
APPLICATION NO.	23/00805/FULLS
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
REGISTERED	30.03.2023
APPLICANT	The Romsey School
SITE	The Romsey School, Greatbridge Road, Romsey, SO51 8ZB, ROMSEY TOWN
PROPOSAL	Removal of hedgerow, trees and 10 car parking bays to facilitate bus bay, and installation of 15 car parking bays along northern boundary and planting
AMENDMENTS	12 th June 2023 – amended construction environmental management plan received 31 st May 2023 – Update to description of development 26 th May 2023 – amended plans received to remove the fence along the northern site boundary. Vehicle access plan and CEMP received
CASE OFFICER	Kate Levey

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)
[Click here to view application](#)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been called to Southern Area Planning Committee at the request of a member.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The Romsey School is a large school within the Romsey settlement boundary. The main entrance to the school is from the north east corner via Priestlands.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This proposal is for removal of hedgerow, trees and 10 car parking bays to facilitate bus bay, and installation of 15 car parking bays along the northern boundary, including removal of planting along this boundary.
- 3.2 The application originally proposed the removal of all of the hedging aligning the front (north east) boundary of the site adjacent to Priestlands, and replacing it with security fencing. However, this element has since been removed from the scheme and the description of development updated accordingly. The existing hedge along this boundary is to be retained.

4.0 HISTORY

- 4.1 23/00804/FULLS Demolish garage, timber shed and two lean-to structures, construct single storey extension to the retained building – Decision Pending
- 4.2 23/00008/FULLS Replacement of raised pedestrian timber walkway, connecting two school blocks, with external fire escape staircase added to structure. Permission subject to conditions and notes 17.03.2023

- 4.3 22/01212/FULLS Erection of single-storey extension to South Building to provide 3 additional SEND classrooms, 2 therapy rooms and ancillary staff offices; insert new window at ground floor on Western elevation; related external works and landscaping. Permission subject to conditions and notes 23.06.2022
- 4.4 19/00129/FULLS Erection of storage and social shed; alterations to existing washroom (part retrospective). Permission subject to conditions and notes 27.02.2019
- 4.5 16/02108/FULLS Erection of 7.2m x 4.2m pre-fabricated building and erection of 1.8m x 2.6m accessible washroom attached to 'Company House'. Permission subject to conditions and notes 06.12.2016
- 4.6 14/01294/FULLS Campus Remodelling Work; extension to Performing Arts Block to provide additional music classroom and associated support areas, extension to West Block to provide additional technology classroom & associated support areas, extension to Sports Hall to provide changing room, vocational studies and conference facility, and extension and external recladding works to Inclusion Facility. Permission subject to conditions and notes 10.12.2014

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Trees:** no objection subject to condition

5.2 **Ecology:** no objection subject to condition

5.3 **Landscape:** no objection subject to conditions

5.4 **HCC Archaeology:** No comment

In view of the limited scale of impact and the degree to which the existing school development will have compromised the archaeological potential of this location, I would not raise any archaeological issues.

5.5 **HCC Highways:** No objection

5.6 **Southern Gas:** At the time of writing this report no response has been received.

6.0 REPRESENTATIONS Expired 15.06.2023

6.1 **Romsey Town Council:** Object

- RTC would like to see a substantive application with proposed mitigation of planting of mixed native hedgerow on the boundary
- The loss of the hedgerow at the front of the site would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area
- Potential for impact on RPAs of trees within the school and resident's gardens
- An impervious surface should be used for car parking
- Potential for damage to neighbour's fences
- RTC regrets apparent lack of consultation with immediate neighbours

- Potential overhang of neighbour's trees above parked cars may lead to requests to prune
- Not convinced that increasing car park spaces and provision of a bus bay will result in reduced traffic
- A construction environmental management plan should be submitted

6.2 Romsey and District Society: Comment (summarised)

- The application should be updated to include additional areas for construction access, materials storage or site offices
- Construction traffic will be in close proximity to school children and pedestrians and a construction traffic management plan should be available

6.3 Letters: The application generated 11 letters of objection. A summary of the points raised are set out below:

Character and appearance of the area

- Installation of the fence along the north (front) boundary of the site will result in removal of large hedgerow and trees
- The fence would be ugly
- The school have removed yew hedging adjacent and replaced it with Euroguard fencing and black mesh and this should be changed back to hedging
- The existing hedges at the front of the school should be retained

Amenity

- Loss of privacy for houses backing onto the school
- Increased noise and pollution levels for neighbouring properties
- The proposal does not accord with policy LHW4

Traffic and parking

- There is a lot of traffic generated by parents dropping off and collecting children
- A drop off point could be facilitated on the Greatbridge Road trading estate
- The increase in car parking does not seem appropriate when it is important to cut car use and support sustainable transport
- Consideration should be given to providing 10 car parking spaces not 15 to allow tree 8 and hedgerow H2 to be retained
- The width of the car park bays should allow doors to be opened without damaging neighbours fences

Biodiversity

- Concern about biodiversity loss, loss of green corridor and bats
- Revised guidance is to be published in April by the Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust
- The proposal does not accord with policy E5
- Disagree with statements in the Construction Environmental Management Plan

- The mitigation measures proposed elsewhere on the site do not prevent fragmentation of the green infrastructure and biodiversity networks
- The proposal does not contribute to central Government's carbon reduction objectives

Arboriculture

- The creation of hard standing parking bays would damage tree RPAs
- A large sycamore tree has been removed and should have been replaced
- Trees and bushes will be removed to facilitate the bus bay and along the north boundary
- Trees to be removed should be replaced in situ or as close as possible
- The proposal does not accord with policy E2
- Some of the hedgerow at the front of the school was removed recently
- The application does not accord with policy E6.

Consultation

- Disappointed not to have been consulted by the school at an earlier stage out of courtesy

Safety

- The existing hedge is better for security rather than a fence

Other matters

- This application should be linked to the other application (assumed to be 23/00804/FULLS Demolish garage, timber shed and two lean-to structures, construct single storey extension to the retained building (pending consideration)
- Loss of hedging to impermeable surface will increase run off
- (Occupier of 29 Priestlands, Romsey) uses the rear room of the house as a hypnotherapy clinic and additional noise will make this difficult to continue
- Concerned about potential damage from parked cars and maintenance of fence
- Concerned about compromised security to neighbours backing onto the school
- The school should communicate with the neighbours about proposals
- Mitigating measures should be implemented and monitored for compliance
- The amendment to the application to remove the fencing at the front of the site is welcomed, however this change is not reflected in the design and access statement at paragraphs 3.1 and 4.1
- Consideration should be given to 10 car parking spaces rather than 15 which would allow more trees to be retained
- Neighbours should be given a schedule of works, contact details and advance warning of deliveries
- Who is responsible for monitoring and compliance of ecological and arboricultural matters

7.0 **POLICY**

7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)(TVBRLP)

COM2: Settlement hierarchy

E1: High quality development in the Borough

E2: Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough

E5: Biodiversity

E8: Pollution

LHW4: Amenity

T1: Managing movement

T2: Parking provision

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Romsey Town Design Statement – Area 9 Romsey Town Centre Outer Core

8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance of the area
- Arboriculture
- Biodiversity
- Neighbouring amenity
- Highways
- Parking provision

8.2 **Principle of development**

The site lies within the settlement boundary as defined on the Inset Maps of the TVBRLP. In accordance with Policy COM2 of the TVBRLP development is permitted provided the proposal is appropriate to other policies of the Revised Local Plan. The proposal is assessed against relevant policies below.

8.3 **Character and appearance of the area**

The Romsey School is an established educational facility within the town of Romsey. The proposed works are located within the northern part of the site, whereby the majority of public views would be via the existing entrance gates into the site from Priestlands. Short and medium distance views into the northern part of the site may also be possible from the rear gardens of properties along Cherville Street. Short distance views of the very northern part of the site are possible from the rear gardens of properties 1 – 35 Priestlands.

8.4 Provision of bus bay

The proposal includes removal of 10 existing car parking spaces and a hedge to make space for a bus bay within the site. Views of this area of the site from public vantage points from Priestlands are at an oblique angle and there is already hard standing in this location. The removal of the hedgerow and trees in this location is necessary in order that the bus bay can be made wide enough to facilitate the parking of a bus and for widening of the adjacent footpath. Given the low height of this hedge and limited public view of this part of the site, it is not considered on balance that this element of the scheme would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Furthermore, public viewpoints of the bus bay would be seen in the context of the wider school setting, as such it is considered that this part of the proposal would result in a neutral impact upon the character of the area.

8.5 Provision of car parking bays

The proposal also includes provision of 15 car parking bays along the northern boundary for staff car parking, which would result in the loss of a hedgerow and two trees along this boundary. Given the positioning of this hedge, views of it from the public realm are limited. Any views from rear gardens of 1 – 35 Priestlands are private views and not public. It is not considered that this element of the proposed development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

8.6 For the reasons discussed above, it is considered that the development does not give rise to an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and the proposal is in accordance with policy E1 of the Revised Local Plan.

The application originally proposed the removal of all of the hedging to the front (north east) boundary of the site adjacent to Priestlands, and replacement with security fencing. This element has since been removed from the scheme and the description of development updated accordingly. The existing hedge along this boundary will be retained as shown on plan reference 28153 – PD203 A.

8.7 **Arboriculture**

The application is supported by an arboricultural report and tree survey (Arbor-eco consultancy, February 2023). This report identifies that one category B, five category C, 3 category U individual trees, three hedges and one group of trees would need to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. However, since the application was submitted, the proposal now seeks to retain one of the hedges and so the proposal seeks to remove only two hedges elsewhere within the site. During the case officer's visit to the site it was noted that category 'B' tree T26 and category 'U' tree T27 had been felled, however, these were not protected trees and therefore did not require consent from the Local Planning Authority before their removal. The remaining trees within the site are also not protected, nor are they considered worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. However, their retention is not without merit and the trees identified for removal do provide some limited public amenity value

particularly as softening and screening within the context of the school. There would be some short to medium term harm as a result of the loss of these trees and hedges, but replacement planting could mitigate for the loss of these trees. As such, the loss of the two hedges and trees to facilitate the proposal is considered to be acceptable, subject to additional landscaping and planting being secured via condition within the site.

- 8.8 The submitted planning statement sets out a site wide replanting scheme with planting of 50 new sapling trees, 20 established trees as well as a 420 sapling hedgerow. A subsequent email from the applicant's agent sets out that the established trees being planted will initially be 1.5 metres – 2 metres tall and they will grow to between 5 metres – 10 metres in height. The trees will be a mix of silver birch/yew/cherry blossom. The sapling trees will be a mix of silver birch/ wild cherry/ rowan/ crab apple/ downy birch and will again grow to 5 metres – 10 metres in height. The hedge species will be a mix of hawthorn, hazel, wild cherry and these are to be planted as saplings, but will grow to around 2 metres - 3 metres. The saplings will be planted intertwined with the more established trees being planted in their own areas. An indicative plan showing mitigation planting has also been submitted, and this shows locations of the 20 established trees, sapling trees and hedges proposed. The plan shows the intentions of the applicant and also demonstrates that there is sufficient space within the site to plant replacement trees. The plan is indicative only and accordingly, a condition has been recommended on this application such that a detailed planting plan shall be submitted. A further condition regarding schedule of landscape management and maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years is also recommended.
- 8.9 The submitted arboricultural report is accompanied by additional information about protection of retained trees. The Arboricultural Officer is satisfied that the retained trees will be suitably protected as long as the tree protection measures detailed in the submitted arboricultural method statement and illustrated on the tree protection plan are implemented. Accordingly, conditions are recommended relating to the tree report and tree protection plan to ensure that it is installed and retained during the lifetime of the development. A further condition is recommended to ensure that the replacement planting is carried out within the first available planting season following the completion of the development. These conditions ensure that the proposal accords with policy E2 of the Revised Local Plan.
- 8.10 **Biodiversity**
The application is supported by an ecological impact assessment (Ecosa, March 2023) and also a Construction Environmental Management Plan. The site boundary is located 200 metres west of the River Test SSSI. The ecological assessment states that *'the habitats within the site are common and widespread within the wider landscape. The dominant habitats on site contains a low diversity of plant species and are of low ecological value. The hedgerows and scattered trees have the highest relative ecological value.'* The scattered trees observed on site were assessed as having negligible suitability to support roosting bats due to a lack of suitable features. However, there is some suitable habitat on site to support commuting and foraging bats. The

report explains the reasoning why certain protected species are not deemed to be threatened by the development – these species are otter, badger, hazel dormouse, water vole, ground nesting or wintering bird species, reptiles, great crested newts, and invertebrates. Habitats present on the site are suitable for nesting birds and European hedgehog.

8.11 The report concludes that no direct impacts on the River Test SSSI. The report recommends that spill kits are used and that materials and machinery are stored as far away from the river as possible. This will protect against any accidental pollution to the River Test SSSI. The removal of vegetation is proposed to be compensated for by planting of 20 established trees within the wider site boundary. The ecological report states that the proposed mitigation planting will compensate for the loss of foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The removal of the hedgerows within the site will be mitigated for by the planting of additional hedgerow on the southern part of the site. The loss of the scattered trees, introduced shrubs and hedgerow on the site will result in a loss of breeding habitat for birds and could result in the disturbance and/or damage/destruction of an active nest. The removal of vegetation should be avoided during the bird nesting season and if this is not possible, then a qualified ecologist should inspect the vegetation prior to work taking place. Any identified active nests should be left undisturbed. Regarding hedgehogs, works should be timed to avoid the hibernation season but should hedgehog be encountered during the works, the hedgehog should be left alone and allowed to disperse on its own accord.

8.12 The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the ecological impact assessment and is satisfied that the report reflects the current condition of the site. Due to the proximity of the site to the River Test SSSI, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted and it is secured by condition that the measures within the CEMP are adhered to during the construction phase. Further conditions are recommended regarding external lighting and replacement planting. Subject to these conditions, it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with the objectives of policy E5.

8.13 **Amenity**

Due to the nature of the proposal and the fact that no buildings are proposed, there would be no impact to any neighbouring properties in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight or overbearing impact. An existing close board fence of 1.8 metres in height exists along the northern boundary of the site, which demarcates the boundary with 1 – 35 Priestlands. As such, the loss of the hedge adjacent to this close board fence within the site would not result in loss of privacy to these neighbouring properties. Consideration has been given to potential noise impacts generated by vehicle parking and manoeuvring adjacent to the boundary fence with 1 – 35 Priestlands. The proposed spaces along the northern boundary will be used for staff parking only, and so vehicle movements in and out of the proposed car parking spaces are likely to be minimal and reduced to staff working hours. There is separate visitor parking available near reception which would be used on an ad-hoc basis. This visitor parking is located in excess of 30 metres away from the nearest residential property whereby frequent use of the visitor parking facilities is not anticipated

to generate a harmful noise or pollution impact. For these reasons, the scheme is considered to accord with Policies E8 and LHW4 of the Revised Local Plan.

8.14 Parking provision and highways

The proposal seeks to continue utilising the main school entrance access and exit points onto Priestlands. Submitted drawing reference 28153 – PD200A demonstrates the traffic circulation route around the site, whereby a one-way system would be used to access the bus bay and proposed parking spaces. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) have been submitted. It has been demonstrated that access for construction traffic would be via the main school entrance. The likely vehicle types accessing the site during the construction phase are 3.5 tonne flatbed trucks, 3 tonne pickup trucks, 3.5 tonne van and 32 tonne tipper lorry. Temporary barriers will be placed around the site so pedestrians are unable to access certain areas which could be unsafe. The HCC Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and the CTMP and has raised no objection. A condition is recommended such that the measures within the CTMP are adhered to during the construction process. Subject to this condition, the proposal is considered to accord with policy T1 of the Revised Local Plan.

- 8.15 The proposal does not result in a requirement for additional pupils to be enrolled at the school, or for additional staff to be employed. The proposal would result in a net increase of 5 spaces within the northern part of the site. As a result, there would be a total of 140 parking bays across the whole site. Parking provisions should be made in accordance with onsite school parking guidelines prepared by Hampshire County Council. The agent has explained that the school has 77 teachers and 105 non-teaching staff and the guidance suggests 147 spaces for the site. Currently there are 137 spaces across the site which is a shortfall. However, the proposal includes provision of a net increase of spaces. On balance it is considered that there is sufficient parking available on site. The parking guidelines explain that for bays parallel to, or abutting, a carriageway, aisle or drive the preferred size should be 6.0m x 2.5m to allow vehicles to manoeuvre into the bay when adjoining bays are occupied. The proposed parking bays along the northern part of the site meet these requirements.

- 8.16 The County Highways Officer has assessed the proposals in terms of highway safety and raises no objection to the proposal. The proposal includes sufficient parking provision, and this on-site provision reduces the impact upon the highway network. However, to ensure that the highway network is protected, conditions are recommended which require the parking spaces to be laid in advance of first use, and retained in perpetuity. Subject to this condition, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies T1 and T2 of the Revised Local Plan.

8.17 Third party comments about the provision of a drop off point on the Greatbridge Road trading estate are noted. This land is outside of the application site and any such potential arrangements would be a private, civil matter between the land owner and the school.

8.18 Other matters – third party comments

- Third party comments have been received about not being consulted by the school, however, this is not a requirement prior to submitting the application.
- Comments received state that this application should be linked to the other application (assumed to be 23/00804/FULLS 'Demolish garage, timber shed and two lean-to structures, construct single storey extension to the retained building'. Application 23/00804/FULLS is still pending consideration, and will be assessed on its own merits.
- Third party concern has been raised about loss of hedging to impermeable surface and associated increase in run off. However, given the modest scale of these elements and the retention of the open field areas, it is not considered that there will be any materially significant increase in flood risk or surface water flooding. As a result, the application is in accordance with Policy E7.
- Concern has been raised about potential damage to parked cars and maintenance of the fence. However, these are private civil matters which can be afforded no weight.
- Concern has been raised about compromised security to neighbours backing onto the school. However, there is an existing close board fence which is proposed to be retained between the school and the neighbouring properties within Priestlands. Furthermore, there is natural surveillance from habitable rooms of existing properties within Priestlands. It is considered that the proposal does not give rise to an adverse impact in terms of facilitating crime.
- Third party concern has been raised about the removal of yew hedging and replacement with Euroguard fencing and black mesh. However, this land is outside of the application site boundary and not a consideration under this application.
- Comments received state that the design and access statement still includes provision of fencing. The fact that the design and access statement has not been updated is acknowledged, however, the fence originally proposed is not shown on the approved plan and the existing hedge is shown for retention. An approved plan condition is included and this will clearly stipulate which plans development must be undertaken in accordance with.
- Comments have been received about installation of 10 car parking spaces rather than 15 which could allow more trees to be retained. However, the application needs to be assessed on its own merits and on the basis of the submission.
- Comments have been received about a schedule of works, contact details and advance warning of deliveries being provided to the neighbours, however, these matters are not within control of the LPA and are civil matters.

- Comments have been received about measures within ecological and arboricultural reports being adhered to. Ultimately it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that measures secured by condition are adhered to and the applicant is bound by the habitats regulations. If the conditions are not adhered to, then the matter can be passed to planning enforcement to investigate.

9.0 **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The proposed scheme is considered to accord with the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) and is therefore acceptable.

10.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

PERMISSION subject to:

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers
28153-PD200 A, 28153-PD201 A, 28153-PD202 C, 28153-PD199, 28153-PD206, 28153-PD203A, 28153-PD204A
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
2. The bus bay and parking spaces along the northern boundary hereby permitted shall not be occupied until space has been laid out and provided as appropriate for the intended use, in accordance with the approved plan (28153 – PD202C) and this space shall thereafter be reserved for such purposes at all times.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T1.
3. Notwithstanding details already submitted on the submitted mitigation planting plan, a planting plan, detailing tree and hedgerow species, sizes and numbers, locations and densities of planting shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Hedgerow planting shall be native, and details to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority shall include percentage mix of hedgerow species. The new trees and hedgerows, as detailed, shall be planted in the approved positions in the first planting season following the completion of the development. These must be planted in accordance with the recommendations in BS8545 (2014) Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations. If any of the proposed trees or hedgerow die following planting, they shall be replaced with similar species in similar positions within six months of the death of each specimen.
Reason: To ensure the continuation of canopy cover in the area and enhance the development.
4. Prior to first use of the bus bay or the parking spaces along the northern boundary hereby permitted, a schedule of landscape management and maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall include long term design objectives, management responsibilities and

maintenance schedules for all landscape areas. The landscaping shall be maintained in accordance with the approved schedule. Any trees or planting that are removed, die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective within this period, shall be replaced before the end of the current or first available planting season following the failure, removal or damage of the planting.

Reason: To enable the development to respect, complement and positively integrate into the character of the area in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policies E1 and E2.

- 5. Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Section 5 of the EIA by ECOSA (March 2023), the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and proposed plan (Drawing number 28153- PD203A).**

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Habitat and Species Regulations 2017, NERC Act 2006, NPPF and Policy E5 of the Revised Test Valley Local Plan 2016.

- 6. No external lighting shall be installed unless in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include plans and details sufficient to show the location, type, specification, luminance and angle of illumination of all lights and a light spread diagram**

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area and To prevent disturbance to protected species in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and policy E5 the Revised Test Valley Local Plan 2016.

- 7. No machinery shall be operated, no process shall be carried out and no deliveries taken at or despatched from the site outside the following times 07:30 – 18:00; nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.**

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of local residents in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy LHW4.

Notes to applicant:

- 1. In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**

- 2. Bats and their roosts receive strict legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. All work must stop immediately if bats, or evidence of bat presence (e.g. droppings, bat carcasses or insect remains), are encountered at any point during this development. Should this occur, further advice should be sought from Natural England and/or a professional ecologist.**