

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	Chris Dorsett
Address	3 Merrivales Lane,Bloxham
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I'm surprised by this proposal. The School is a key stakeholder in the village, it has extensive responsibilities for maintaining and conserving the character of our shared environment, and yet here it is seeking a significant change to the look of Stone Hill. It is both depressing and frustrating for those of us who signed up to the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan. Long-term residents like myself had hoped this agreement would ensure that building requirements would continue to be carefully balanced with the non-urban legacies that made us want to raise families here. Not so. The proposed development makes no attempt at handing on to future Bloxham inhabitants the sense of continuity and environmental custodianship that goes with living in a historic village. For a long time Stone Hill has played a pivotal role in offsetting that part of Bloxham most given over to the priorities of retail and passing traffic. It is one of the streets that facilitates pedestrian mobility if you find walking along the main road too menacing. Reduced traffic during lockdown has revealed how much the A361 dominates and inhibits our communal spaces. Now that we are, once again, split by what is, in effect, an exclusion zone, villagers have every right to place a heightened value on locations that represent alternative modes of habitation. It follows that a permanent change to this historic street takes on a significance beyond its utility for the school. How necessary is the development? It's so intrusively institutional. Surely these old walls, openly displaying village history, could be utilised without recourse to the tired modernist architecture shown on the plans. The scale is over-blown, the added features entirely predictable and, as always, the elevation drawings leave so much unillustrated and undeclared. The other evening, watching someone move quietly through the gates into the shadowy space at the back of Stonehill House, I realised how little the architect's representations tell us about the actual impact of the development, particular after dark when light and noise affect the whole neighbourhood. Very little of what is planned will demonstrate to future villagers, or indeed to the School's students, the capacity we all have to make careful use of what history hands down to us. Please, let's commit ourselves to the highest levels of scrutiny when it comes to maintaining Bloxham's conservation area.</p>
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Attachments	