

Appendix 2
Report for the original planning application

East Area Parliament		20 October 2010	
Strategic Development Control Committee		27 October 2010	
Application Number:	10/01006/FUL		
Decision Due by:	19 July 2010		
Proposal:	Demolition of existing sports hall, grandstand and ancillary buildings. Erection of new sports centre and Eton Fives' courts. Laying out of footpaths, access road, cycle parking, car parking and landscaping.		
Site Address:	University Running Ground Iffley Road Oxford (Location Plan – Appendix 1)		
Ward:	St Marys Ward		
Agent:	DPDS Consulting Group	Applicant:	University Of Oxford

Recommendation:

East Area Parliament is recommended to support the application for planning permission subject to the listed conditions and accompanying legal agreement.

Strategic Development Control Committee is recommended to be minded to grant planning permission but to delegate authority to officers the power to issue the notice of permission on completion of the legal agreement.

Reasons for Approval:

- 1 The proposal would respond well to its setting, providing two new buildings of high design quality that would maintain the characteristics of the site. The improved facilities would meet the identified needs of the University and be accessible to the wider community. The site is sustainably located to encourage non-car modes of transport and the University actively encourage sustainable travel through its Green Travel Plan. The application would not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties due to intervening vegetation and distances, whilst matter of lighting can be secured by planning condition to ensure that it is appropriate to its location. The application would comply with the policies of the Oxford Local Plan.
- 2 The Council has had regard for the comments received through the consultation process. The issues set out below have been addressed within the report and are not considered to be significant enough to warrant refusal of the application. The matters of light and biodiversity enhancement measures can be secured by a planning condition.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples
- 4 Architectural Detailing
- 5 Lighting Scheme
- 6 Car Parking Before Use Commences (Porous
- 7 Cycle Parking Before Use Commences
- 8 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 2
- 9 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 10 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 11 No felling lopping cutting
- 12 Landscaping Plan
- 13 Landscape hard surface design - tree roots
- 14 Landscape carry out after completion
- 15 Landscape management plan
- 16 In accordance with Flood Risk Assessment
- 17 Surface water drainage scheme
- 18 Topographic Survey on Completion
- 19 Bat boxes prior to commencement
- 20 Arch - Implementation of programme
- 21 Construction Travel Plan
- 22 Travel Plan
- 23 Public Art
- 24 Alterations to Jackdaw Lane Access

Legal Agreements:

The following contributions are required to mitigate the impact of the proposals on City and County Services and infrastructure:

£6,000 towards improvements to bus infrastructure on Iffley Road

£15,000 towards traffic management measures in the locality

In addition to the contributions a Shared Use Agreement will be entered into in order to secure access to the new facility for local residents and schools.

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP2** - Planning Obligations
- CP3** - Limiting the Need to Travel
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP7** - Urban Design
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9** - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11** - Landscape Design
- CP12** - Designing out Crime
- CP13** - Accessibility
- CP14** - Public Art

CP15 - Energy Efficiency
CP16 - Renewable Energy
CP17 - Recycled Materials
CP18 - Natural Resource Impact Analysis
CP20 - Lighting
HE2 - Archaeology
HE7 - Conservation Areas
HE9 - High Building Areas
HE10 - View Cones of Oxford
NE1 - Purpose of Oxford's Green Belt
NE2 - Control of Development Oxford's Green Belt
NE8 - Development on Low Lying Land
NE9 - Flood Risk Assessment
NE10 - Sustainable Drainage
NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows
NE17 - Biodiversity
NE18 - Special Areas of Conservation & SSSIs
NE19 - Nature Conservation/Local Nature Reserves
SR1 - Protection of Indoor Sport Facilities
SR2 - Protection of Open Air Sports Facilities
SR3 - New Indoor & Open Air Sports Facilities

Core Strategy – Proposed Changes

CSP2 - Previously developed land & greenfield land
CSP10 - Energy & natural resources
CSP12 - Flooding
CSP13 - Biodiversity
CSP18 - Infrastructure & Developer contributions
CSP19 - Urban design townscape char & historic environment
CSP20 - Community safety

Other Material Considerations:

This application is within close proximity to the St Clements and Iffley Road Conservation Area

National Guidance:

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG 13 – Transport
PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk

Local Policy and Guidance:

Planning Obligations-Supplementary Planning Document (April 2007)
Parking Standards, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans-Supplementary Planning Document (October 2006)
Natural Resource Impact Analysis Supplementary Planning Document (November 2006)
St Clements and Iffley Road Conservation Area Appraisal

Supporting documents

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- NRA and Energy Strategy
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Transport Statement and Sustainable Travel Plan
- Arboricultural Report
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Bat Assessment

Relevant Site History:

07/02870/CAC - Conservation Area consent for demolition of outbuildings – withdrawn

07/02871/FUL - Demolition of pavilion. Proposed three court indoor tennis centre and replacement outdoor tennis courts (six courts). Footpaths, cycle parking, 3 parking spaces (for disabled drivers) and landscaping – withdrawn

09/01315/FUL - Demolition of existing pavilion. Construction of new building to accommodate 3 indoor tennis courts plus 6 external courts, to replace existing. Provision of 3 disabled car parking spaces, covered cycle parking, landscaping and external works – pending

09/01316/CAC - Demolition of existing pavilion building - pending

Representations Received: The following comments have been received from 37 Marston Street, 62 and 91 Iffley Road:

- New sports halls are large and unattractive
- Potential negative visual impact on views of Christchurch Meadow
- Existing lighting is intrusive. A condition should be required of any consent to minimise light pollution
- Existing problems with PA system
- Loss of Yew trees may affect views along Iffley Road and should be replaced
- Concern about noise from hard surface tennis courts (note: this is not part of proposal)
- Biodiversity enhancements should be required
- Would like to see application approved with conditions relating to noise limitation measures and biodiversity enhancements

Statutory and Internal Consultees:

Highways And Traffic – No objection subject to conditions and contributions towards bus infrastructure on Iffley Road and safety measures in the area (see detail below)

Environment Agency Thames Region – No objection subject to conditions (see detail below)

Thames Water Utilities Limited – No objection

Thames Valley Police – No objection subject to effective lighting and security of the pedestrian and cycle route to the west of the proposed building

Sport England Local Office – No objection subject to a community access package

English Heritage Commission – No objection

Natural England – No objection

Issues:

- Need

- Character and Appearance of the Area
- Built Form and Appearance
- Trees
- Biodiversity
- Flooding and Drainage
- Sustainability
- Traffic, Access and Parking
- Planning Obligations

Officers Assessment:

Site Description and Locality

1. The application site forms part of the University Sports Complex on the western side of Iffley Road. The site accommodates a range of sports facilities including a swimming pool, cricket school, fitness and multi-purpose rooms, squash courts, tennis courts, rowing and athletics.
2. Development within the site is focused around the running track with the existing sports centre and swimming pool to the west and the grandstand and cricket school along the north western boundary. This has maintained the general sense of openness experienced from Iffley Road by the undeveloped eastern end of the site which stands several metres higher than the existing buildings. Views across the site from Iffley Road are therefore limited due to the high timber fence that runs along the edge of the public highway, although the tree line to the west of the site and hills beyond are visible.
3. Vehicular access is taken from the south of the site off Jackdaw Lane, while the vast majority of foot and cycle traffic accesses the site at its northeast corner off Iffley Road. These access points are not changing as part of the proposals.
4. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing sports centre and grandstand buildings to make way for the new sports centre and grandstand. The new sports centre will accommodate over 80 sports incorporating two court halls (comprising 8 and 4 courts), 3 squash courts, a dojo, fencing salle, fitness suite, power lifting studio, bouldering wall, a café and other social spaces, office space and support accommodation. The new grandstand will incorporate a lane cricket hall, projectile hall, spectator seating, club rooms and support accommodation.
5. Further to the new buildings the car parking will be reconfigured and landscaped. The pedestrian and cycle route to the west of the building is formalised and widened allowing occasional vehicular access for maintenance and servicing purposes. Following concerns raised by the Highway Authority the access from Jackdaw Lane will also be widened. The existing swimming pool is to be re-clad to reflect the materials of the new building.

Need

6. The site has developed as a sporting venue in a piecemeal manner. The result is a series of unremarkable and unrelated buildings that while once fit for purpose no longer meet the needs and aspirations of the University.

- 7 The University has undertaken research that has indicated that a lack of good quality facilities in a major university is likely to be a significant disincentive to student recruitment. There is no policy objection to new sports facilities, indeed policy SR3 supports new indoor sport facilities and requires them to have joint user agreements. The Committee will recall a similar package for the recently approved indoor tennis centre and swimming pool. Officers would suggest a similar agreement if planning permission is granted for the current scheme. This will include membership for local residents, plus access for local schools and clubs.
- 8 The site is in a highly sustainable location with good access via non-car modes of transport. The proposals would utilise an existing site in a more resource friendly manner, providing improved local sporting facilities. Officers therefore raise no objection to the principle of the proposal.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 9 PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment, recounts the government's commitment to the conservation of the historic environment and its heritage assets explaining that they should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. It defines the *Historic Environment* as meaning all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places and a *Heritage Asset* as '*a building, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment*'.
- 10 When making planning decisions PPS5 explains that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the positive role that their conservation can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic viability. The Government recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term, but it does highlight that it is desirable for development to make a positive contribution.
- 11 Policy HE9.1 of PPS5 explains that there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets (conservation area, listed building) and the more significant the asset the greater the presumption in favour of conservation should be. It explains the importance of preserving or enhancing the setting of designated assets and adds that where a proposal has a harmful impact, which is less than substantial harm then planning authorities should weigh the public benefit of the proposal against the harm and recognise that the greater the harm the greater the justification will have to be.
- 12 The application site lies outside, but abuts the St Clements and Iffley Road Conservation area and lies within two of the Oxford view cones. From the site there are views of the Grade I listed church of St John the Evangelist in Iffley Road and views from Iffley Road across the application site towards Christ Church. The running track has historical significance (established 1876) as the place where the sub 4 minute mile was achieved by Sir Roger Bannister in 1954. There are also views across the site to the river corridor and it's more rural and green landscape.
- 13 The St Clement's and Iffley Road Conservation Area Appraisal describes the historical development of Iffley Road, explaining why the west side is less developed and more open, the Oxford University Sports field providing a physical reminder of

this. The ancillary accommodation on the site begun to be developed from about 1900, but the bigger structures did not start to appear until the 1960s.

- 14 Despite this modern form of development and the limited views offered due to the timber fence along Iffley Road, the perception of a large open space still exists. From the east side of Iffley Road the wooded backdrop along the river is visible. There is also a glimpse view of Christ Church, although this view is affected by the existing grandstand building along the northwestern boundary of the site.

Built Form and Appearance

- 15 The proposals for the new sports hall involve replacement facilities in a series of top lit 'cubes', in front of which and overlooking the running track is proposed a more architecturally detailed and articulated 'spine' building. The 'cubes', to be constructed in buff brick, form the principle elements of the proposal, isolating the main sports functions of the building, whilst the 'spine' contains entrance and foyer, ancillary office space, studios and fitness suite.
- 16 The new sports centre is taller than the existing but this is to a great extent governed by the requirements of the sports that occupy the spaces. The northernmost and middle 'cubes' house the sports halls, while the southernmost cube provides the ancillary accommodation, squash courts, dojo and fencing halls. To the west of each 'cube' is a single storey timber clad store building with a curved profile providing a softer appearance at ground level.
- 17 Whilst the new sports hall will be taller than the existing building this is a functional requirement and will be compensated by a significantly improved architectural composition. In views from Iffley Road the building would be seen across the openness of the running track and against the existing backdrop of trees and greenery. In this context the size of the building would be absorbed and coupled with the elegant appearance of the building the overall visual impact would not be significant.
- 18 The new grandstand is approximately 3.5m lower than the existing building, improving views of Christ Church. Unlike the existing grandstand the new building does not overhang the pedestrian and cycle access to the northwest, therefore providing a more open and pleasant entrance to the site. Like the new sports centre the grandstand has a finer appearance with the glazed 1st floor being set back under a projecting roof. This reduces the bulk and mass of the building, and is again seen against a backcloth of trees and the glimpses of Christ Church.
- 19 The application site lies within the Rose Hill and Crescent Road View Cones, within which the Council seeks to retain significant views. The site sits at a lower level than Iffley Road as the land drops towards the river to the west. As a result of this, as well as the wider urban context and intervening vegetation, the proposed buildings would not be seen within the view cones and as such the significant views into the City would be preserved.
- 20 The proposals have been informed by a detailed analysis of the site and its context and have been revised to reflect comments raised during pre-application discussions and consultation. There is a sound justification for the need of these facilities and there is public benefit that will derive from their provision. Taken together with the beneficial impacts of a lower grandstand building which will improve views of Christ Church, along with the removal of fencing, it is considered that the proposal will not

cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area, its setting or that of nearby listed buildings.

Trees

- 21 The proposals include the removal of a 12 trees or groups of trees including; 4 willow trees (T1, T2, T30, T31), 2 poplar (T27, T28) a single Leyland cypress (T29) and 2 groups of Leyland cypress (G3 and G4) trees that stand in or around the existing car parking area that is between the existing external hockey pitch and the existing sports hall buildings; a single black pine (T14) which stands near the western end of the tree belt that runs along the southern boundary of the site; 2 yew trees (T18,T19) that stand adjacent to the access road from Iffley Road north west of the existing running track.
- 22 New tree planting is proposed; along the southern boundary of the site; in the car park between the new multi-use sports block and the external hockey pitch; and, in areas between the proposed new athletics track and football pitch and the external tennis courts and tennis centre. Although not directly a part of the proposals under consideration, it is worth noting that the tennis court and centre developments will provide new tree planting along the boundary with Iffley Road.
- 23 Removal of the black pine tree (T14) is justified in the interests of good arboricultural management since it will provide space into which an adjacent, high quality and value lime tree can grow to the overall benefit of the tree belt. 2 willows (T1, T2) and 2 groups of Leyland cypress (G3 and G4) trees stand within the footprint of the proposed buildings and therefore must be removed to facilitate the development. These are low quality and value trees that are not a significant feature of public views from outside of the site. Their removal will therefore not have a significant effect on public visual amenity. Proposed new planting in the new car parking area and along the southern boundary of the site will adequately mitigate the visual impact of the removal of these trees.
- 24 2 willows (T30, T31), 2 poplar (T27,T28) and a single Leyland cypress (T29) are to be removed to allow an access road to be constructed near to and along the southern boundary of the site. These are also low quality and value trees that are not a significant feature of public views from outside of the site. Their removal will therefore not have a significant effect on public visual amenity. Proposed new planting along the southern boundary of the site will adequately mitigate the visual impact of the removal of these trees.
- 25 The 2 yews trees (T18, T19) are of greater significance and their loss is to be regretted. While T18 is ivy clad and T19 shows some dieback in its crown and both would benefit from remedial work, these are moderate quality and value trees. Unfortunately, the size and layout of the proposed new athletics track requires these trees to be removed. Since the trees are not a significant feature of public views from outside of the site their removal will therefore not have a significant effect on public amenity. However, the trees are probably visible in private views from residential properties that overlook the site from Iffley Road and removing them will therefore have a minor harmful impact on these views. The tree planting alongside Iffley Road (associated with the approved tennis centre) will mitigate the impacts in private views and will eventually provide significant public visual amenity benefits in Iffley Road.
- 26 The new buildings encroach upon the Root Protection Area (RPA) of retained trees. In particular, the access road to the west of the sports centre will be constructed

within the RPA of the ash, black pine and horse chestnut trees (T5-T16) along the southern boundary and a new building will be constructed within the RPA of a mature horse chestnut tree (T17) that stands on the boundary with Christ Church sports ground. A great deal of pre-application site investigation has taken place to determine the physical extent of the root systems of these trees and the constraints they impose on ground works and the access road. The design of the development has been positively amended in the light of the findings to minimise the potential impact on retained trees. If adequate care is taken to ensure that trees are protected from damage during the construction phase of development, by for example erecting barrier fencing and ground protection on site and using working methods that avoid damaging activities in proximity to tree, officers expect the retained trees should not be significantly harmed during the development.

- 27 The proposed tree planting will provide significant public amenity benefits. In particular, planting along the southwestern boundary of the site, which includes a matrix of aspen and alder trees under-planted with goat willow and osier which is appropriate for the riparian & floodplain landscape, will eventually help enhance the screening and softening of the development provided by the existing tree belt. These benefits could be further enhanced by the inclusion of some evergreen trees, such as holly, yew and pine.
- 28 Officers are therefore satisfied that the tree belt on the southwestern boundary of the site should remain unharmed by the development and will be enhanced by proposed new tree planting.

Biodiversity

- 29 NE21 of the Oxford Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for developments that would harm animal species specifically protected by law, unless the harm can be overcome by appropriate mitigation through compliance with planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 30 The application is accompanied by an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Assessment. The latter indicates that there are low or negligible opportunities for roosting within the buildings and trees. The proposals would not therefore adversely affect bats. However there may be opportunities for biodiversity enhancement by the installation of bat boxes. Officers would therefore recommend a condition to this effect. Natural England supports this approach.
- 31 The site is also within 2km of the Magdalen Grove, New Marston Meadows and Iffley Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), however Natural England has advised that the development will not have a significant adverse impact on the nearby SSSI's.

Flooding and Drainage

- 32 The site is primarily located within Flood Zone 1 although the car park and western end of the site fall within flood zone 2. In accordance with Local Plan policy NE9 the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which in accordance with PPS25 sets out the existing site conditions and identifies compensatory flood storage demonstrating how the proposal will not increase surface water flood risk.

- 33 The proposal will compensate for losses in flood storage by providing open 'natural' flood storage through regrading the land surrounding the buildings and in voids under the building. The proposals will result in a significant betterment with a total increase in flood storage of 879m³. The Environment Agency approve of this approach.
- 34 The FRA also details surface water attenuation. This will be through the use of oversized pipes and a rainwater harvesting system. The Environment Agency supports this approach subject to a number of conditions set out above.

Sustainability

- 35 The City Council encourages all development to combine resource efficiency and renewable energy into their design. The development due to its size exceeds the threshold where a Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) is required.
- 36 A NRIA has been submitted and the development scores 6 out of 11 on the checklist score. Through a combination of passive design, energy efficiency measures, air source heat pumps and solar water heating systems, along with a combined heat and power unit, the proposal would amount to a 22.5% carbon reduction. The proposal also includes rainwater recycling that will service the new building, areas of landscaping and existing hockey pitch.
- 37 Officers therefore consider that the proposals are in accordance with local plan policy to increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources and reducing carbon emissions.

Traffic, Access and Parking

- 38 The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment which sets out the current situation with regard to parking and traffic and the impact of the proposals. The site is presently accessed off Jackdaw Lane and Iffley Road and this arrangement would be retained as part of the application. Vehicular traffic would continue to come from Jackdaw Lane while the majority of users will come from Iffley Road via bike or under foot. Traffic surveys taken in December 2009 confirm this revealing that 73% of trips to the site are pedestrian or cyclist.
- 39 The potential impact of additional traffic has been calculated on the basis of an additional gross external floor area of 4,686m² and a proportional increase of 85%. Assuming that there would be an 85% increase to existing peak hour trips the proposals would generate one additional two-way trip every one or two minutes. On this basis the Transport Assessment concludes that the existing access from Jackdaw Lane has capacity to absorb the additional traffic. It should however be remembered that 73% of users arrive by alternative means of transport and in reality the traffic increase would not be likely to be as high as predicted. Notwithstanding this the applicant proposes alterations to the Jackdaw Lane access to improve visibility along with the installation of a rumble strip.
- 40 The proposal reduces the number of car parking spaces from 60 to 48. Whilst the Transport Assessment has predicted an increase in peak hour vehicle trips the redevelopment would, due to the high percentage of users that arrive by bicycle and on foot, along with the proactive approach of the University towards encouraging more sustainable modes of transport, it concludes that the parking provision will be sufficient. The County Council as Highway Authority agrees with this conclusion.

- 41 The proposals will accommodate 410 cycle parking spaces on site which significantly exceeds the requirements of the Oxford Local Plan.
- 42 The projected increase in users of the site will have an impact on County transport infrastructure. To mitigate this the County Council requests £6,000 towards improvements to bus infrastructure on Iffley Road providing 'real time' service updates and £15,000 towards traffic management measures in the locality.

Planning Obligations

- 43 In addition to the financial contributions requested by the County Council the City Council, in accordance with Local Plan policy SR3, will require the applicant to enter into a joint user agreement prior to planning permission being granted to secure access for local schools and residents.

Conclusion:

- 44 The application accords with the local plan policy with regard to land use, parking and sustainability. The scheme would not adversely affect residential amenity and the applicant has established a need for the redevelopment. In this regard the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.
- 45 The application follows a lengthy design process, with input from Council officers and consultation with the community through two exhibitions and a presentation to the East Area Parliament. This level of consultation and engagement, coupled with an imaginative design approach, has resulted in a development of high architectural quality, that whilst large would be appropriate for its setting and offers improved facilities that would benefit the University and wider community. Concerns raised about lighting can be appropriately addressed through a planning condition.
- 46 The proposals are therefore considered to be a well thought out and intelligent response to the site constraints and as such officers recommend that the Committee be minded to grant planning permission but delegate authority to officers to issue the notice of permission on completion of the s106 legal agreement.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers: 10/01006/FUL
Contact Officer: Steven Roberts
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Date: 4 September 2010