

**Application Number:** 13/02697/FUL

**Decision Due by:** 14th January 2014

**Proposal:** Removal of existing portacabin and temporary buildings. Extension to existing sports hall to provide dance studio and fitness suite. Provision of replacement car parking and external works.

**Site Address:** Headington School, Headington Road, Oxford (**site plan: appendix 1**)

**Ward:** Headington Hill And Northway

**Agent:** Mr Alan Divall

**Applicant:** Headington School

---

**Recommendation:**

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

**Reasons for Approval**

- 1 The proposed development would make an efficient and appropriate use of previously developed land in order to provide improved sports facilities for the school which meet modern day standards. 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 while also preserving and enhancing the significance of the Headington Hill Conservation 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, biodiversity, sustainability, or drainage and any such impact could be successfully mitigated by appropriate conditions. 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**

To include the following

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples in Conservation Area
- 4 Landscape plan required
- 5 Landscape carried out after completion
- 6 No felling lopping cutting of any trees
- 7 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 8 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 9 Details of construction plant storage on site
- 10 Details of parking area – including method of construction
- 11 Archaeology - Implementation of programme of investigation
- 12 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 13 Details of Biodiversity Enhancements
- 14 Details of Sustainability Measures
- 15 Ground resurfacing - SUDS compliant
- 16 Community use of facilities

## **Principal Planning 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
- HE3** - Listed Buildings and Their Setting
- HE7** - Conservation Areas
- HE10** - View Cones of Oxford
- NE15** - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows

### Core Strategy

- CS2\_** - Previously developed and greenfield land
- CS13\_** - Supporting access to new development
- CS16\_** - Access to education
- CS18\_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment
- CS21\_** - Green spaces, leisure and sport

### Other Planning Documents

National Planning Policy Framework  
Headington Hill Conservation Area Appraisal

## **Public Consultation**

### Statutory Consultees

#### Oxfordshire County Council

- Transport & Planning Strategy: No objection
- Highways Authority: No objection as there are no additional traffic movements as

a result of this proposal

- Drainage Authority: No objection. The development is on an existing site and although there is a loss of some green space it would not present any surface water drainage issues. The extension should be drained using SuDS methods including porous surfaces to drain parking areas.

Environment Agency Thames Region

- No comments on the application

Thames Valley Police

- The development should be designed to Secured by Design standards

Thames Water Utilities Limited

- No objection

English Heritage

- No objection.

Third Parties

None

Community Consultation

A Statement of Community Involvement has accompanied the application. It sets out that pre-application discussions were held with the Council prior to submission and a public exhibition held for the local community along with pre-application discussions with officers.

The school have held a number of public exhibitions in relation to the proposal. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013 an exhibition was held for parents and staff, of which 22 people attended. A further exhibition was then held on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013 for the general public and local councillors and 8 people attended including two members of the Oxford Civic Society and one Councillor. The statement suggests that the views regarding the proposal were generally positive, and people thought generally thought the design was sensitive to the local context. The other comments included what details of the sustainable design measures and features in the new building; would there be any flooding or drainage issues; and what scope there was for community benefits from the building.

**Officers Assessment:**

**Background to Proposals**

1. The site is located on the northern side of Headington Road and is bordered by Headley Way to the east, Cuckoo Lane to the North, and Pullens Lane to the West. The site is within the Headington Hill Conservation Area (**appendix 1**)
2. The site comprises the Headington School Campus, which can be viewed in three parts, with the main teaching facilities at the eastern end, and recreational, administrative and residential facilities to the west.

3. The application relates to existing sports hall which is set in the south-western sector of the campus, and is separated from the main school buildings by the all-weather pitch and sports halls. The sports hall is a large metal clad shed with shallow pitched roof, which is then linked to a brick built single storey changing room block and swimming pool building. There are a number of temporary buildings to the south which are used for temporary storage and teaching space, and are single-storey and timber clad.
4. In terms of planning history the site has been subject to a number of applications in recent years as the school has sought to develop its campus, however, these are not of particular relevance to this application. In July 2006 the school prepared a masterplan which outlined the school's vision and development areas over a 15 year period. The current proposal was identified within this masterplan.
5. The proposal is seeking permission for the erection of a two-storey extension at the western end of the existing sports hall with a floor area of approximately 1656m<sup>2</sup> to provide a dance studio, fitness suite, cardio room, changing facilities, ergo room, and ancillary storage. A single storey extension would also be added to the front of the sports hall to provide additional classrooms. The development would also include the removal of the existing portacabin and temporary buildings alongside the Sports Hall and Napier House and provision of replacement car parking, and ancillary external works.
6. Officers consider the principal determining issues to be:
  - Principle of development;
  - Need for Indoor Sports Provision
  - Site layout and built forms;
  - Impact upon Adjoining Properties
  - Transport;
  - Landscaping;
  - Archaeology
  - Biodiversity;
  - Sustainability
  - Drainage;
  - Other Matters

### **Principle of Development**

7. The National Planning Policy Framework and Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS2 encourage the reuse of 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 proposal development would be located within part of the site that would constitute previously developed land and therefore the principle of developing this part of the site would accord with the above-mentioned policies.

## **Need for Indoor Sports Provision**

9. The Oxford Core Strategy recognises through Policy CS16 that there is a need to improve access to all levels of education, through new or improved facilities. The general aim of the school to improve the range of their accommodation would accord with these above-mentioned policies. In addition Policy CS21 encourages provision to indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and investigating opportunities to provide public access to private facilities.
10. The School Masterplan identified the need to improve the existing sports facilities within the site and identified the existing sports hall as the most suitable location to meet this aim. A statement of need has accompanied the application which explains that there is a requirement to provide their pupils with facilities that would enable them to pursue the sport or sports of their choice no matter their ability in order to encourage participation and well-being. The school has expanded the range of activities outside the curriculum time, and set up Dance and Yoga classes for the 6<sup>th</sup> form and other indoor clubs. The school also has an elite programme for sports such as rowing and so needs to provide facilities to encourage those aspiring to be elite athletes.
11. The existing sports hall was built in 1996 and it no longer meets the Department for Education guidance on sporting facilities for the number of pupils. The guidance stipulates that a minimum 1033.5m<sup>2</sup> is required for a school population of 810 pupils and this would be needed across 3 hall spaces (Assembly, Sports and Activity). The current provision would fall short of this provision. The school currently have year group PE lessons, which means there can be up to 120 pupils having PE at the same time. Although the school recognises that they have high quality outdoor sporting facilities, there is a lack of indoor space which limits the activities that can be offered, especially in poor weather. It results in the school having to use classrooms for activities. In addition the Preparatory School have limited PE facilities and need to use the Senior School during curriculum time. The school have a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which need indoor space to train and for those fitness based activities the current fitness suite cannot accommodate these activities. In addition the school has the top rowing school in the country but operates from temporary accommodation on site and space rented in another schools boathouse. There is therefore a need to provide more permanent accommodation. The current changing facilities within the sports hall do not meet Sport England standards.
12. In terms of community use, the proposed development is primarily intended for the use by pupils with some additional use by school staff. There is currently no intention to operate this facility as a sports centre with individual personal access, because no additional car parking will be provided; the facility is close to the schools boarding houses which brings security issues; and opening the fitness suite during evenings and weekends would give rise to a need through the schools duty of care to segregate pupils from the public. The statement of need has identified that there may be scope to enable evening and weekend use of the Dance Studio and Ergo room for organised groups, but would be to groups who control their own memberships such as rowing clubs etc. This may

allow for community use in the evenings and weekends primarily away from school hours. A condition is suggested

13. The masterplan has identified the need to provide improved indoor sports facilities, primarily because the current provision does not meet the Department for Education and Sports England standards, and that the temporary accommodation which is currently used for sports such as rowing is in need of replacement and has led to a need for a more permanent solution. Officers would raise no objection to the proposal which would be consistent with the aims of Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS16 and CS21.

### **Site Layout and Built Forms**

14. The school is located within the Headington Hill Conservation Area. The National Planning Policy Framework requires proposals to be based upon an informed analysis of the significance of any heritage asset affected and expects applicants to understand the impact of any proposal upon the asset with the objective being to preserve that significance.
15. 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. Oxford Local Plan Policies CP1, CP8 and HE7 require new development to enhance the quality of the environment in a manner that relates to its context and preserves the special character and appearance of the conservation area.
16. Impact on the Heritage Asset: The 'Headington Hill Conservation Area Appraisal' identifies that its significance is derived from its role in providing a green landscape background to the historic city centre; the retention of trees and green landscape; its characteristic buildings; public paths; and the protection of viewpoints across the city. Headington School is recognised as one of the important institutional uses within the southern part of the area. It was established in 1920 with the acquisition of Davenport House and its large park which provides spacious grounds and the attractive green setting to the school. The main school building was constructed to the east in 1928 and has considerable architectural interest in spite its later alterations and has a frontage to Headington Road that emphasises the roads importance. The high boundary walls that enclose the site from the surrounding roads provide privacy are a key feature of this establishment as they hint at the tranquil open setting that lies beyond. The appraisal acknowledges that the more recent school buildings to the west are set closer to the Headington Road boundary and generally turn their back on the road, rather than addressing the frontage. As such they are considered less successful in reflecting the significance of the institution, the status of the road, or the attractive features of the historic gardens and parkland. There are also attractive views of this open space and mature planting from Cuckoo Lane.
17. A Heritage Assessment has been submitted with the application. The assessment acknowledges the conclusions within the conservation area

appraisal. It recognises that the School or its grounds does not play any part in the green landscape background to the City Centre or the view cones associated with the Conservation Area. It goes on to state that the proposed extension to the sports centre would have the potential to enhance the school grounds. The greater use of brick would assist in integrating the building with the more recent additions to the rear of the main school building, and would provide more active frontage towards the playing fields while also reducing the prominence of the existing sports hall. Furthermore the replacement of the various temporary buildings and piecemeal access arrangements with more permanent facilities will also have a beneficial impact on the conservation area.

18. Officers consider that the existing sports hall is of little architectural merit designed for function rather than form and therefore could be viewed as having a neutral impact upon the significance of the conservation area. The proposed extension represents an opportunity to improve this part of the site and contribution of the sports hall to the school grounds and wider area. The extension would be sited in a manner that would address Headington Road and therefore addressing one of the Conservation Area Appraisals issues with buildings in this part of the site and having a positive impact on any views into this part of the site from the Headington Road. The rear elevation has been designed to relate the building to the open sports field with the use of glazing and a balcony, and this would also preserve the views across the space from Cuckoo Lane. As such it is considered that the proposed extension would help enhance the visual appearance of this part of the site and thereby preserving the significance of the designated heritage asset.
19. Layout: The building has been sited to the western end of the existing sports hall as there was sufficient space at this end of the building and it would also enable the building to have a clear relationship with the existing access road that leads from Headington Hill Hall. The internal layout has been designed to enable two entrances, with the main entrance facing towards Headington Hill Hall and the other to the rear onto the main thoroughfare for pupils moving between the residential accommodation to the west and academic buildings to the east. The changing rooms are located to the front in order to enable direct external access to the ground floor changing rooms. At first floor level the building is orientated to look out across the sports fields and tennis courts in order to provide a direct visual link to this aspect of the campus. The Thames Valley Police have recommended that the development be designed to Secured by Design principles, and this could be secured by condition.
20. Size and Scale: The proposed extensions could be divided into three parts, the main two-storey extension which would have shallow pitched hipped roof with a ridge height of approximately 11m. A link structure between the existing sports hall and proposed extension which would provide the main entrance to the facility and would have a flat roof with a height of approximately 6.5m. Then storage building to the south of the extension, which would have a lean-to roof of approximately 6.5m. While the extensions would be fairly substantial structures in terms of size and scale, they would not look out of place when viewed against the existing sports hall or the surrounding residential accommodation.

21. Appearance: The main two-storey extension to the sports hall has been designed as pavilion building with a shallow hipped roof with large overhanging eaves. The building will be brick built to match the main academic buildings and would have horizontal recesses in the first floor brickwork to match the transoms in the first floor glazing to the rear in order to reduce the sense of scale of the building. The roof will be an aluminium material powder coated in a grey or brown colour. The brickwork will use an English bond in order to reflect the detailing in the main school building and help integrate the building into the historic grain of the school grounds. The link element will also be constructed from brick to match the other main buildings. The lean to structure will also be brick built with grey/brown roof to match the existing clay tiles of the surrounding buildings.
22. Overall 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 existing sports hall and is sited in a manner that would preserve the local significance of this heritage asset. This would accord with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and the above-mentioned development plan policies.

### **Impact upon Adjoining Properties**

23. The proposed extension would be sited a significant distance from the nearest residential properties in Valentia Road, Franklin Road, Woodlands Road and Headley Way. As such the proposed extension would not create any adverse residential amenity issues for these properties that would conflict with the aims of Oxford Local Plan Policies CP1 and CP10.

### **Transport**

24. The proposed extension would provide improved sports facilities for the school and would not lead to any increase in numbers at the school. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal on the basis that it will not create any additional traffic movements to and from the site.
25. The proposal will retain the current vehicular and pedestrian accesses from Headington Road. The proposed extension would result in the loss of some parking spaces and so these will be relocated to a new parking area to the south of the site in the area where the current temporary classrooms are sited. The layout would be appropriate and enables disabled parking to be provided directly outside the sports hall. In terms of pedestrian access the sports hall has two main entrances, one from the main school and playing fields which is the most used by pupils moving between the residential accommodation to the west and the academic accommodation to the east. The other entrance faces towards the new parking area and onto Headington Road.
26. Officers would recommend that details of the parking areas are provided showing the means of construction, demarcation, and method for the disposal of surface water. In addition a construction traffic management plan is also recommended to set out the likely vehicles and pedestrian routes into the site in order to



separate pupils from construction traffic. This should be secured by condition.

## **Landscaping**

27. There are no significant arboricultural implications associated with this development, three mature horse chestnut trees used to be within the current development area but the Council accepted that they could be removed on grounds that they were in a poor physiological and structural condition. They have subsequently been removed. At that time it was agreed in principal that replacement planting on either side of the access road into the school grounds would provide adequate landscape mitigation. There is scope for replacement planting to be undertaken on site, and this is indicatively proposed in the proposed site plan drawings but further details are required, which could be secured through a landscaping condition.
28. The Tree Survey accompanying the planning application shows that a good quality silver birch (T.9) is to be retained on site. However this would be adjacent to a new proposed area of car parking. Therefore this and the other tree to be retained (T.1) apple should be protected and therefore a Tree Protection Plan should be required under any consent. In addition, officers would also recommend that a condition be attached requiring details of the locations for plant and material storage areas during construction to ensure that this does not have an impact on any protected trees on site.

## **Archaeology**

29. This site is of interest because it is located on natural terrace at the top of Headington Hill, in a location that has the potential for Iron Age, Roman and Early Saxon activity. Previously early Saxon finds have been found to the west on the crest of the hill (County HER No 3629) and Iron Age and Roman rural settlement activity has been identified to the east, near the school Music Room (County HER No 26157).
30. Therefore having regards to the scale and nature of the proposed development, officers would recommend that a condition requiring a written scheme of archaeological investigation to be carried out before development commences.

## **Biodiversity**

31. Having regards 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. The south facing roof of the extension would provide an opportunity for a maternity roost to be provided, which the school could build in cameras as an educational opportunity for its pupils. This should be secured by condition.
32. Officers are also aware that the ecological survey for the whole site submitted with the masterplan indicated that bats were likely to use the line of trees adjacent to the site. Therefore it would be beneficial to attach a condition to

require a lighting plan for the extension and its external areas to ensure that there is no light spillage onto the trees which are used as bat flyaways.

## **Sustainability**

33. The proposed development would not be considered a qualifying site for a Natural Resource Impact Assessment to be required under Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9. However, this policy does still require development proposals to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction methods will be incorporated into the building.
34. A Sustainability Statement has been included within the design and access statement. This states that the proposal intends to achieve a high degree of sustainability by exceeding the current Building Regulation requirements. It intends to achieve this through high levels of thermal insulation; combined heat and power boiler technology; appropriate layout of the building; ensuring air tightness; and the use of mechanical heat recovery system. The orientation of the building and the lack of south facing roofs have led to solar technologies being discounted. The development will use locally sourced materials from the Green Specification Guide. Furthermore in terms of water resources, all hard surfacing will use sustainable urban drainage techniques. The extension will limit the consumption of water within the building, by using flow restrictors & aeration taps; low flow, aerated showers, and dual-flush WCs. The aims set out in the statement are welcomed, but do not include a set of commitments to what will be provided in the scheme. Therefore officers recommend imposing a condition to require details of the sustainability measures to be provided before development commences, when the scheme has evolved to its detailed design stage.

## **Drainage**

35. In addition to the proposed extension a number of external works such as the provision of a new parking area to the south of the sports hall will also be required. The Oxfordshire County Council Drainage Authority have stated that as the development is on an existing site and would result in the loss of some green space it would not present any surface water drainage issues. The extension and all hard surfacing should employ sustainable urban drainage techniques such as including porous surfaces to drain parking areas. This should be secured by condition.

## **Other Matters**

36. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a standard charge on new development. The amount of CIL payable is calculated on the basis of the amount of floor space created by a development. The reason that CIL has been introduced is to help fund the provision of infrastructure to support the growth of the city, for example transport improvements, additional school places and new or improved sports and leisure facilities.
37. The proposal would be liable for a CIL payment, which has been calculated at approximately £26,700. However this will only apply if planning permission is

granted and the scheme is implemented.

## **Conclusion**

38. 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:** 17th December 2013