

East Area Planning Committee

9th October 2012

Application Number: 12/01787/FUL

Decision Due by: 1st November 2012

Proposal: 3 storey extension to existing building to provide replacement accommodation for science, ICT and business enterprise, sixth form and assembly hall, with associated landscaping and replacement parking including demolition of the existing science block. Ancillary works to provide single story extension WC extension to existing art block and single storey extension to sports changing rooms. (Amended description)

Site Address: The Oxford Spires Academy Glanville Road (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Cowley Marsh Ward

Agent: Mr S Ward

Applicant: CFBT Schools Trust

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 extensions and alterations would be of a size and scale that would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the original school grounds and the character and appearance of the 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, trees, or biodiversity. The proposed development would therefore accord with the relevant national planning policy and policies of the current development plan. No third party objections have been received.
- 2 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 carry out by completion
- 6 Travel Plan
- 7 Details of Cycle Parking
- 8 Details of Parking Areas
- 9 Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme
- 10 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 11 Arch - Implementation of programme
- 12 Details of Energy Efficiency Measures
- 13 Details of Biodiversity Enhancements

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
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11** - Landscape Design
- CP13** - Accessibility
- CP18** - Natural Resource Impact Analysis
- CP19** - Nuisance
- CP20** - Lighting
- CP21** - Noise
- TR1** - Transport Assessment
- TR2** - Travel Plans
- TR3** - Car Parking Standards
- TR4** - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- NE15** - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows
- HE10** - View Cones of Oxford
- SR2** - Protection of Open Air Sports Facilities

Core Strategy

- CS2_** - Previously developed and greenfield land
- CS18_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment
- CS9_** - Energy and natural resources
- CS12_** - Biodiversity
- CS13_** - Supporting access to new development
- CS19_** - Community safety
- CS21_** - Green spaces, leisure and sport
- CS16_** - Access to education

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Site History:

The site has an extensive planning history with the most relevant applications as follows:

00/00367/DF - Demolition of existing garage and cycle store. Construction of new art studio and replacement cycle parking: Approved

01/01003/DF - Demolition of existing music room and associated buildings, erection of new 3 storey classroom block and single storey extension to link with existing building. New hard play area. Additional 15 new parking spaces (73 in total): Raised objection / County Council Approved

Representations Received:

None

Statutory and Internal Consultees:

Thames Water Utilities Limited: No objection

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority: No objection, comments reported in the Highways Matters section of the report.

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description

1. The application site is situated at the northern side of Barracks Lane at the junction with Glanville Road on the edge of a built-up residential area. It is bordered to the south-west by Barracks Lane, Herbert Close to the north-west, and Southfield Golf Club to the north-east (**site plan: appendix 1**)
2. The site comprises the Oxford Spires Academy and its grounds which is a secondary school formerly known as Oxford School. The majority of the school buildings and teaching accommodation is within the south-western corner, with the remainder of the grounds taken up by open space in the form of recreation grounds and sports fields. The site is has two vehicular accesses onto Barracks Lane.

Proposal

3. The proposal is seeking permission for a number of works to the existing academic accommodation as part of a refurbishment programme for the Oxford Spires Academy. These works include the following:
 - The renovation and erection of a three-storey extension to the existing I.T./Business block to provide accommodation for Science, I.T. & Business Enterprise, Sixth Form, and a new Assembly Space to seat 330 students.
 - The demolition of the existing science block and replacement with a landscaped courtyard

- Small scale extension of the sports hall changing rooms
 - The addition of a link between the existing Art Block and Main Reception Building
 - Replacement car parking facilities
4. In addition the refurbishment programme would also involve a number of internal alterations to other buildings throughout the site. These internal alterations do not require planning permission and therefore are not subject to this application.
 5. Officers consider that the principle determining issues with regards to the proposal are as follows:
 - Principle of development
 - Educational Need
 - Form and appearance
 - Impact upon adjoining properties
 - Archaeology
 - NRA
 - Biodiversity
 - Trees.

Principle of Development

6. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the efficient use of previously developed land. This is supported by Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy.
7. The general principle of extending and remodelling the existing school buildings in order to improve and reorganise the academic accommodation would be consistent with the aims and objectives of these policies.

Educational Need

8. The Oxford Core Strategy makes clear in Policy CS16 that the Council will seek to improve access to all levels of education, through new or improved facilities, throughout Oxford.
9. The proposal will demolish the existing science block, and extend the existing I.T. / Business Block to provide a new building which would accommodate Science, I.T. & Business Enterprise, Sixth Form, and a new Assembly Space to seat 330 students.
10. The proposal would improve the overall quality of the teaching accommodation by providing modern facilities which will serve the educational needs of students in the Cowley Area and enable the Academy to further development is recent academic improvements. This would accord with the aims of Policy CS16 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

Form and Appearance

11. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development proposals to demonstrate high-quality urban design which responds appropriately to the site and surroundings, and creates a strong sense of place while contributing to an attractive public realm and providing high quality architecture. Policy CP1 of the Local Plan also requires 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.
12. The refurbishment programme includes a number of works to the existing accommodation, with the main element under this planning permission comprising the demolition of the existing science block and the erection of a three-storey extension to the existing I.T. / Business block. The removal of the existing science block would not have a negative impact upon the school grounds considering it is a rather tired looking building. A landscaped courtyard would be provided in its place which would establish a central hub for the campus linking the main academic buildings together and improving the general permeability through the site which in urban design terms would be welcomed.
13. The existing I.T./Business Block is a large three-storey building which would lend itself to a sizeable extension given the space that exists between the western elevation and the main school buildings that front onto the main entrance. The three-storey extension would fill this space, and in terms of size and scale has been designed as three separate blocks of varying height. The main parts would be three-storey, while the Assembly Hall element is two-storey in order to reduce the perception of the increased bulk of the host building. The whole building would then be provided with a more modern appearance with a brick plinth and white rendered finish with larger windows and vertical louvers. The Assembly Hall would be finished in a different type of cladding, in order to distinguish this part of the building and provide a prominent feature which addresses the main entrance to the school grounds and providing a legible entrance for visitors to the school, community use, and also academy branding.
14. The other ancillary works to the school grounds would involve a small glazed link and extension between the Art block and Main Reception building, and small scale extension of the sports hall changing rooms. These would be minor alterations that would not have a significant impact upon the visual appearance of their host buildings.
15. Officers consider that the size, scale, siting, and design of the proposed extension would create an appropriate visual relationship with the existing buildings within the school grounds and also the wider street scene of Barracks Lane and Glanville Road. As such officers consider that the proposal would accord with the aims of the design policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Impact upon adjoining properties

16. 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.
17. There are residential properties on the southern side of Barracks Lane, but while they are opposite side of the entrance to the school they are some distance from the proposed extension to the I.T. / Business Block. The distance is sufficient to ensure that the proposed extension to the block would not give rise to any loss of amenity to these properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact. The same would be said for the residential properties of Reliance Way that lie further to the south of the site on the opposite side of the Barracks Lane footpath.

Highway Matters

18. The Academy is situated on a busy residential road and is well located for access to pedestrian and cycle routes along with regular bus services on the Cowley Road. There is a vehicular access to the Academy opposite Glanville Road with no segregation of pedestrians who may use this access and vehicle entry for access to the car park. There is segregation of vehicles and pedestrians at the vehicle exit to the south of the Academy. There is a traffic free cycle route (which forms part of a longer distance cycle route) which is street lit and connects residential areas from the north and south to the Academy
19. The proposal would increase the gross floor area within the site, but not the number of students and staff on the site. The Local Highways Authority have indicated that the proposal would not have any impact on drop off and pick up trips by car where there is existing on-street parking pressure and parking is not controlled.
20. The site in general has approximately 120 car parking spaces on site, with an overflow area outside the sports hall. The proposal does not intend to increase the operational parking within the site, but instead reorganise the location of this parking. The level would therefore be maintained at 120 spaces which include disabled and visitors' spaces. The main bulk of parking will be relocated to the east of the site, and will enable the pedestrian and vehicular activity within the site to the benefit of the safety of students. The small area of parking would result in the loss of a small part of the open recreation space which would certainly be regrettable, however, this part of the field is currently underused and the benefits to the layout in terms of improved student safety would be welcomed.
21. The Academy encourage the staff and students to use alternative means of transport, however, the existing parking is well-used and any reduction of the spaces on site could lead to increased parking on-street in Glanville Road. The

School Travel Plan submitted as part of the application was produced in 2006/2007 and does not therefore include existing pupil numbers, predicted pupil numbers, modes of travel currently used by the students and staff and details of the current barriers to the use of healthy, sustainable modes of transport. An up-to date School Travel plan should be produced to include up-to date travel survey data (postcode and trip mode data for the Academy), a measurable set of targets, based on the survey data and an action plan to outline how the targets are going to be achieved. This should be secured by condition.

22. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal on highway grounds, subject to conditions requiring the provision of a construction traffic management plan; provision of cycle parking; details of the parking layout to ensure the spaces are to standard and identifying the disabled and visitors spaces; and a sustainable urban drainage scheme.

Archaeology

23. A geophysical survey report for this site has been prepared by Stratascan Ltd (2012). The report notes that the survey area was dominated by the presence of high levels of magnetic disturbance likely to have been caused by modern development and that the type of discrete elevated magnetic responses that one would anticipate from Roman kilns were not present. Two features in the eastern part of the study area were identified as of possible archaeological origin. In this case, bearing in mind the results of the survey and the previous archaeological evidence from the site. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework a condition should be attached requiring further archaeological work to be carried out. The archaeological investigation should take the form of a strip and record watching brief.

NRIA

24. An Energy Statement by Ridge Property Consultants has been submitted as required by Local Plan Policy CP18 and Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy, and the NRIA Supplementary Planning Document.
25. The energy statement states that proposal will utilise a combination of passive measures, air source heat pump heating and cooling and electricity generation through the use of photovoltaic cells. The measures will result in a 13% improvement in emissions over those required by Part L of the Building Regulations 2010 rather than the improvements over 2006 emissions coupled with 20% renewable generation. Therefore officers would raise no objection to this aspect of the proposal. A condition should be attached requiring these details to be carried out.

Biodiversity

26. There is scope for biodiversity enhancements, both due to the scale of the site and development and opportunities because the site is next to the golf course and near to Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh nature areas, and is in an area of high water table. A condition should be attached which obtains some improvements

such as the landscaping to include native species; and the use of bat and bird boxes in the building, including bird boxes for larger birds like swifts and house martins.

Trees

27. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared for the site by SJ Stephens Associates. This assessment concludes that 13 trees would need to be removed as part of the proposal. It is intended that 5 of these trees will be relocated on the site, with the remainder removed. Apart from the trees that are to be relocated on site, the only tree of significant landscape value to be removed would be a Weeping Willow.

28. Having reviewed the assessment, the Oxford City Council Tree Officer would raise no objection to the proposal. The trees to be removed have no public amenity value beyond the site, and would not alter the existing tree coverage on the boundary to the site. The loss of these trees could be mitigated by an appropriate landscaping scheme which seeks suitable locations for the relocated trees and also suitable replacement planting. This could be secured by condition.

Conclusion:

29. 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 to the Members of the East Area Planning Committee is to approve the development.

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: 18th September 2012