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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P16/S4099/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	16.12.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	MOULSFORD
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Jane Murphy Pat Dawe
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Cranford House School
<b>SITE</b>	Cranford House School, Moultsford OX10 9HT
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Extensions and alterations to school buildings to include extensions to the Junior School and STEM centre. New 6th Form college to replace previously approved performance centre and alterations to car park layout. (As supported by applicant's letter received on 07 February 2017 and by the Highway Consultant's letter received on 07 February 2017 and Bat Surveys and method statement mitigation received 22nd June 2017)
<b>OFFICER</b>	Luke Veillet

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application is referred to planning committee because the views of the Moultsford Parish Council differ from the officer's recommendation.
- 1.2 Cranford House School is a private school located on the edge of the built-up limits of Moultsford. Until 2013, the school offered co-educational day teaching facilities for pupils aged between 3 and 7 years and single sex educational day facilities for girls aged between 7 and 16, however, in recent years the nursery element has been relocated to off-site to premises to the north of Moultsford in Cholsey. This removed 50+ pupils and up to 10 staff from the main site. The site comprises several buildings, the most significant is Cranford House itself which is Grade II listed. To the west of this are a number of low key buildings converted into classrooms around a courtyard.
- 1.3 To the south of the school site are the residential properties of Glebe Close and to the west are those of Willow Court Lane, with countryside beyond. The entire area is within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.4 The application site, takes access via Willow Court Lane off the A329, The Street, via a simple priority bell mouth. Willow Court Lane is an east-west carriageway that is privately owned, by Cranford House, but forms a public right of way and allows access to a number of private dwellings, agricultural land to the west of Cranford House and a public footpath leading to Halfpenny Lane
- 1.5 A plan identifying the site can be found at **Appendix 1** to this report

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks permission to demolish the existing gym and to erect a two storey sixth form facility. It is also proposed to erect two and single storey extensions to the Junior School and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre and to make changes to the existing car parking and traffic flow system within the site.
- 2.2 The site was previously granted planning permission under P11/W2129 for a new

sports and drama performance centre. The drama centre was due to replace the current gym. Whilst the sports centre was built, the drama centre was not. The new proposed 6<sup>th</sup> Form follows a similar footprint and design to the previous approved drama centre and will be located in the same place (replacing the current gym, adjacent to the listed building).

- 2.3 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application can be found at **Appendix 2** to this report. All the plans and representations can be viewed on the council's website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) under the planning application reference number

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Moulsford Parish Council – Objection**

- Traffic generation, parking & safety - Proposal will lead to a large increase in pupil numbers with only a disproportionately small number of additional parking spaces.
- Increased traffic congestion
- Emergency vehicles would have great difficulty accessing not only the school grounds, but much of the village at peak times.
- We do not believe the two Travel Plans present a realistic solution.
- The removal of the nursery has not improved traffic congestion
- Section 6.3 of the Proposed 6th Form Transport Statement is disingenuous in stating that the proposed Sixth Form will not give rise to an increase in pupil numbers or traffic flows in the area and will have no material impact on capacity or amenity. 60 to 80 full time sixth form pupils will clearly have far more impact than 50 part time nursery pupils and there is clear potential for overspill parking in Glebe Close, the Church drive and the private Pavilion car park.
- While the school states the pupils will not be allowed to drive to school or to the village, actually managing and enforcing such a well-intentioned prohibition is likely to be problematic.
- Amenity considerations i.e. over-development & light pollution. In its planning application Ref. P11/W2129 the school projected future pupil numbers at the site of no more than 424. The current proposal at full capacity will take numbers to around 500, which in turn will lead to the requirement for additional facilities. We believe this represents over-development of the site with all its associated issues.
- With each development, light pollution at the site increases. More and more high intensity lights are appearing around the site which have an adverse effect on neighbours and wildlife alike

**Oxfordshire County Council Single Response**

**Highways Authority**

No objection subject to conditions. A full representation can be viewed on the council's website, but the key points are shown below.

- **Key issues:**  
The proposals involve alterations to an educational institution to provide for additional capacity by a net GFA of 1,012 Sqm for a sixth form college with associated changes to car parking arrangements with a net increase of some 17 spaces.
- The relocation from site of a nursery means that with respect to historical permissions there is little net change in rolls from a transport perspective.

- Pre-application advice on the proposals was obtained from OCC and the Transport Statement (TS) took its scope from this in which the following issues were also highlighted:
- The possibility of over-spill parking in the village due to the introduction of a sixth form centre which will accept 60-80 students, some of whom might want to drive themselves to school.
  - ii. The possibility of over-spill parking in the village due to the school employing 10 additional members of staff.
  - iii. The need for a school travel plan to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel.
- The above matters were considered by the Transport Consultants and adequate responses were made to these issues.
- **Legal agreement required to secure:**  
Travel plan monitoring fees of £1,240.00.
- **Conditions:**
  1. Construction traffic management plan
  2. Surface Drainage works
  3. Parking layout implementation
  4. A Car Parking Strategy Document
  5. Amended travel plan

**OCC Archaeologist**

- The building concerned lies within an area of some archaeological interest. Cropmarks show a trackway and field system to the west side of the site. A number of confined burials, coins and pottery, all dated to the Roman period, were recovered from the fields around these cropmarks in the 1960s following the chance discovery of a Bronze Age Torc whilst ploughing. The site is also to the west of the line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Silchester and Roman pottery has been found along the line of this road to the south of the site. Two Neolithic axes have also been recovered to the South west of the proposal area.
- An archaeological evaluation has been carried out on the proposed site of the pitch and water treatment area which recorded a number of archaeological features including a ditch, a gully and a grave. Although these are undated it is likely that they are related to the archaeological features identified in the wider area. Further archaeological investigation was required as a condition on a previous planning application for the construction of the adjacent new sports hall (P11/W2202) but this does not appear to have been undertaken and this condition has not been met.
- No objections, subject to appropriate conditions to secure a written scheme of investigation and recording of items found.

**Countryside Officer - No strong views**

- No objection, subject to condition to secure bat licence

**Conservation Officer – No Strong Views**

- No objections subject to conditions
- The main building is grade II listed so this application is considered with regard to the impact on the setting of the listed building.
- The STEM and junior school extensions are further small incremental additions to existing blocks and would not harm the interest of the main listed building or its setting as they will not impact its presence or status on the site. The proposed 6th form block is an amendment to an approved scheme for a performance centre. This block will have a greater visual impact on the listed building. However, it will replace an existing 1960s gym which make no contribution to the setting of the listed building. The proposed design is very similar to the approved performance centre but adapted for use as classroom space with the notable addition of increased windows across the three floors.
- The proposed additions would harm the setting of the listed building to its detriment. I consider that the contemporary design of the block closest to the listed building, proposed as the 6th form block, would be an improvement on the existing gym block.

**Tree Officer – No strong views**

- No objection, subject to tree protection conditions

**Neighbour Object (5) Neighbour No Strong Views (4)**

The representations that have been received from local residents can be viewed in full on the council's website. They are summarised below:

- Traffic to the school has significantly increased as the school has enlarged
- The submitted transport statement contains a number of statements that should be challenged. The statement that the school operates a one-way system at drop off and pick up times shows no consideration for residents who only enjoy rights of way over Willow Court Lane North
- The application form refers to 111 parking spaces in the new scheme, but the transport statement refers to 112
- The parking numbers assume that 25 cars parked on Willow Court Lane North. There is not room for 25 cars and this must render the other figures cited open to question. The distance available for parking is no more than 110m and is only able to accommodate 18 -19 vehicles if well parked which is often not the case.
- There is inadequate parking at the school for the numbers seeking to park, especially at peak times.
- Whilst the proposals contained in this application show a minor improvement (at least there will be more parking spaces than staff, rather than vice versa), the school cannot continue to grow without addressing the traffic flow and parking issues.
- Cranford's own figures suggest numbers could hit 500 by 2020/21 up from the current 340 pupils (and 270 pupils 5 years ago). Staff would also need to increase to cover the increased size of the school. The traffic situation is already unmanageable at peak times
- Coach drops are not mentioned anywhere in the traffic management plans, currently they block the routes of access and egress

- The Nursery move has not created any noticeable reduction in traffic indeed it merely extends the area of congestion so the traffic jams can now occur through to Cholsey rather than being confined to Moulsoford along the A329
- Since the Nursery move we suspect that pupil numbers have increased in other year groups. If that is the case then the addition of 70 sixth form pupils will have a significant impact on traffic in and around Willow Court Lane.
- The amount of light has increased over the years and many lights are now left on 24/7.
- The school is already causing parking problems in Glebe Close due to visitors parking there. We will not accept more strangers using what is a very narrow close
- There are some 15 private dwellings past the school in Willow Court Lane, with a residential community of approximately 40 souls. The Transport Statement focuses on the traffic movement associated with the school and makes no reference to the traffic movement of the residents of Willow Court Lane and associated delivery and service vehicles.
- The needs of a sixth form will not stop here, and will lead to further pressure on the traffic management and infrastructure of the school, and shared access to Willow Court Lane.
- We are concerned that proposals to address valid concerns (on parking, congestion, traffic flow and safety) will not be adequately policed and/or observed
- Proposals to restrict sixth formers from driving to school are unenforceable
- The current situation is already problematic, so any increase, of any kind, at this stage, is going to put a further strain on a system that is already over-congested
- In particular, we are concerned about ensuring emergency vehicle access as entry to the residential part of the lane can be limited by inconsiderately parked vehicles
- We suggest that Cranford House pays the council to adopt Willow Court Lane in its entirety and enforces parking restrictions through the use of double yellow lines between certain hours.
- It is clear that by adding additional pupils of driving age, and employing additional teaching and admin staff, the traffic in the Willow Court Lane area will increase from its already unacceptable levels. The extra number of vehicles turning into Willow Court Lane, and queuing in peak times, will increase the risk of a serious accident. The school has proposed no enforceable restrictions, and already regularly appears to breach previous planning restrictions around traffic and parking.
- The increased number of pupils of driving age will clearly increase the noise and disturbance due to motor vehicle movements as stated above. The noise generated by the pupils in their day to day activities will also clearly increase.

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

##### 4.1 [P16/S4100/LB](#) - Approved (10/02/2017)

Extensions and alterations to school buildings to include extensions to the Junior School and STEM centre. New 6th form college to replace previously approved performance centre.

The site has an extensive planning history relating to extensions and alterations to the buildings as well as the provision of new buildings and facilities in relation to the school use. The most relevant applications to this proposal are [P11/W2202](#) & [P11/W2439/LB](#)

under which planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the demolition of some redundant buildings and construction of new sports centre and the demolition of existing gymnasium building and construction of new drama centre. The sports centre has been erected but the gymnasium remains on site and under the latest proposals it is to be demolished and replaced by a 6<sup>th</sup> form facility.

The full planning history is available to view via the council's electronic records

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

**5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2031 Policies**

CS1 – Sustainable development  
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSEN3 - Historic environment  
CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans  
CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction  
CSQ3 - Design  
CSR3 - Community facilities and rural transport

**5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;**

C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
CON11 - Protection of archaeological remains  
CON12 - Archaeological field evaluation  
CON13 - Archaeological investigation recording & publication  
CON2 - Extensions to listed buildings  
CON3 - Alteration to listed building  
CON5 - Setting of listed building  
D1 - Principles of good design  
E9 - Extensions to existing institutions  
EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

**5.3 Neighbourhood Plan policies; None**

**5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

**5.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

**National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main planning considerations in this case are:

- The principle of development
- Impact on the AONB landscape
- Impact on the character of the site, buildings and surrounding area (scale, type, design and materials)
- Highway impacts and parking
- Impact on the setting and character of the listed building
- Neighbour impact
- Environmental impacts (Trees, Protected species)
- Archaeology
- Other considerations

**The principle of development**

6.2 SOCS policy CSR3 sets out the general strategy for proposals which result in the provision of community facilities (including schools). It notes they will be encouraged. SOLP policy E9 sets out requirements for proposals in relation to extensions of existing institutions in the countryside (such as private schools). As the site is outside the built limits of Moulsoford, the proposal should be considered under this policy. This policy notes that where the development is proposed to meet the operational requirements of the institution, they will be permitted subject to certain relevant criteria. These are:

ii.) the proposal does not conflict with the policies of the Development Plan to protect the landscape;

iii.) the development is of a scale and type that is appropriate for the site and its surroundings, and the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site;

iv.) the design and materials used are in keeping with existing buildings and suitable landscaping is provided where appropriate; and

v.) in the case of proposals which would generate significant additional journeys, the site is in a location which is accessible by public transport and/or by cycling and walking

6.3 In this case, the school has highlighted the operational requirements and needs to extend the existing buildings and introduce a 6<sup>th</sup> form building. This is to modernise their operation to be competitive with the public sector, meet government educational standards and offer an improved service, developed out of parent feedback. For example, due to government education law changes, children are now required by law to remain in full time education until they are 18 years old. As such, the provision of the 6<sup>th</sup> form and modernising of the junior school will enable the private school to remain competitive in the current market to meet such requirements. As result, the development is acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of the detailed criterion, which is subject to further consideration below.

**Impact on the AONB landscape**

6.4 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF confirms that "great weight" should be given to conserving and enhancing the character and qualities of the AONB "*which have the highest status of protection*". This reinforces the statutory duty placed on the council under S85 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. In addition, paragraph 116 confirms that planning permission for major developments within AONBs should be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances and where it is in the public interest to grant planning permission.

- 6.5 This proposal has been classified as a “major” development for planning application purposes, however in assessing whether paragraph 116 is engaged, it needs to be established whether the development constitutes *major development* in the AONB, in context of the NPPF. In this context, the NPPF definition of “major” development is not the same as the “ten houses or more” definition used for classifying application types in the Development Management Procedure Order. The use of the word “major” in the NPPF is a more relative term and it is through case law that the quantum of what constitutes major development in the AONB has been determined. NPPG notes whether the development is “major” is a matter for the decision maker. Case law to date indicates that factors such as the size of the development relative to the existing settlement and the severity of the development’s impact on the landscape are all factors in the assessment of what represents “major” development in the AONB. In this case, I am of the view the proposed development is not “major” development, thus paragraph 116 is not engaged. The proposed development in context of what already exists on site, is relatively small. One building is replacing another and the extensions are all subordinate to the existing buildings, contained within the existing developed site. Thus it cannot be said, by either its scale, size or impact on the surrounding area or landscape, that it would constitute as “major” development in the AONB. The impact to the landscape in my view will be limited.
- 6.6 Whilst I consider the development is not “major” development in terms of impact on the AONB, SOCS policy CSEN1 seeks to protect the character of the district’s unique landscapes and gives high priority to conserving and enhancing AONBS. As mentioned above, the development is on an already built-up site and the largest part of the development (the 6<sup>th</sup> form building) is replacing the existing gymnasium. It is similar in terms of size and design to the previously approved “drama centre” and shares a modern, curved and contoured design which will equate to a more visually pleasing development than the existing gym. The proposed extensions remain subordinate, having limited additional impact than the current built form. As such, in my view it will enhance the character landscape, settling into the surroundings and enhance visual amenity. As such, the development accords with the mentioned policies and SOLP policy E9, criterion ii).

**Impact on the character of the site, buildings and surrounding area (scale, type, design and materials)**

- 6.7 SOCS policy CSQ3 seeks to ensure that all new development is of a high quality and inclusive design, responds positively to its site and surroundings; and is of a scale, type and density appropriate to the site and its setting. SOLP policy D1 further supports good design principles. As mentioned above, criterion iii) and iv) of policy E9 also require the development to be of appropriate scale and design.
- 6.8 Firstly, the 6<sup>th</sup> Form building in terms of scale and design, is almost identical to the approved drama centre that has not been built (approved under P11/W2202). It is a modern and contemporary design, including curved metal roofs, an aluminium framework and glazing. There is also a glazed link between the existing listed building and main 6<sup>th</sup> form, which is proposed to include a green “living” roof. These design features, along with the various staggered building lines, helps to reduce the overall massing of the building, whilst also creating an aesthetically pleasing building that settles comfortably into site. The curved and green roofs help the development to respond positively to any limited impact to the AONB landscape and in my opinion, will be vast improvement on the old gymnasium it is due to replace. This has a positive impact on the site and wider setting.
- 6.9 The junior school and STEM centre building forms a rectangle, with a courtyard in the

middle (Willow Court). The STEM centre runs along the eastern elevation of this building and the junior school on the south. The largest addition will be the 2-storey extension to the junior school, with a new entrance added on the northern side. This extension will add 3 classrooms and library. This is to accommodate the schools vision to consolidate the junior school teaching areas and allow the junior section to be entirely separate from the senior (they are currently spread across the site). Externally, it is of a design and scale that is in keeping with the traditional appearance of the existing building. The footprint has been reduced significantly from plans submitted as part of the pre-application advice (P16/S1115/PEM) and again building lines have been staggered, maintaining the character of the site and surroundings. The roofs are pitched, in keeping with existing and materials are proposed to match. The extension is clearly a subordinate addition, respecting good design principles. The STEM centre extension is a first-floor addition, above the existing laboratory extension approved under P07/W1337. This will essentially provide an additional two teaching rooms for computer/science facilities, which will be used by for A level teaching as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> form progression. Again, this is a modest, subordinate addition, with a design that is in keeping with the site and surrounding buildings. As such, in my view, the design and scale of all the proposed additions are acceptable, in accordance with the mentioned policies.

#### **Highway impacts and parking**

- 6.10 The vast majority of objections to this scheme relate to concerns regarding impact to the highway network and parking. This is due to the inevitable increase in pupils via the proposed 6<sup>th</sup> form college on site. SOCS policy CSM2 notes that where new development has transport impacts, a transport assessment should be submitted and travel management plans provided where necessary. SOLP policies Policy T1 and T2 require that all new development provides safe and convenient access to highway and sufficient turning and parking areas where required. The final relevant criterion v) of policy E9 states that the site should be accessible by public transport or walking/cycling, where there is a significant increase in additional journeys.
- 6.11 Before looking at the impacts on the development on the highway network, it is first important to highlight the school's current make-up and how it operates. At present, there are 330 pupils and 95 members of staff (425 total). The removal of the nursery off site in 2013 took 52 pupils and 10 staff away from the school. As such, the total of users of the site was more in the region of 477 at that time. This proposal is said to be a 5-year plan, with 6<sup>th</sup> Form not enrolling until around 2020. The plan would help ensure sustainability of the business and secure the relevant income streams to remain competitive and develop for the future. The 6<sup>th</sup> form would likely introduce 60-80 6<sup>th</sup> form students (girls only for senior school and 6<sup>th</sup> form) and 8 to 10 teachers. As such, the total will be closer to 500, around 30 more than existed when the nursery was on site. It is also acknowledged the increase in class room space is not to greatly increase numbers, but to reshuffle the school's current arrangement and layout. It is to consolidate the junior learning space to one area so they have their own space and provide future 6<sup>th</sup> formers with additional facilities. It is proposed to introduce a full co-educational approach to the junior school. Currently they only accommodate girls from years 3 -11 and boys only 3-7. This is an old "prep" school formula whereby boys would then go onto boarding school elsewhere. Through modernising their approach, they are looking to offer equal capacity for both sexes. The additional classrooms are not to accommodate this, as with the removal of the nursery, they already have the space and capacity to implement this strategy. The additional class rooms will provide consolidation and additional space for the juniors to enjoy (break rooms, library etc.). As such, the proposed scheme itself is ultimately increasing net persons potentially on site by around 30-40 above what has existed previously or can currently be achieved with the existing facilities/permissions at capacity. This is not a particularly large increase,

particularly as the age of pupils are less likely to be car dependant than nursery children.

- 6.12 With regards to this apparent increase in net users of site, a travel assessment statement was submitted along with a travel plan. The County Council, as highways authority, have reviewed all this documentation and raised no objections, subject to appropriate conditions and securing a unilateral undertaking (UU) for the monitoring of the proposed travel management plan. A UU has been secured for a sum of £2,140 between the county council and the school for monitoring the plan. With regards to this, a condition will be required to update the travel management plan, prior occupation of the development. This will be to ensure the plan fully covers some additional points raised by the county engineer. The applicants transport consultant has responded with comments on 7<sup>th</sup> February with changes to travel plan that will be made and the highways engineer is content with the proposal.
- 6.13 The primary measures that are included in the traffic plan, demonstrate that the school is intending to do all they can to mitigate any impact introduced by increased users of the site. There are existing minibus services that have further capacity to pick up more children, car share schemes and proposed dissemination of the new parking arrangements. However, the measure most likely to have significant impact in mitigating any harm will be preventing 6<sup>th</sup> formers from driving to the school. This will be a clause in the pupils' contracts that they sign when enrolling, along with behaviour expectations etc. This is likely to ensure the increase in traffic is kept to a minimum and included as part of the travel plan.
- 6.14 Another important measure that is likely to mitigate any harm, is the improvement of the current car park/traffic flow system that was implemented under the previously approved 2011 scheme. The new car park plan indicates 112 parking spaces form 88. However, what will likely have the most benefit is the removal of the end bays in the current car park to allow a free flow of traffic and inclusion of a "one-way" system. At present, cars get stuck down the dead ends of the lanes during pick up/drop off times, backing up to the main road causing congestion. The free flow circuit of the proposal will minimise this issue, filtering cars around the car park in a more consistent direction through one way traffic flow. In addition, with the new 6<sup>th</sup> form building being set further back then the existing gym, it will allow for widening of the road outside the main entrance, creating drop off bays and additional parking. In my view, this new layout is significantly more practical and will likely ease current congestion and limit the impact of any additional traffic.
- 6.15 Overall, looking at all the evidence, whilst the proposal will likely increase cars attending the site, I'm of the view through the various measures proposed to be put in place, the impact will likely be no greater than exists currently and will likely be improved. I believe there is a valid argument to indicate that when the nursery school was on the site, by virtue of the pupils' age, the likelihood of parents on the site dropping off/picking up children would have been more than what would result out of teenage pupils attending the site. In my opinion, teenagers are more likely to seek independent, sustainable forms of transport to 6<sup>th</sup> form. Furthermore 6<sup>th</sup> form students would only be able to legally drive by the age of 17, which would be their second year at the college. As such, a maximum of only 30 to 40 students could drive, presuming everyone passed the driving test immediately. However, given the travel plan will mitigate this issue by preventing them driving in, I'm of the view, subject to the appropriate conditions, the impact on the highway will not be any worse. In summary, the overall number of pupils who will be dependent on car transport to the site should be minimal over what already exists. It is acknowledged that the site currently has parking and traffic flow problems that have resulted in enforcement complaints from the

previous scheme, however, the new car park layout should certainly alleviate this issue. By the very nature of schools, pick up and drop off times virtually always impact on the surrounding highways to a certain extent, this is unavoidable. However, in this case, the proposed scheme appears to be doing all it can to improve the current situation, whilst having no greater impact. As such, it accords with the mentioned policies.

**Impact on the setting and character of the listed building**

- 6.16 SOCS policy CSEN3 details that heritage assets in the district will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and important their contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place. SOLP policy CON2 details that any extension to a listed building must be appropriate to its character, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it. CON5 details that development proposals that adversely affect the setting of a listed building will not be permitted. In this instance, listed building consent has already been granted for this scheme. The council's conservation officer raised no objections and noted the new 6<sup>th</sup> form building is an improvement over the existing building. The new buildings are not thought to have a detrimental impact on the buildings special historic character. Impact on their setting is limited, with old and new built form clearly distinguished. The listed building is not overwhelmed and the development accords with the mentioned policies, subject to appropriate conditions securing finalised proposed materials.

**Neighbour impact**

- 6.17 The main objection from neighbours related to traffic congestion, increased noise and light pollution. The issue of traffic congestion has already been addressed above. In terms of possible noise and light pollution, in my view, the proposal is unlikely to have any further material impact than the existing site. It is acknowledged that there are neighbouring dwellings in the vicinity to the south and west. However, the closest proposed building (extension to the junior school) to any neighbouring dwelling, will still be around 22m from their boundary. It is separated by the existing school buildings in-between (the nursery and swimming pool) which are far closer to the boundary. The 6<sup>th</sup> form building, whilst larger than the current gym in terms of footprint, by virtue of replacing an existing building is unlikely to have any further impact on neighbouring amenity. There appears to be no case of overlooking and in my view noise pollution is unlikely to be materially greater than what the school currently/previously produces, considering the extent of the existing buildings. The extensions are unlikely to increase this by virtue of their siting position, in the middle of complex of existing building. Furthermore, in terms of lighting, the schools are largely empty at night which will limit any harm by light pollution. Additional lighting required by the new development will likely be minimal. As such, any further impact on neighbouring dwellings in the vicinity is unlikely to outweigh the positive contributions the development will have.

**Environmental impacts (Protected species, Trees)**

- 6.18 An E.I.A screening opinion was completed (under P17/S1208/SCR), as the development is considered a schedule 2(10) development. The opinion concluded the development was likely to have low impact on the environment, as such an environmental statement was not required.
- 6.19 SOCS policy CSB1 seeks to prevent the net loss of biodiversity on a proposed site, which is supported SOLP policy C6 and in addition policy C8 which notes development will not be permitted where it has an adverse impact on protected species. SOLP policy C9 states that development that causes loss of landscape features (such as trees) will not be permitted.

- 6.20 In terms of protected species, the junior school/STEM centre has a high likelihood to be a habitat for certain bats, which are protected species. The applicant submitted a mitigation strategy after emergence surveys were completed. The council's countryside officer was consulted who confirmed the strategy was acceptable and would likely lead to the issue of a protected species licence. This is required when undertaking works that may affect their roosts. As such, subject to the appropriate condition to secure the licence prior to commencement of works, the development is acceptable.
- 6.21 In terms of trees, there are a number around the site that have a positive contribution to the sites visual amenity. The councils tree officer was consulted and raised no objections subject to securing suitable protection of trees to be retained, particularly the yew and lime tree at the front (east) of the site. As such, subject to condition, the impact on important trees in limited, according with the mentioned policy.

#### **Archaeology**

- 6.22 SOLP Policy CON11 details there is a presumption in favour of preserving archaeological remains. CON12 details that before determining applications at sites where the development may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, where necessary, archaeological field evaluations should be undertaken. Policy CON13 states that developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of any archaeological deposits if discovered.
- 6.23 After consulting the councils' archaeologist, it is noted items from the Roman era have been discovered on the site and surrounding area. As such, there is a possibility there are items of further archaeological interest around the site, which will require recording and reporting. A condition to facilitate this was included in the 2011 permission, but appears to have not been complied with. As such, given the sensitivity of the site, it is important the written scheme of investigation is secured prior to commencement of development, to ensure appropriate investigations are carried out and items found recorded. Subject to an appropriate condition, the development will be acceptable in this context.

#### **Other Matters**

- 6.24 **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The council's CIL charging schedule has been adopted and will apply to relevant proposals from 1 April 2016. CIL is a planning charge that local authorities can implement to help deliver infrastructure and to support the development of their area, and is primarily calculated on the increase in footprint created as a result of the development.

In this case CIL is not liable as the proposed development does not relate to increasing residential floor space

#### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The development is proposed to meet the schools' future operational needs, which allow the site to support changes in government education legislation, facilitate modernisation and remain competitive in the private school market. This in turn will help ensure the sites sustainability. The development is likely to have limited impact on the landscape, the site, buildings and surrounding area. This through a high-quality design, which is in keeping with sites character. Where a more modern approach has been taken with the 6<sup>th</sup> form building, this is an improvement over the old building it replaces. The contemporary design ensures it minimises landscape impact, neighbouring amenity and impact on the environment is also limited. It is acknowledged there could potentially be some increase in traffic and parking around the site, however, the

proposed parking plan, travel plan and proposed measures largely mitigate these issues. On balance, the scheme is unlikely to have greater impact than has existed in the past and present. The proposed parking scheme will likely improve the current traffic congestion around the local highway network and site. Any limited harm that will be caused by the relatively small increase in the pupils is outweighed by the overall positive benefits the development will bring to the site and wider community. As such, subject to the attached conditions, the development accords with Development Plan policies.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 That planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions**

- 1 : Commencement within three years - full planning permission.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3: Archaeological (written scheme of investigation).**
- 4: Construction traffic management plan (CTMP).**
- 5: Wildlife/bat mitigation license to be submitted.**
- 6: Tree protection.**
- 7: Sample materials (photograph panel) walls and roof.**
- 8: Details of junction between the existing listed building and new work (office and lobby into 6th form block).**
- 9: Highways – surface water drainage details (pre-occupation).**
- 10: Highways – submission of car parking strategy document (pre-occupation).**
- 11: Highways – submission of revised travel plan (pre-occupation).**
- 12: Highways – parking and turning areas maintained.**

**Author:** Luke Veillet  
**Contact No:** 01235 422600  
**Email:** [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)

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