

MARY PIERRE-HARVEY

The role of Director of Estates and Campus Services at Oxford Brookes is an important one – a broad portfolio, which includes maintaining the estate and providing other services essential to the smooth running of the University. Plus, the role requires the knowledge, experience and determination to deliver major capital projects in a large, complex organisation – as well as interpersonal skills to gain the confidence of a wide range of stakeholders. Step forward **Mary Pierre-Harvey BSc MSc MRICS**, who was appointed in 2019. Meeting in London, Mary has a warmth and vivacity that immediately puts you at ease, inspiring you to dig a little deeper.

Words: **Wendy Jacob** Photography: **Paul Tait**

Brought up in Trinidad by a single mother determined to give her daughter the education she had not received, Mary went to a Catholic convent school. She confesses that her A levels were not the best, but they were good enough to take her to university, with a scholarship from the Trinidad and Tobago government. As a black woman studying with mainly white men, she recalls her first day at the University of Greenwich. “The concept of who I was and where I came from, was out of kilter – a colleague even asked me if we lived in trees and ate bananas!”

Following her degree in Quantity Surveying at Greenwich, and an MSc in Architecture at UCL, Mary’s career took off, working on high profile

projects that included the restoration of Westminster Abbey Chapter House and Dover Castle Great Tower.

Working for a number of world-leading organisations, Mary admits she has experienced discrimination, but is hesitant to reveal the details. Pushed, she will comment on what she sees as unacceptable discrimination and is keen to share her determination to encourage greater inclusivity in education and the workplace. “I don’t believe that we will ever completely eradicate discrimination,” she says. “But, we can, individually and collectively, do much more to promote equality and inclusion and effect zero tolerance for all forms of inequality and exclusion in workplaces. Let inclusion and equality start with me and spread like wildfire!” >>

