

Application Summary

Address: Stoke House [7 Stoke Place Oxford OX3 9BX](#)

Proposal: Erection of 12 study bedroom annex on two floors

Case Officer: Felicity Byrne

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: Mr Howard Stanbury

Email: secretary@foh.org.uk

Address: [29 St Andrew's Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 9DL](#)

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Amenity Group

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Access
- Amount of development on site
- Effect on adjoining properties
- Effect on character of area
- Effect on privacy
- Effect on traffic
- Information missing from plans
- Local plan policies
- Not enough info given on application
- On-street parking
- Other - give details
- Public transport provision/accessibility

Comments: I am submitting these comments on behalf of the Friends of Old Headington.

The trustees of the Friends have considered the proposal and have a number of concerns they wish to express. We are aware of the submission prepared on behalf of the Stoke Place Residents' Association and fully support their analysis and comments.

This is a new application from Ruskin College following the expiry of a previous application dating from 1997 that had been renewed in 2004, 2010, and 2013, and expired on 18/10/2016. The application is rooted in views that were prepared two decades ago and take little account of current developments.

The application is also connected to 17/02387/FUL (erection and demolition of student accommodation blocks at Ruskin Hall) and it is our view that these applications should be considered together as they are clearly part of the same plan from the college.

Our comments cover a number of issues:

Preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area

- * Stoke House is a Grade 2 listed building set in the of Old Headington Conservation Area. It was built in 1883 though parts of the core are thought to date from the seventeenth century. The house gave its name to the lane where it stands, Stoke Place. The house is set in a garden landscape, an essential part of the country house setting of the building.
- * Design proposals suggest degradation of the historic garden setting of Stoke House.
- * The plans are the original proposals from 1997 and do not show the building in the context of neighbouring residential housing

Green space

- * In addition to the adverse impact on the setting of Stoke House, the proposals will result in the loss of five mature trees (beech, sycamore, birch, and ash).

Transport

- * The transport assessment and its update letter assumes that there will be no parking by students and others, and therefore does not address the impact of parking in Stoke Place. Ruskin-related parking is already an on-going problem. This is a serious concern of local residents that needs to be addressed.
- * The transport assessment needs to be expanded to consider the implications of offering summer school accommodation. It should be noted that in the summer large coaches have been observed in St Andrew's Road and Old High Street, which are not large enough to accommodate them.
- * It is important that the grass verges in Stoke Place should be preserved.

Conditions of occupation

- * Conditions of approval of an earlier application (09/2486/EXT) stated that 'the building ... shall be used only by students of Ruskin College or delegates attending short

courses or conferences'; if a future proposal is approved we would expect this to remain unchanged.

* The amount of accommodation proposed at Ruskin College and Stoke House Annex is increasing beyond that proposed in the Ruskin Master Plan (when student numbers were projected to be largely unchanged), and student numbers are currently falling (long-course student numbers have fallen from ~350 p.a. in 2014 and 2015 to ~285 in 2016). There is a suspicion that a strategy of the college is to offer student accommodation for other local institutions. We object to what we see as 'mission creep', where accommodation appears to be being built purely to house students from other institutions. If such students were undergraduates from Brookes or Oxford University, the character and impact of the educational establishment would change.

Amount of development

* The amount of accommodation increases from that proposed in the original Ruskin Master Plan for both sites; if the Master Plan is to be the guide to development on the combined site, it is better that it is adhered to more closely.

Effects on adjoining properties and privacy

* The proposed building is adjacent to 8, 9, and [10 Stoke Place](#) and from upper floors could impinge on the privacy of residents there. There is the risk of light pollution on neighbouring properties as well.

* We fear increased unauthorised parking in Stoke Place (see Transport, above).

Consultation

* The original Master Plan went through a consultation process led by Ruskin ten years ago. There was no consultation or engagement from Ruskin on the revival of the plans for significant new accommodation on the site now.

Headington Neighbourhood Plan

The planning application (and 17/02387/FUL - erection and demolition of student accommodation blocks at Ruskin Hall) makes no reference to the Headington Neighbourhood Plan Area (HNPA) and in particular to the following policies:

* CIP1: Development to respect existing

local character

New developments (including additions, alterations, change of use and extensions) will only be permitted where they respond to and enhance the distinctive local character where it is described in the Character Assessments (in this case the Old Headington Conservation Area Character Assessment, which is referenced from the Neighbourhood Plan)

* CIP4: Protecting important assets

Where the significance of a heritage asset, either designated or non-designated, would be affected by a development proposal, that development proposal will only be permitted where it addresses the conservation and enhancement of the significance, character and any special architectural or historic features of significance the asset may possess.

* GSP2: Provision of Green Space within Developments

In order to increase and enhance green space within the HNPA:

1. Development proposals which increase public access green space and enhance biodiversity within the HNPA will be approved, including incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments.
2. Significant developments will be subject, where it is appropriate, to a planning condition requiring the submission to and the approval of the Local Planning Authority of Biodiversity Enhancement Plans which include the provision of measures to increase the biodiversity of the site and provide arrangements for their maintenance.
3. The Plan favours the provision of public access green space on site. However, where it can be demonstrated that public access green space cannot be provided on site as part of significant developments, then alternative public access green space must be provided within, or adjacent to, the HNPA. This can be in the form of an extension or enhancement of existing public access green space within, or adjacent to, the HNPA.

* GSP3: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity

1. Development proposals that seek to conserve and enhance land which has a significant wildlife or ecological value will be

approved.

2. Development proposals which may result in significant harm to sites and/or species of ecological value as defined by Policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy or any future policy in a subsequent development plan document will not be permitted, unless the developer can demonstrate that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss, and this can be mitigated against and compensated for elsewhere within the HNPAs by providing a replacement habitat on an equivalent or higher ecological value.

* GSP4: Protection of the Setting of the Site

Development will be permitted where its design responds appropriately to the site and character of the surrounding area.

* TRP3: Travel Plans

1. Any new development which falls above the threshold set by the City Council Parking Standards, Transport Assessment and Travel Plans SPD will be expected to prepare a travel plan showing how employees and residents may minimize car use.

2. Any development that requires the submission of a Design and Access Statement will be expected to state whether car-free alternatives have been considered and, if parking provision is to be made, why the car-free alternative have been rejected.

* TRP4: Provision for People with Disabilities to use Active Forms of Transport
All new developments should include active transport provision for people with disabilities, to make journeys easy by active means.