

East Area Planning Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

**Application Number:** 11/02528/FUL

**Decision Due by:** 6th January 2012

**Proposal:** Construction of two storey entrance foyer. Single storey extension to form kitchen. First floor extension to provide store and teaching space. Two storey extension to provide cloakroom. New entrance lobby at rear with canopy over library. (Amended plans)

**Site Address:** Headington Preparatory School, 26 London Road (**site plan: appendix 1**)

**Ward:** Headington Ward

**Agent:** Solway Brown Partnership

**Applicant:** Headington School

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## Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve planning permission for the following reasons:

- 1 The proposed development would make an efficient and appropriate use of previously developed land in order to improve the existing academic accommodation for the school. The proposed extension and alterations would be of a size and scale that would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the original house, and be sited in a manner that maintains the importance of this building and its grounds as a heritage asset and its value to the character and appearance of the London Road and wider area. The extensions have been designed in a manner that would safeguard the residential amenities of the surrounding residential properties and would not create any adverse impacts upon the local highway, protected trees, or biodiversity. The proposed development would therefore accord with the relevant national planning policy and policies of the current development plan.
- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application, however officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.

- 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.

**Conditions:**

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples of materials
- 4 Landscape plan required
- 5 Landscape carried out after completion
- 6 Tree Protection Plan & Measures
- 7 Details of construction plant storage
- 8 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 9 SUDs drainage scheme required
- 10 Biodiversity enhancements – Bird and Bat boxes

**Main Local Plan Policies:**

**Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016**

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9** - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11** - Landscape Design
- CP13** - Accessibility
- CP19** - Nuisance
- CP21** - Noise
- TR3** - Car Parking Standards
- TR4** - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- NE16** - Protected Trees

**Core Strategy**

- CS12\_** - Biodiversity
- CS16\_** - Access to education
- CS18\_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment

**Other Material Considerations:**

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment

**Relevant Site History:**

The site has an extensive planning history, not all of which is directly relevant to this application. The history that is considered relevant is listed below.

01/01277/NF: Erection of single storey building for use as nursery and kindergarten:  
Approved

03/01688/FUL: Erection of single storey extension to provide a larger library: Approved

05/00705/FUL: Single storey classroom extension (24 sq m): Approved

08/01233/FUL: Erection of a temporary class room building for five years: Approved

10/01541/FUL - Demolition of existing stone wall and chainlink fence and erection of new brick piers and railings: Approved

10/03214/FUL: Extension to foundation building to provide 2 additional classrooms, work room and link to main school buildings. (Amended plans): Approved

### **Representations Received:**

#### 12 The Croft:

- Object to the proposal
- The westward extension of the buildings façade on the London Road is ugly and discordant, consisting of bluff monotonous glazing, and aluminium bonded windows which are totally out of keeping with the character of the oldest and finest building in an incoherent part of Headington.
- Much of the public amenity of the small wooded parkland provided by the childrens playground and the lovely old stone wall has been destroyed by earlier, closely related planning applications which in my view were granted in clear breach of planning policies.
- The lovely stone wall, replaced by ugly Council estate boundary treatments was an inherent part of the character of the building.
- A computer generated 3D image of the North/London Roadside is noticeable by its absence in the application this should be required before it can proceed so an accurate assessment of the proposed extension can be formed.
- The application is invalid as no Heritage report has been undertaken. The English Heritage report was based only on searched for registered (HER, Designated assets), earlier applications did not consider the loss of the heritage assets at all.
- The planning history of the site is relevant to this application as it touches on the balance between conservation of heritage assets (PPS5) and presumption of consent, and the total damage done to the heritage asset.
- The undoing or remediation of the damage done already to the front of the property, by removal of the ugly close-boarded fence, or possibly dressing all in stone (not just the caps) and replacement of the close boarded fence with visually permeable iron railings or wall plantings, would do much to redress this balance.

### **Statutory and Internal Consultees:**

English Heritage Commission: The application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of the Councils specialist conservation advice.

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority

In view of the above comments, the LHA has no objections to the proposed development subject to the inclusion of the following conditions:

- School Travel Plan to be updated if proposed extension will result in an increase in pupil numbers.
- Construction Travel Plan to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development.
- Drainage details (surface water and foul drainage) to be submitted to LPA for approval prior to the commencement of development
- Development to be SUDS compliant.
- No surface water from the development shall be discharged onto the adjacent public highway.

Thames Water Utilities Limited: No objection

Environment Agency Thames Region: No objection

Thames Valley Police: No objection to the proposal

**Issues:**

- Principle of development
- Visual impact
- Impact upon adjoining properties
- Highway Matters
- Trees
- Biodiversity
- Other matters

**Officers Assessment:**

Site Location and Description:

1. The site is located on the southern side of London Road and is bordered by the residential properties of London Road and Latimer Road to the east, and Brookside to the west and south (**site plan: appendix 1**)
2. The site comprises the Headington Preparatory School and school grounds which have occupied the site since 1916. The main school building is a two-storey building originally built as a residential dwelling 'Brookside' in 1880 by Wilkinson and Moore. A number of other school buildings within the site have been added over the past 94 years.
3. The site is accessed from the London Road, with a parking area separating the building from the street. A small area of woodland is located to the north-west, which provides the recreation area for the school. The trees within the grounds are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

Proposal:

4. The proposal is seeking planning permission for a number of alterations and

extensions to the school buildings in order to provide approximately 1122m<sup>2</sup> of additional teaching accommodation.

5. These works would include the construction of a two-storey entrance foyer; the extension of the current hall to accommodate the kitchen; the addition of 3 new classrooms, 2 music practice rooms, a hall, office storage and toilets on the first floor over the existing accommodation; two-storey extension to provide cloakroom; and new entrance lobby at the rear with canopy over the library.
6. The scheme has been amended since it was originally submitted with alterations made to the two-storey entrance foyer and the provision of chimneys on the roof of the first floor extension.

### Principle of Development

7. Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy requires development to be focussed upon previously developed land. While Policy CP6 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 requires development proposals to make an efficient use of land in a manner where the built form suits the sites capacity.
8. The general principle of extending and remodelling the existing school buildings in order to improve the teaching accommodation for the school, would be consistent with the aims and objectives of these policies.

### Visual Impact

9. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development to demonstrate high-quality urban design responding appropriately to the site and surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; contributing to an attractive public realm; and providing high quality architecture. Policy CP1 of the Local Plan requires new development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP8 emphasising the need to ensure that development relates to its context and the siting, massing and design to create an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain and scale of the surrounding area.
10. PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment expects proposals to be based upon an informed analysis of the significance of a heritage asset and expects applicants to understand the impacts of any proposal with the objective being to preserve that significance. The school and its grounds are not listed or within a conservation area, and there is no formal adopted list of Buildings of Local Interest. Therefore as defined by PPS5, they would not constitute a designated heritage asset. Notwithstanding this, the guidance does recognise that heritage assets can be identified by local authorities during the process of decision-making reflecting their value to the quality of the historic environment. Having considered the application, officers are of the view that the building and its grounds would be considered a heritage asset. The main building was designed by Wilkinson and Moore in 1880, who are architects of importance to the city. The house and its grounds are evidence of the historic development of the local area and important to the character and significance of the London Road. The long history of the site's association with Headington School has also been noted as an aspect of its

historic and architectural interest contributing to its significance. Therefore the impact of the proposal upon this asset is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

11. A 'Heritage Impact Statement' has been submitted during the application process. This concludes that the historic interest of the original building and quality of its setting have been compromised by the extensions and ancillary school buildings that have been added, and that the parking area to the front and the small woodland area restricts views into the site from the London Road. Officers would not necessarily agree with these conclusions, and consider that the original building and the landscape character of the grounds have not been compromised to the extent suggested. As a result, officers would not rely on the findings of this document in considering this or future applications.
12. The main part of the proposed alterations would consist of first floor extensions to the accommodation that lie to the west and rear of the original house, which are then linked by a two-storey glazed entrance foyer. These extensions, whilst relatively large, would maintain the diminution of scale that allows the oldest part of the building to remain prominent within the site, and the gable end of the resultant building to the west would have a scale of detailing that complements the gables within the original house. The size and scale of the two-storey glazed entrance foyer has been reduced since it was originally submitted and now sits more comfortably between the two built elements. The glazed link and the first floor extension to the west are set back from the frontage of the original building, which restricts views from the public realm and would not detract from the importance of the original house. In addition, the proposal would retain the function of the original main entrance to the house and includes the removal of a fire escape from the main frontage, which would result in a minor enhancement to the façade of the building and its visual relationship with the London Road. The rest of the alterations to the building, such as the entrance lobby with canopy to the library and the two-storey extension to provide cloakrooms, are modest in scale and would not have a significant impact upon the building.
13. Therefore officers consider that the proposed alterations would be of a size and scale that would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the original house, and sited in a manner that maintains the importance of this building within the setting of the site. As a result the proposal would preserve the local significance of this heritage asset, and its value to the quality of the character and appearance of the London Road and surrounding area. This would accord with the aims and objectives of PPS5, and the above-mentioned development plan policies.

#### Impact upon Adjoining Properties

14. The Council seeks to safeguard the amenities of properties surrounding proposed development as new development can block light, have an overbearing effect and overlook adjoining properties. Policy HS19 states that development should protect the privacy or amenity of existing residential properties, specifically in terms of potential for overlooking into habitable rooms, sense of enclosure, overbearing impact and sunlight and daylight standards. This is also supported

through Policy CP10

15. The school grounds are bordered by private residential properties of London Road, Latimer Road, and Brookside to the east, south and west respectively along with the amenity area of the St Lukes Nursing Home which runs along the southern boundary. The existing school buildings are already of a significant scale. However, considering the orientation of these extensions and their relationship to the adjoining properties, officers consider that the proposed extensions would not have an adverse impact upon these adjoining residential properties in terms of sense of enclosure, overbearing impact or loss of light.
16. Although there would be first floor windows serving the two music rooms to the rear of the site, officers consider that these would not give rise to any significant loss of privacy given the relationship that already exists between the school and this site. The proposal would not create any adverse overlooking issues for any other properties.

#### Highway Matters

17. The proposal will increase the amount of academic accommodation for the school, but according to the application form this will not result in an increase in staff numbers. The number of pupils at the school are capped at 280 (by legal agreement), as part of the planning permission for the foundation stage building and the applicant has confirmed that there is no intention to expand this figure as a result of the extensions. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal.
18. A construction travel plan has been submitted in support of the application, with a drawing that shows the likely vehicle and pedestrian routes into the site. This also includes the position of the contractor's compound within the site and the designated entrances for pedestrians into both the main and foundation stage buildings, separating them from the construction traffic. The Local Highways Authority have indicated that this Travel Plan would not meet their required standards and would recommend that a condition be attached requiring a revised Construction Traffic Management Plan to be submitted.
19. A condition should also be attached requiring further details of the drainage for the scheme to ensure that there is a sustainable urban drainage scheme in place.

#### Trees:

20. The proposed extensions will not have any implications for any of the significant trees within the school grounds which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
21. The existing tree protection measures that are in place in association with the other developments on site, and as shown on the submitted tree location and constraints plan are considered adequate tree protection measures. These could be secured by condition.

### Biodiversity:

22. The existing roofs of buildings within the site appear to be in a good condition, and as such would be unlikely to be used by bats. However, due to the location and scale of the proposed development there would be scope to provide biodiversity enhancements as required by Policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026. Therefore a condition should be attached which requires the provision of bat and bird boxes in the design of the building.

### Other Matters:

23. During the consultation process comments have been made about the impact of the recently constructed boundary wall along the London Road frontage. It is suggested that any permission should be subject to a condition that requires this wall to be removed or remodelled.

24. The wall has already been granted planning permission under reference number 10/01541/FUL, and therefore this application is not an opportunity to revisit this previous permission. The wall would not constitute a material planning consideration for the determination of this application.

### **Conclusion:**

25. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the adopted Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore officer's recommendation is to approve.

### **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.



**Contact Officer:** Andrew Murdoch

**Extension:** 2228

**Date:** 9th March 2012

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