

West Area Planning Committee

7th November 2012

Application Number: (1)12/01999/CAC

(2) 12/01997/FUL

Decision Due by: 26th September 2012

Proposal: (1) Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of existing biology lab, prep room, lean to workshop and store, sheds and 2 domestic greenhouses

(2) Demolition of existing biology lab, prep room, lean to workshop and store, sheds and 2 domestic greenhouses and erection of new 6 classroom block, workshop and store

Site Address: 139 Banbury Road Oxford (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: St Margarets Ward

Agent: Ms Joelle Darby

Applicant: Ms Paula Holloway

Recommendation:

The West Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve conservation area consent and 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 removal of the existing outbuildings within the site would not have a detrimental impact upon the visual amenity of the site or the Conservation Area. The size, scale, and siting of the proposed development would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form and grain of the site and the surrounding area, while also respecting the significance of the historical context of the site and the special character and appearance of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The development has 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. No third party representations 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 in Conservation Area
- 4 Further details of windows and rooflight
- 5 Landscape plan required
- 6 Landscape carry out by completion
- 7 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 8 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 9 Amenity windows obscure glass
- 10 Implementation of Drainage Scheme
- 11 Details of Sustainability Measures

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
- HE7
- 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:

National Planning Policy Framework

This application is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.

Relevant Site History:

The site has an extensive planning history those of most relevance to the application are as follows:

94/00615/NFH - 3 portable buildings at rear (fronting Lathbury Road) for a temporary period to provide alternative lecture rooms whilst work is in progress: Approved

94/00899/NFH - Insertion of roof lights, new window in flank wall, external fire escape stair, relating to conversion of roof space to provide 2 additional classrooms (Amended plans): Approved

07/02437/FUL - Erection of lean-to store extension and rear workshop and storage building (St Clare's College): Approved

10/02422/EXT - Erection of lean-to store extension and rear workshop and storage building (application for new planning permission to replace extant permission): Approved

11/02953/FUL - Demolition of existing biology lab, prep room, lean to workshop, store and two domestic greenhouses. Erection of a new 6 classroom block, workshop and store: Withdrawn

11/02980/CAC - Conservation area consent for demolition of existing biology lab, prep room, lean to workshop, store, sheds and 2 domestic greenhouses: Withdrawn

Representations Received:

None

Statutory Consultees:

None

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The site is located on the western side of Banbury Road close to the junction with Lathbury Road which forms the southern boundary to the site. To the north lie the properties of Moreton Road, and Banbury Road and Lathbury Road to the west (**site plan: appendix 1**). The site is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.
2. The site comprises the main site of St Clares College which is made up of the main three storey Victorian buildings which front onto Banbury Road (nos.139-143) and a number of outbuildings that are sited to the rear which provide teaching accommodation.

Proposal

3. The proposal is seeking conservation area consent for the demolition of existing biology lab, prep room, lean-to workshop and store, sheds and 2 domestic greenhouses within the rear of the campus.

4. Planning permission is then sought for the erection of a two-storey block along the northern edge of the site to provide a new 6 classroom block, science and preparation room for 12-15 pupils. With a one-and-a-half storey building on the western edge to form a workshop, store, and office which is accessed from Lathbury Road.
5. The submitted scheme has been developed following the withdrawal of applications 11/02953/FUL & 11/02980/CAC and as a result of further pre-application discussions with officers and local residents to overcome initial concerns with the scheme.
6. Officers consider that the principle determining issues with regards to the proposal are as follows:
 - Principle of development
 - Educational Need
 - Impact upon the Heritage Asset
 - Impact upon adjoining properties
 - Accessibility
 - Biodiversity
 - Drainage
 - Trees.

Principle of Development

7. The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] encourages the effective use of previously developed land. This is supported by Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
8. The general principle of remodelling the existing buildings within the already built up main campus in order to improve the available academic accommodation, would be consistent with the aims and objectives of these policies.

Educational Need

9. Policy CS16 of the Oxford Core Strategy makes clear that the Council will seek to improve access to all levels of education, through new or improved facilities, throughout Oxford.
10. The college has undertaken a review of their accommodation and identified a need to improve the existing teaching facilities as many are located in mixed teaching / residential spaces in different buildings throughout the area. The proposal would provide 3 dedicated science classrooms with a preparation room, secure chemical store, and student projects store on ground floor level with 3 general classrooms and office on the upper floor. In addition a maintenance workshop, office and store, will be provided in the west wing which is accessed from Lathbury Road in order to provide a more rational servicing arrangement for college.
11. The proposal would improve the overall quality of accommodation by providing modern facilities which serve the educational need of the students, enabling the college to reduce the amount of mixed teaching / residential accommodation within

their range of properties. This would accord with the aims of Policy CS16 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

12. The site is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The National Planning Policy Framework requires proposals to be based upon an informed analysis of the significance of any affected heritage asset and expects applicants to understand the impact of any proposal upon the asset with the objective being to preserve that significance. These aims are embodied in Local Plan Policy HE7 which seeks to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area or its setting.
13. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 require proposals to demonstrate high-quality urban design that responds appropriately to the site and surroundings; creates a strong sense of place; contributes to an attractive public realm; and high quality architecture. The Local Plan encourages new development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP1 central to this purpose. Policy CP8 requires development to relate to its context with the siting, massing and design creating an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain and scale of the surrounding area.
14. The proposal relates primarily to the buildings at the rear of the site, with the main Victorian buildings on the Banbury Road frontage unaltered. To the rear there are a collection of outbuildings which as stated in the design and access statement establish a disparate group of buildings. The proposal is seeking conservation area consent for the demolition of the existing biology lab, prep room, lean-to workshop and store, sheds and 2 domestic greenhouses within the rear of the campus. There would be no objection to the removal of these buildings.
15. The new buildings will be sited along the northern and western edges of the site in order to make best use of the available space to the rear of the campus and provide a more coherent layout for the buildings. The new classroom building will be two-storey with a maximum height of 6.5m that lowers to 6m at the boundary with 145 Banbury Road. The overall scale of the building would be no larger than the other two-storey academic buildings within the rear of the main site. The scale would be broken up further by setting the first floor element back 2m from the boundary with 145 Banbury Road and the use of bay 'clerestory' windows and different materials as scale breaking devices. The new classroom building is considered to be of an appropriate size and scale for the site. Although there are views of the rear of this site from the public realm of Lathbury Road and Moreton Road the size and scale of the building would not have a negative impact upon these views and represent an improvement on the withdrawn scheme (11/02953/FUL). With regards to the single storey workshop element to the north and west, this would have lean-to roof that slopes down towards the boundary and again is of an appropriate scale for the site.
16. In terms of architectural detailing the new classroom has been designed as a garden building which faces into the site, providing the opportunity for a landscaped courtyard between the main frontage buildings and the Sugar house

café. The use of bay windows and the glazed link on the northern and eastern boundary provide some architectural interest to the building softening the appearance. It is intended that the building will use a palette of materials such as sweet chestnut horizontal timber cladding which will weather to a silvery grey; red/brown zinc roof to relate to the colour of bricks within this part of the conservation area and zinc wraps over the bays on the northern façade.

17. As a result officers consider that the proposed development would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form and grain of the site and the surrounding area, while also respecting the significance of the historical context of the site and the special character and appearance of the conservation area. This would accord with Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2026, and Policies CP1, CP6, CP8, CP10, and HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Impact upon Adjoining Properties

18. 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.
19. The site is bordered by the properties of 145 Banbury Road and 1 Moreton Road to the north, and 2 Lathbury Road to the west. It is understood that these properties are all within the ownership of Williams College with 145 Banbury Road and 2 Lathbury Road in use as student accommodation, and 1 Moreton Road the principal's house. The college has not objected to the proposal. Although the proposed classroom building would introduce a two-storey building adjacent to the boundary with 145 Banbury Road and 1 Moreton Road, it is considered that this would not have a particularly overbearing impact upon the rear gardens of the properties given the overall size of the gardens themselves. In addition a sunlight and daylight study has been submitted with the application which indicates that there would not be a significant loss of light to these properties from the proposal. Similarly the single storey nature of the proposed workshop on the western edge will not have an adverse impact upon the adjoining property at 2 Lathbury Road.
20. In terms of overlooking, the proposal will introduce first floor bay windows and a glazed link at first floor level which could lead to some loss of privacy for the adjoining properties at 145 Banbury Road and 1 Moreton Road. These windows have been designed to angle any glazing away from the properties to avoid any impact, and the plans indicate that this would be obscure glazed. A condition should be attached to secure this obscure glazing.

Trees

21. The proposal is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report prepared by Sarah Venners. The Tree Survey indicates that 4 trees (Norway Maple, Ash, 2x Purple Leaved Plum) will need to be removed from the site in order to facilitate the

development but these are not significant trees and as such there would be no objection to their removal.

22. There are a number of trees within the site that are of good quality and should be retained as part of the proposal these include an Ash, Horse Chestnut, Lawson Cypress, Weeping Willow, Laburnum, and a Laurel. The report sets out the tree protection measures that will be in place to protect these trees through the construction process. A condition should be attached to ensure that these measures are carried out as set out within the report.
23. In addition, there is a group of Lawson Cypress trees within 1 Moreton Road that screen the rear boundary. The owners of the site (William College) have made clear in their representations in the Design and Access Statement that this screen should be maintained. The Tree Survey has considered the impact of the proposal upon this group of trees and indicates that it is likely that some of the roots will have encroached into the site. It goes on to state that the foundations for the boundary wall will likely have restricted significant root spread into the site and that the trees will tolerate some disturbance and any root severance that is likely to occur from the construction of the foundations. The report concludes that any excavation adjacent to the root protection area of these trees will require supervision and appropriate techniques to minimise disturbance. A condition should be attached which secures this supervision and appropriate techniques to avoid adverse impact upon the belt of trees in the adjoining property.

Accessibility

24. The classrooms will be fully accessible with level access from the external areas into the new building and throughout the ground floor. There will be a part M compliant WC provided on the ground floor of the new block.

Biodiversity

25. The Oxford City Council Biodiversity Officer has conducted a site visit and considered that of the buildings to be demolished two were unsuitable for bat roosts, while the third was very well maintained with no holes or gaps suitable for bat entry. As such it is considered that bats are not likely to be affected by the development.

Drainage

26. A Preliminary Drainage Design Report by Price & Myers has been submitted with the application setting out the proposals to deal with surface and foul water drainage for the scheme. A condition should be attached which requires this drainage scheme to be carried out

Sustainability

27. The Design and Access Statement by Berman Guedes Stretton states that the proposal has been designed in line with good environmental practice, making best use of passive means of energy conservation which achieve higher than

recommended 'U' values along with the specification of plant and fittings which maximise energy efficiency. The scheme will also propose a ventilation strategy which maximises natural ventilation; make provision for rainwater harvesting and storage'; utilise a number of low-zero carbon technologies; and use responsibly sourced materials.

Conclusion:

28. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore Members of the West Area Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission for the proposed 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: 25th October 2012