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JCR Rooms Banding Proposal

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Objectives

- To introduce a banding system that reflects the overall quality of the rooms. The emphasis is on the overall quality of life that room offers, rather than to reflect the many minor factors that could be employed as we have seen that taking too many small factors into account results in rooms being abnormally banded.
- To introduce a system that makes it very easy to understand how each room was given a band. Thus the system must be simple, and must allow students to easily work out for themselves why a room is in a certain band.
- To introduce a system that does, however, place emphasis on more factors than just the size of the room, which although a very important consideration, can be outweighed by the quality of the accommodation and the facilities available in that accommodation.
- A system must meet College's requirements, in allowing enough money to be raised from the rooms stock, and not to introduce too many bands which would make the system unwieldy and impractical.

In carrying out this exercise we obviously face the problem caused by very different subjective appreciations of the qualities of each room, and the consequential difficulties in objectively comparing the many, and very varied, college rooms. Thus we have attempted to create a process that reflects the generally held views on what constitutes a good room, but at the same time limiting the number of factors involved, as we recognise this has the potential to lead to inexplicable discrepancies in room banding. The process also follows the mindset of a student attempting to choose a college room, and we have posed the questions such a student would ask to ourselves at each stage.

It is also important to remember that this works in combination with a ballot system, which does mean smaller differences between rooms may not lead to a difference in price but fall as advantages of being higher in the ballot that year.

Part I: The Rooms Banding Process

This system works on the basis that all factors which determine the quality of every room in a staircase are considered at Stage 1 and the whole block is rated accordingly. The later stages apply only where the individual room is different to the "normal" room within each staircase.

This is the main stage, where most of the factors which affect a room are considered.

Stage 1 – Star Rating

5*	4*	3*	2*	1*
N	D	M	All Lensfield Rd except 36 + 38	Q
Kenny A	K	I	H	S
Kenny B	L	J		T
36 Lensfield Rd	Howard Court			U
38 Lensfield Rd				1,2+3 Gonville Place

J, M, Q, S, T, U and Lensfield / Gonville Place are rated on the basis that do have hand basins.

H, I and 24 Lensfield Rd. are rated on the basis they do not have hand basin
All other accommodation (inc. 36, 38, 65 Lensfield) is rated on the basis it is ensuite.

Rooms which differ from these assumptions are moved at a later stage.

Stage 2 - Sizes

Small	<13m sq.
Medium	13.0 < 16m sq.
Large	16m sq. +

There is an additional size category that applies only to 2* Lensfield Road Houses:

Lensfield X-Large	22m sq. +
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Stage 3 – Initial Banding

The * rating combined with the size of the room establishes the room's Band, on a scale from A-G.

- 1)- Read across the top to the * rating of the room,
- 2)- Read down that column to the size category of the room,
- 3)- Read across that row to establish the Room Band.

5*	4*	3*	2*	1*	
Large					A
Medium	Large				B
Small	Medium	Large	Lens XL		C
	Small	Medium	Large		D
		Small	Medium	Large	E
				Medium	F
			Small	Small	G
					H

(The small 2* rooms are have a different equivalency – this again reflects the much larger range of sizes of rooms in the Lensfield houses – see explanation in Part II.)

Stage 4 – Tweaking

Rooms which are substantially different to the overall rating of the staircase. (this applies to very few rooms).

This stage involves an exercise of discretion, required due to the large range of rooms available in college. Rooms are moved if they are substantially different in comparison to other rooms **in the same staircase**. Factors that differentiate between rooms in different staircases have already been included in the * rating.

Staircase	Room	Change	Explanation
Kenny A	8,9, 17,18	Down 1	Kenny A is rated on the basis it is fully ensuite accommodation. These rooms have showers only.
Kenny B	5,6,9 10,18,19	Down 1	Kenny B is rated on the basis it is fully ensuite accommodation. These rooms have showers only.
36 + 38 Lens	4,8 9,10	Down 1	These houses are rated on the basis that they are fully ensuite accommodation. These rooms are not ensuite.
32 Lensfield	2,4, 5,9	Up 1	This house is rated on the basis it is non-ensuite accommodation. These rooms are ensuite
28 Lensfield	8	Down 1	This room is a split-level set (split into two smaller rooms, on separate floors).

54 Lensfield	1	Down 1	This room is a split-level set (split into two smaller rooms, on separate floors).
56 Lensfield	1	Down 1	This room is a split-level set (split into two smaller rooms, on separate floors).
65 Lensfield	1	Down 1	This room is in the basement.
H	3,4,8,9	Up 1	"H" is rated on the basis it is not ensuite accommodation. These rooms are however ensuite.
H	1,2	Up 1	H is rated on the basis it is not ensuite accommodation. However, although these rooms are not ensuite, they are extremely large, and thus are still moved up.
I	9A,B,C	Up 1	These rooms are in a flat with their own bathroom and private, but small, kitchen.
J	3,10 17	Up 1	J is rated on the basis it is non-ensuite accommodation but these rooms are ensuite.
M	3Z, 7Z, 11Z	Up 1	M is rated on the basis it is not en-suite, however these rooms are en-suite.
O	5Y, 5Z	Up 1	This is the boat captain's set. This is the only accommodation in the block so is effectively en-suite, and so is moved up 1 band.
S	2	Up 1	S is rated on the basis it is not ensuite, but this room is ensuite.
T	10	Up 1	This room is moved up due to its extremely large size
U	5Y, 5Z	Down 1	This room is a walk-through set.

Stage 5 – Orientation: The Facing of the Rooms and Handbasins

Lensfield Road / Gonville Place

Rooms which face onto the road are moved down 1 band.

College Rooms

Rooms in J, M, Q, S, T, U, which do not have a handbasin and also face off of domus (ie away from main court) are moved down 1 band.

For all other college blocks the fact they are either ensuite or do not have handbasins was a factor in the rating of the accommodation at stage 1.

Part II – Explanation of the Rationale and Stages of the Process

Stage 1. Staircase Grading.

Each staircase, block or house (henceforth, collectively 'staircase') is rated on a scale of 5* to 1*. The staircase is the primary consideration; it dictates the general quality of the room, the facilities available to its occupant and the accommodation's location.

Furthermore, most students when choosing a room will first of all decide which staircase they wish to live in. When asked where one wants to live next year, most students reply, for example, H block.

All the factors that affect every room in the staircase are included in this consideration. Thus the quality of the rooms, the kitchens, the bathrooms, and the location of the staircase are all considered at this stage.

The key to this stage is comparison between blocks, and thus a starting point is to compare different blocks on different factors. The key factors are

- the bathroom facilities
- the kitchen facilities
- the standard of the décor in the rooms
- the standard of communal areas and hallways etc.

At this stage, all the staircases are ranked in a hierarchy of accommodation. This is done in the first instance by reference to the table below. The values do not correspond exactly to a banding, but are designed to allow the staircases to be ranked. Additional considerations apply in transposing this ranking in to a banding (see below).

Explanation of the Tabulated Rating System

Renovated? (1-5) This is the quality of the rooms and the communal areas, the quality of furniture.

1 = Kenny A Quality

3= average college rooms, with good furniture although the décor is not new

5= the old, un-renovated college rooms with old décor, furniture etc

Bathroom Type

ES1 –Grade 1 En-suite – Kenny A quality

ES2 –Grade 2 En-suite – any En-suite older than Grade 1.

HB - Hand basins in each room

N - Nothing in each room.

Quality – (1-5) quality of bathrooms

- 1= Kenny A quality, this will be top standard finish and a bath.
- 2 = as Grade 1 but smaller or without a bath, or slightly older.
- 3= Average quality bathrooms; en-suite or extremely generous allocation of bathrooms per student.
- 4 = Average quality bathrooms, e.g. communal bathrooms in "I".
- 5= Poor standard facilities, such as communal bathrooms in "H".

Bathroom Quality Total

Each bath type is given a numerical value : ES1 = 1, ES2 =2, HB =3, N =4.

Total = (Bath Type + Quality)/2.

(divided by 2 to keep the value in line with the other factors).

Kitchen Quality

- 1=Kenny A quality kitchen
- 2= Very good quality kitchen, smaller, e.g. I
- 3= average kitchen to a moderate quality, also if there are poor kitchens on most floors with one good kitchen for a whole college staircase.
- 5=Gyp Rooms (these are given 5 instead of 4 due to the big difference in quality).

TOTAL

= Renovated *2 plus Total Bathroom Quality plus Kitchen Quality

The value for Renovated is multiplied by 2 because this is the major factor, and also because there are multiple considerations represented by this number (quality of rooms, quality of communal areas, quality of furniture etc).

The total will be between 4 (best) and 20 (worst). These values do not correspond exactly to bands, but give a guide as to the hierarchy of accommodation.

BLOCK	Renovated?	Bathroom Type	Bathroom Quality	Total Bathroom Quality	Kitchen Quality	TOTAL	* Rating
N	1	ES1	1	1	1	4	5
Kenny A	1	ES1	1	1	1	4	5
Kenny B	1	ES1	1	1	1	4	5
36L 38L	1	ES1	2	1.5	1	4.5	5
K	2	ES1	2	1.5	2	7.5	4
L	2	ES1	2	1.5	3	8.5	4
Howard Crt	2	ES2	3	2.5	2	8.5	4
D	2	ES2	3	2.5	3	9.5	4
I	2	N	4	4	2	10	3
M	3	HB	5	4	3	13	3
J	3	HB	5	4	3	13	3
H	3	N	5	4.5	5	15.5	2
Lensfield*	4	HB	4	3.5	5	16.5	2
Gonville Pl*	5	HB	5	4	3	17	1
East Range	5	HB	5	4	5	19	5

* see "Point to Remember"

Points to Remember

- rooms within each block which do not correspond to the "model" room within that block are moved on their own individual considerations at the later stages.
- **Lensfield Road** houses do differ but not enough to be given independent consideration.:
- **65 L** is En-suite (ES2) instead of having hand basins which would reduce its value by 0.5, but it is not on college, and is less popular than most Lensfield Houses, so these considerations balance. A value of 16 instead of 16.5 does not move it out of order with the other Lensfield Houses.
- **24 L** is of a better quality than the other houses but has no rooms with hand basins, so again these considerations balance out. Again its value would be reduced by 1.5 (reduced by 2 for better renovated value, but increased by 0.5 for no hand basins). Thus it would have a value of 15 instead of 16.5. Although this would place it above H staircase, it remains in the 4* rating.

Gonville Place is also outside of college, is of comparatively poor quality and is not on the university network, so the fact its value is very close to the values of 4* accommodation should not be taken to move it into the 4* band.

Description of Staircases

5* Staircases

These staircases all have ensuites of top quality. The kitchens fully equipped, and in top quality condition, most having been refurbished very recently.

N – is the most recently refurbished accommodation, with an excellent quality of rooms, superb kitchens and superb ensuite bathrooms.

Kenny A and Kenny B – These again are newly refurbished, have excellent quality of rooms, kitchens and ensuites.

36 Lensfield Road and 38 Lensfield Road – (this accommodation is rated on the basis that it is ensuite accommodation). These are the best equipped Lensfield Houses, with superb kitchen/diners. The block has generally large rooms, and is ensuite. The ensuites do not have baths as they do in N or Kenny A or B, but the kitchens are the best in college. Further, it is in a prime location on campus and Lensfield Road.

4* Staircases

These Staircases are also all ensuite, but the bathrooms may not be to the excellent condition found in 5* Staircases.

The kitchen facilities are modern and well equipped, but are not to the same standard, or possibly size, as found in 5* staircases.

The difference between K and L is the communal facilities and these two blocks set the parameters of the 4* category, and Howard Court and D fit between them, because although they are quite different in style, they are very good quality accommodation.

K – All the rooms have excellent quality ensuites. K has very good, modern kitchens, and is finished to a very high standard. It is not 5* because the kitchens are not as generous as in 5* accommodation and the ensuites do not have baths. The block is slightly older than the refurbished Kennys and N.

Howard Court – is a fully ensuite block with moderate kitchen facilities. It is in a very good, quiet location in college, and the room sizes are very generous.

D – is a small block with moderate kitchen facilities and good ensuites.

L – the rooms are the same as in K staircase but the kitchen facilities are poor. It has an excellent position within college. L remains a 4* room due to the very high quality of the rooms and the ensuites.

3* Staircases

I – The kitchen facilities are very good, and are the same as in K. However this block is not ensuite, and thus is a 3* block. This block is rated on the basis that the rooms do not have a hand basin, but the very good standard of décor and kitchen facilities mean this block remains a 3* block.

M –The main kitchen on the middle floor is excellent and fully equipped. The rooms have been renovated to a good standard, but again are not ensuite. Although some rooms in this block share a “front” door, and appear to be sets, they are actually separate rooms, and are rated as such.

J - The main kitchen on the middle floor is excellent and fully equipped. The rooms have been renovated to a good standard, but again are not ensuite.

2* Staircases

These are the Lensfield Road houses excluding 36 and 38. These are all very similar rooms in terms of upkeep and the limited kitchen facilities. The rooms are generally in a moderate condition. The kitchen facilities are generally poor in comparison with the rest of college, and the bathrooms are older.

65 Lensfield is an ensuite house. However this accommodation is kept in the same band as the other Lensfield accommodation. This represents the fact the house does not adjoin the domus, and the standard of the house is lower than that of the other Lensfield Houses. The recent residents of this house have often not been happy with the standard of their rooms, despite having an ensuite bathroom.

24 Lensfield is similar to the other houses but is newer. However none of the rooms have handbasins.

H - This block is rated on the assumption the rooms are not ensuite. This is an older block, but finished to a good standard with high ceilings and traditional features. The rooms have no handbasins and the communal bathrooms and kitchen facilities are extremely poor. H is not 1* due to the good quality of décor in the rooms.

1* Staircases

1,2 and 3 Gonville Place – the kitchens are large and well equipped but are old. Although these houses have communal areas the accommodation is of poor quality, as are the bathrooms. The houses are on the major junction which can be a major disturbance. This accommodation is not on the college computer network.

Q, S, T, U –the East Range remains un-renovated. The kitchen facilities are minimal and the standard of the accommodation is comparatively poor.

Stage 2 – Size

Each room is categorised Small, Medium or Large.

Small	<13m sq.
Medium	13.0 < 16m sq.
Large	16m sq. +
Lensfield X-Large	22m sq. +

There is an additional Lensfield E-Large category because the Lensfield Houses have a much larger range of room sizes and this range necessitates an additional category. It recognises that the sheer size of these rooms make them very attractive accommodation.

Stage 3 – Initial Banding

The rooms are then set against equivalent rooms of different quality and size. This system allows for cross-referencing on the chart to provide a simple method of determining room banding.

In general a room which is 1 * worse, but is one size band greater will be of the same band. This takes into account the fact that some people will find larger rooms preferable, others the rooms of better quality. It is important to remember at this stage that choosing rooms is highly subjective, and this system is aimed at providing choice within each price range but also ensuring students each get equal value for their money.

The exceptions at this stage are the 2* Lensfield Road houses. The variation between the sizes and quality of the rooms within each of these houses is much larger than within staircases on domus. Thus, there is an additional Extra-large category, and further, the Small 2* rooms are made equivalent to rooms 2 bands lower rather than 1. These very small rooms in Lensfield Road are mostly in awkward positions within the houses, and do not have the space typical of Lensfield rooms to compensate for the comparatively poor facilities within these houses.

There is an H band because rooms may be moved down a band at a later stage (Stage 4 or 5).

Stage 4- "Tweaking" - Rooms which are substantially different from the overall rating of that staircase

It is vital to remember that comparisons between the staircases are drawn at Stage 1, and thus are already incorporated into the initial banding of the room. Therefore at this stage, rooms are moved if they are substantially different *to the other rooms in the same staircase* and the overall rating of the staircase.

Obviously categorising by staircase or house means that some rooms in those staircases will be comparatively under or over priced due to the fact they are substantially different to the other rooms in that staircase. This necessitates the moving of a few rooms that do not fall within the overall description of that staircase. The most common case is ensuite rooms in a

non-ensuite block (e.g. J) or non-ensuite rooms where the block is rated on the basis that the accommodation there is ensuite (e.g. 38 Lensfield). The justification for each individual movement is given in Part I, paragraph 4.

Stage 5 – Facing of the Rooms and Handbasins.

It is important to appreciate students place different weights on different factors in choosing their room, and that to an extent the ballot system will play a part in how rooms are allocated.

Thus it will be appreciated that these two factors are not generally regarded as being of equal important as Staircase rating or Size.

Therefore these factors do not have the effect of moving rooms down a whole band, as has previously been the case. Rooms on the front and back of Kenny A, for example, should not differ in price by whole band.

Importantly, as regards hand basins, it is vital to note that rooms are moved up or down a band for being ensuite. Eg ensuite rooms in H and J (non-ensuite blocks) are moved up 1 band for having an ensuite. Therefore to move rooms down a whole band solely due to lack of a hand basin would be to equate a hand basin to an ensuite bathroom, which is obviously incorrect. This illustrates the fact that hand basins are a minor factor.

However it is important to note that the facing of the room, and the presence of hand basins affects different staircases differently, so at this stage the "Houses" are treated differently to "Domus Staircases".

Houses.

The difference between rooms that face directly onto Lensfield Road (or Gonville Place) and rooms which face away from the room is substantial, as the front rooms face on to a very busy and noisy road. Thus rooms which are on the front of the Lensfield Houses and Gonville Place are moved down a whole band.

In the houses there are good standard "family house" style bathrooms, rather than the poor standard communal facilities found in the non-ensuite blocks in college, such as in M. Therefore whether a room has a handbasin or not in a house is less of a disadvantage than not having a handbasin in, for example, M, where the bathroom facilities are very poor. Thus rooms without handbasins are not moved down a band in the houses.

Domus Staircases

The difference between rooms in college which face onto and away from the courts is less of an important factor than in the Houses, as even the back of, for example, Kenny A is still reasonably quiet etc. It is, however, a factor. Thus rooms which face off domus are "worse" than rooms which do not, but only by a lesser degree than a smaller room is worse than a larger room.

Therefore rooms which face off domus are not moved down solely on this lesser factor. To an extent, the ballot system will mean it is fair for the slightly better rooms to go to people higher in the ballot.

Again, for the few blocks where not having a handbasin is relevant (J,M and East Range – all other blocks are rated either as being ensuite (N) or having no handbasins (I).), this is a factor but again only to a lesser degree, and thus do not serve to reduce a room by a whole band on it own.

However, if the rooms which face off of domus also are at the additional disadvantage of not having a handbasin, then these two factors together combine to reduce the room by one band.

The effect of this is that in some blocks, such a M, there will be a choice in the same band between a room on main court without a hand basin, and room on the back with a hand basin. This, bearing in mind different people value each of these factors differently, allows a fair choice between rooms without having to pay more for factors which some students do not value as important.

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