

**West Area Planning Committee**

14 March 2012

**Application Number:** 12/00179/FUL

**Decision Due by:** 26 April 2012

**Proposal:** Erection of new three storey boarding house and associated external works including a new car park and landscaping.

**Site Address:** Sports Field St Edward's School Woodstock Road Oxford.  
Site plan at **Appendix 1**.

**Ward:** Summertown Ward

**Agent:** TSH Architects

**Applicant:**

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**Recommendation:** West Area Planning Committee is recommended to grant planning permission for the above application.

For the following reasons:

- 1 The proposed boarding house is considered to form an appropriate visual relationship with the existing building on the site and its surroundings. The proposal involves the loss of one significant mature lime tree, one mature yew tree and other shrub and hedging vegetation. The impacts are considered to be acceptable in scale and can be adequately mitigated through replacement tree planting under landscape conditions. The major landscape trees standing along the Woodstock Road boundary are unaffected by the proposal.
- 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.
- 3 Officers have considered carefully all objections to these proposals. Officers have come to the view, for the detailed reasons set out in the officers report, that the objections do not amount, individually or cumulatively, to a reason for refusal and that all the issues that have been raised have been adequately addressed and the relevant bodies consulted.

subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plns

- 3 Materials as specified
- 4 Updated Travel Plan
- 5 New Access Construction
- 6 Landscape Hard Surface Design - Tree Roots
- 7 Landscape Underground Services - Tree Roots
- 8 Tree Protection Plan (TPP)
- 9 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)
- 10 No Felling, Lopping, Cutting
- 11 Landscape Plan Required
- 12 Landscape Carry Out By Completion
- 13 Contamination - phased risk assessment
- 14 Solar panel details

**Local Development Framework Documents:**

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 (OLP)

- 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
- TR3 - Car Parking Standards
- TR4 - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows
- NE16 - Protected Trees
- SR2 - Protection of Open Air Sports Facilities

Core Strategy (OCS)

- CS9 - Energy and natural resources
- CS16 - Access to education
- CS18 - Urban design, town character, historic environment

Housing DPD – Proposed Submission (SHDPD)

- HP5 - Location of Student Accommodation
- HP6 - Affordable Housing from Student Accommodation

**NB:** The City Council has recently approved the Site and Housing Development Plan Document (SHDPD) which will now go out to consultation before examination by an Inspector. It forms part of Oxford's Development Framework and although not adopted it does carry weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

**Other Material Considerations:**

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

### **Relevant Site History:**

08/00045/FUL - Erection of single storey building to provide a new sports pavilion. PER 26th February 2008.

08/01759/FUL - Erection of single storey detached sports pavilion. Creation of a grassed mount, erection of new store board, ramped access to rear of pavilion and stepped access to the front. PER 10th October 2008.

09/02543/FUL - Erection of replacement fence along Woodstock Road. PER 19th January 2010.

10/02393/FUL - Single storey rear extension and new roof to existing cricket pavilion. PER 29th October 2010.

11/00200/FUL - Erection of a purpose made cricket score board. (Amended plans). PER 16th March 2011.

### **Representations Received:**

None

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

Thames Water: no objections

Highway Authority: no objections subject to a condition requiring an updated travel plan and new access being constructed prior to construction associated with the new building.

Environment Agency Thames Region: the application is deemed to have a low environmental risk

The Victorian Group Oxfordshire Architectural and Historic Society: overdevelopment of the site, Woodstock Road elevation is not satisfactory it is clumsy and would not contribute to the amenity of the street.

Thames Valley Police: there are opportunities to design out crime and promote community safety and an informative is requested.

### **Officers Assessment:**

#### **Site Description**

1. St Edwards School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 13-18. It was founded in 1863 at New Inn Hall Street in Oxford. However in 1873 the school moved to its present site on the Woodstock Road. In 1982 the first girl joined the School in the Lower Sixth and the School became fully co-educational in 1997. Currently there are about 660 pupils in the School, of whom two thirds are boys and about 80% boarders.
2. The application site comprises an area of St Edwards School to the front of Corfe House on the western side of Woodstock Road. The site is currently occupied by a tennis court. **Appendix 1** refers.

#### **Proposal**

3. The application seeks permission for the erection of a boarding house providing 24 en-suite rooms, a house mistress house, house tutors flat,

matrons flat and graduate teachers accommodation and other ancillary accommodation. The proposal will mainly occupy what is currently a tennis court which is rarely used since the school has artificial turf courts within the grounds.

**Issues:**

4. Officers consider the principal determining issues in this case to be:
- Protected open air sports facilities
  - Design
  - Highways
  - Trees
  - Archaeology
  - Sustainability

**Assessment**

**Protected Open Air Sports Facilities**

5. The scheme sits slightly on an area of Protected Open Air Sports Facilities as identified within the OLP. In this respect policy SR2 applies. This states planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in the loss of open air sports facilities, including school playing fields, where there is a need for the facility to be retained in its current location.
6. The actual school playing field will not be affected by the development and given the narrow strip that has to be given over to facilitate the proposal officers would raise no objection to the loss of the small strip of land protected by policy SR2. The loss of the tennis court can be accepted on this occasion as they are little used as the school has a good supply of other tennis facilities elsewhere on the site.

**Design**

7. Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy (CS) states that planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high quality urban design. This is reiterated in policies CP1 and CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan (OLP). Policy CP1 states that planning permission will only be granted for development that respects the character and appearance of the area and which uses materials of a quality appropriate to the nature of the development, the site and its surroundings.
8. Policy CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 suggests the siting, massing and design of the proposed development creates an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain, scale, materials and details of the surrounding area. It also stated building design is specific to the site and its context and should respect, without necessarily replicating, local characteristics, and should not rule out innovative design.
9. The proposed building is over three floors with a rear wing which creates an

“L” shaped building and forms a courtyard with Corfe House. The main wing has a glazed atrium in the middle. The south elevation has a row of glazing at ground floor which serves communal areas which face onto the sports field. Whilst the building is three storeys in height the third storey rooms are in the roof space served dormer windows.

10. Materials proposed are a combination of brick and ashlar stone. Stone is proposed for the field elevation and the house mistress house. The brickwork will consist of a buff brick instead of the more commonly used red brick at the school in order to blend with the adjacent building, Kendal House. Zinc has been chosen for the roof to match Kendal House.
11. Whilst the proposal is contemporary in design it does have some traditional elements for example the gable end that is the house mistress's house, which is the most prominent view when traveling up the Woodstock Road. The use of materials reflects the main existing buildings on the site and the proposal is not dissimilar to the adjacent Kendal House building in its style and use of materials. The proposed building is set apart from the more tradition red brick building of Corfe House by the courtyard which contains the car parking area. Given the separation from Corfe House the proposal will not have a negative impact on it.
12. It is therefore the officers' opinion that the proposed boarding house respects the character and appearance of the area and uses materials of an appropriate nature to the development, the site and its surroundings. It respects the local characteristics in a modern form.

## Highways

13. 8 car parking spaces will be provided which it is claimed formalis the existing informal parking layout. The existing vehicular access (between brick piers) from the Woodstock Road will be widened to 4.5m and the gates set back about 7.0m from the boundary. This is required for construction traffic but in the long term will also allow visiting vehicles to wait off the highway for the gates to open. Widening of the access will also provide better inter- visibility especially between exiting vehicles and cycles.
14. The design and access statement suggests that traffic generation will be minimal with the students being boarders and home visits taking place every 3 weeks. The traffic generated from this is likely to be off peak e.g. Sunday evening. The design and access statement suggests that the travel plan will be updated to take account of the current proposal and a condition is suggested by the Highway Authority for an updated travel plan accordingly.

## Trees

15. The site is outside of any conservation areas and there are currently no Tree Preservation Orders on any trees in the area involved in the application site. However, trees on the site are important where they contribute to the canopy cover adorning the Woodstock Road, which is one of the main arterial routes

into the city. The generally contiguous tree cover along the road is particularly significant in terms of the appearance and character of Woodstock Road and the wider city.

16. The proposed footprint of the boarding house would occupy a space south of Corfe House. This requires the removal of small trees and shrubs making up a line of boundary vegetation along the edge of the sports fields. The loss of this vegetation is not considered a significant impact and may be adequately mitigated by appropriate replacement planting.
17. More significantly, a mature yew is also lost but this is not visible from public views outside of the site. A mature lime tree is also proposed to be removed. The individual value of the lime is moderately high, being an attractive tree that makes a positive contribution to the landscape quality of this part of the school campus. It is also visible to a limited degree from the Woodstock Road but its significance to wider public visual amenity is much less.
18. Other trees of importance intended for retention are close to the proposed development, especially trees along the western side of the building. It should be possible to retain them however without serious risk of damage or injury providing that appropriate tree protection measures are employed throughout the construction process. These could be secured through conditions.
19. The application includes an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) which contains site specific measures to avoid physical injury to trees including protection of the retained trees Root Protection Areas. This document is considered to provide an adequate technical information base for site tree protection and again this can be given weight by condition.

### **Archaeology**

20. This site is of interest because it is located adjacent to parch marks identified by aerial survey which suggest the presence of either Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age monuments and/or later prehistoric or Roman enclosures on the St Edward's School sports field. Previous investigations 180m to the south of the application site have produced evidence for later Roman occupation in this area.
21. Based on the available evidence and the scale of the proposed development, an archaeological field evaluation report was submitted as part of the application. Officers considered archaeological evaluation report for this site to be satisfactory and based on the results of the evaluation officers would not request any further archaeological work in relation be required.

### **Sustainability**

22. An environmental statement has been submitted with the application and describes how the proposed development aims to conserve energy. In summary the statement confirms that passive design features, such as the provision of high levels of thermal insulation and air-tightness shall be

incorporated to reduce the energy baseline of the development, energy efficient systems such as low energy lighting will be provided and solar thermal heating will be provided to meet a proportion of the hot water load. The proposed use of solar thermal has been calculated to reduce the overall annual energy use of the site by 10%. Officers consider these measure acceptable and in accordance with policy CS9 of the OCS.

### **Conclusion:**

For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised Officers conclude that the proposal accords with all the relevant polices within the development framework and therefore recommends approval as the proposed boarding house is considered to form an appropriate visual relationship with the existing building on the site and its surroundings. The proposal involves the loss of one significant mature lime tree, one mature yew tree and other shrub and hedging vegetation. The impacts are considered to be acceptable in scale and can be adequately mitigated through replacement tree planting under landscape conditions. The major landscape trees standing along the Woodstock Road boundary are unaffected by the proposal.

### **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:**

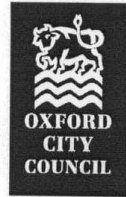
**Contact Officer:** Lisa Green

**Extension:** 2614

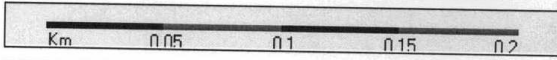
**Date:** 29 February 2012

# Appendix 1

## Sports Field St Edwards School



Scale : 1:2500



|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| Organisation | Not Set          |
| Department   | Not Set          |
| Comments     | Not Set          |
| Date         | 29 February 2012 |
| SLA Number   | Not Set          |

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