

# Comment for planning application 21/01505/F

Application Number	21/01505/F
Location	Stone Hill House Stone Hill Bloxham Banbury OX15 4PT
Proposal	Extension of existing boarding house through the reinstatement of part of the existing ruined coach house, the demolition of outbuildings, the erection of an extension and link structure (with associated alterations to Stone Hill House), insertion of internal wall, and associated works
Case Officer	Wayne Campbell
Organisation	
Name	Sarah Lilley
Address	Sunnyside,High Street,Bloxham,Banbury,OX15 4LX
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>This application by Bloxham School to build a two storey boarding house behind the existing boarding house at Stone Hill House, Bloxham is too important to be a delegated decision and must be 'called in' to the full Planning Committee. The setting in which the proposed building sits is in the heart of the conservation area of Bloxham and is surrounded by listed buildings, including Stone Hill House itself. The impact of this development on the village is too great a decision for one planning officer to make. The planning application shows a two storey building which will predominantly be clad in wood and have a zinc roof. There is nothing like it currently within the conservation area and it does not comply with policy BL10 of the Bloxham Neighbourhood plan. I am very concerned that if this is allowed to happen it will set a precedent for other developments of similar design within the conservation area. The architectural beauty of the conservation area would then be further diluted. I would like to point out that if you are looking up Stone Hill from the High Street the new building will be partially visible but if you are looking down Stone Hill from the Little Bridge Road end the new building will mostly obliterate the view of the old building. The plans also show a glass corridor connecting the old building to the new building which would block access to the car park behind Stone Hill House that currently exists. Stone Hill itself is essentially a single lane road with a pedestrian pavement on one side. It is congested at the best of times with residents, school staff and villagers using the shops so removing the car park will only add to this problem. Stone Hill is one of the main walking routes to the primary school and parents are often seen having to walk in the road with buggies and young children in order to navigate the route due to thoughtless parking of cars on the pavement, If the car park park no longer exists, where will maintenance vehicles park for access to the boarding house? Removing the car park means that this application does not comply with policy BL5 of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan. As I understand it, boarding capacity will increase from 19 to 49 if the new dormitories are built. At the beginnings and ends of term this would mean 49 sets of parents dropping off or collecting their child (and their belongings) on Stone Hill. This is too much for this lane to cope with, quite apart from the impact this would have on residents in the vicinity. The potential impact on the immediate neighbours of the proposed development is enormous. Ashwell House and Ashwell cottage in particular, both listed buildings, will be dominated by a double storey building totally out of character with the surroundings. I am also very concerned about the level of disruption that would be caused if construction were to go ahead. The site will not be easy to access due to the narrowness of Stone Hill and the lack of space in the area for vans, skips, deliveries of materials and the general storage of building materials. One of the supporting documents to this application is the school Masterplan. Until this application came to light, residents of Bloxham didn't even know this document existed. There has been no consultation with the village. This application has to be viewed in the wider context of the school's future plans. Why does the school need to increase its numbers? Who verifies that the reasons for increase are valid and not just a desire to make more profit? Is growth the only way the school would be able to survive? If the school genuinely does need to grow to survive, could they consider using some of their existing housing stock? For instance, the headmaster lives in a big house on Hob Hill with no near neighbours. Could that be converted and extended to take more boarders? The impact of this development on the village of Bloxham would be significant, and I urge you to reject this application before permanent damage is done to the heritage of Bloxham village.</p>
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