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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	23/00804/FULLS
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28.03.2023
<b>APPLICANT</b>	The Romsey School
<b>SITE</b>	The Romsey School , Greatbridge Road, Romsey, SO51 8ZB, <b>ROMSEY TOWN</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolish garage, timber shed and two lean-to structures, construct single storey extension to the retained building
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 26 April 2023 – Additional Woodland Trust Plan received.</li><li>• 26 April 2023 – Additional Hedge Line Plan received.</li><li>• 15 May 2023 – Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Received</li><li>• 07 June 2023 – Revised Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Received</li><li>• 17 July 2023 – Ecological Impact Assessment received.</li></ul>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	Mr Simon Branston-Jones

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Click here to view application](#)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application is presented to SAPC at the request of a local ward Councillor.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is a large secondary school within the Romsey settlement boundary.

## 3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Demolish garage, timber shed and two lean-to structures, construct single storey extension to the retained building.

3.2 The applicant's Design and Access Statement describes the benefits of the proposal as "*.... allow[ing] the school to provide a better teaching facility within a purpose built structure that maximises efficiency and provides for their current needs. The proposal is to increase the staff and teaching areas as well as add a meeting room communal space, reflection room and year team offices, increasing the overall footprint space by a total of 90sq.m from 160sq.m to 250sq.m*"

#### 4.0 **HISTORY**

- 4.1 23/00805/FULLS - 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 – Decision Pending.
- 4.2 17 March 2023 - 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.
- 4.3 23 June 2022 - 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.
- 4.4 27 February 2019 - 19/00129/FULLS - Erection of storage and social shed; alterations to existing washroom (part retrospective) - Permission subject to conditions and notes.

#### 5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Trees** – No objection (subject to conditions).
- 5.2 **Ecology** – No objection (subject to conditions).
- 5.3 **Environmental Protection** – Comment Received regarding bi-fold doors.
- 5.4 **Environment Agency** – At the time of writing this report no comment has been received.

#### 6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 07.08.2023

- 6.1 **Romsey Parish Council** – Comments summarised as follows:
- RTC regrets the apparent lack of consultation with the immediate neighbours
  - No objection to the proposed building
  - Would like to see a plan to plant mixed native species hedgerow on boundary rather than trees on other parts of the site
  - A construction management plan must be submitted and agreed before work commences.
- 6.2 **Romsey and District Society** – Comments summarised as follows:
- 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. A construction traffic management plan should be available.

6.3 **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust** – Comments summarised as follows:

- The buildings adjacent to the garage building with plans to be demolished is an active bat roost.
- The garage has also been identified as having potential for roosting bats.
- Ecological Report and appropriate surveys required

6.4 8 other letters of objection have been received. The key points are summarised as follows:

- Replacement trees should not border neighbouring property or create shade over any garden
- Concern of disturbance to the enjoyment of my home due to increased noise
- Concern of disturbance to the enjoyment of my home office due to increased noise
- If the proposed bi-fold doors are open there may be significant noise
- I will be overlooked
- It is not fair on nearby residential houses to have such disturbance
- Only staff should use the green area
- A hedge or similar should be to increase privacy
- I run a business from home and the additional noise will make this difficult and could put me out of business.
- I work from home and the additional noise will make this difficult
- Construction will cause noise and pollution
- Hedgerow should be used rather than replacement trees
- No regard for existing trees or hedgerows
- There should be no increase in external lighting
- Hedgerow should be used rather than replacement trees
- The maple tree should be retained and incorporated into the design.
- The removal of trees and vegetation will be detrimental to the character of the area.
- How will tree protection measures be controlled
- The maple tree should be retained and incorporated into the design.
- The guidance published by the institute of lighting professionals and the bat conservation trust referred to in the ecologists report has been updated and the new recommendations should be followed.
- Any lighting including construction lighting should comply with guidance published by the institute of lighting professionals and the bat conservation trust
- The school did not communicate or consult with neighbours
- A construction schedule should be made available in advance
- One Construction Environmental management plan (CEMP) covers this application and 23/00805/FULLS. These should be separate

- Neighbours should be provided with a direct contact number for the contractors site manager so that any urgent queries can be dealt with
- Can a condition restricting deliveries to site between certain times be used
- Can neighbours have advanced notice of arrival of any large vehicle deliveries
- Heras fencing positions / locations unclear

## 7.0 **POLICY**

### 7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

### 7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)(RLP)

COM2: Settlement hierarchy

E1: High quality development in the Borough

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

E5: Biodiversity

LHW4: Amenity

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 the development
- Impact on character and appearance of the local area
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on parking standards

#### **Principle of development**

8.2 The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Romsey. In accordance with Policy COM2 of the Revised Local Plan development is considered to be acceptable in principle provided that the proposal is in accordance with other relevant policy. The proposal is assessed against the relevant policies below.

#### **Impact on character and appearance of the local area**

8.3 The Romsey School is an established facility. The proposed works are at the north west corner of the school grounds.

8.4 Due to the location of the proposed works within the large site, only a limited and partial public view of the development will be available from part of the public right of way that runs along the parallel to the river at the east of the application site.

- 8.5 The proposal does not significantly increase the built form when viewed from this vantage point, and the proposal reduces the overall height. The overall design, materials and scale of the proposed extension would be in keeping with the existing building and other buildings within the application site. It is considered likely that development will be seen as in context with the existing school and other buildings within the site.
- 8.6 The proposal does include the removal of four trees that are in close proximity to the development area within the site. While these trees do have some amenity value, due to the location of the application site and existing boundary treatment, their removal will have a limited impact on the overall character and appearance of the area.
- 8.7 Due to the limited and partial public views of the proposal together with the modest scale and overall design of the proposed extension it is considered that there would be a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy E1 and Policy E2 of the Revised Local Plan.

#### **Impact on ecology**

- 8.8 The application has been supported by a comprehensive Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) and a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 8.9 The EIA states the following key points relating to ecology:
- The site boundary is located 200 metres west of the River Test SSSI
  - The site has been assessed as supporting common and widespread habitats
  - The site has a confirmed maternity roost of soprano pipistrelle and has suitability for breeding birds
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- 8.10 The EIA goes on to recommend mitigation and compensation measures to include the need for a protected species licence for roosting bats, sensitive timing of works, incorporation of a new bat roosting opportunity, installation of bird boxes and the requirement for works to be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 8.11 An EPS licence can only be granted if the development proposal is able to meet three tests:
1. The consented operation must be for the 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))
  2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and

3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

8.12 The proposal is considered to contribute to the wider public interest by providing continued modern standard provision for teaching and employment. The local conservation status of the roosts in the building would require the considerations of the tests to be proportionate. In this regard it is considered that the first degradation test is met by the proposal as the public interest is sufficient to balance the low impact on the protected species.

8.13 There are a number of alternatives available to the applicant, including a 'do nothing' option. However, it is reasonable to expect the applicant to undertake improvements and alterations to The school buildings as needs change. Without allowing for this, it is likely that an alternative property would be required and even then subsequent owners / occupants may also wish to make improvements or alterations to the buildings. Any alterations to the building, whether or not they require planning permission would potentially impact on the bat roost. As a result, it is considered that there are no satisfactory alternatives to the proposed development. It is considered that the second test can be met.

8.14 A detailed strategy has been provided that includes methods to be following during the development to ensure bats are not disturbed, killed, or injured, together with measures to retain roosting opportunities within the existing loft space and provide new roosting opportunities within the site. Subject to the measures, it is considered that the third derogation test can be met and the development is not unlikely to be licenced.

8.15 The three derogation tests as set out by the Habitats Regulations can be met and as such, it is considered that the proposal would be likely to be licensed. Subject to a condition on any permission requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted bat survey report, it is considered the proposal would comply with Policy E5 of the Revised Local Plan.

8.16 No details regarding external lighting have been provided. Prior to installation of any external lighting, a detailed lighting strategy for the construction and operation phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Impact on neighbouring amenity**

8.17 The location of proposed development is the north west corner of the school site. A number of dwellings on 'Priestlands' have rear gardens that back onto the northern boundary of school site, and a small number of these dwellings are close to the area of proposed development.

- 8.18 The proposal does not significantly increase any built form facing the northern boundary and the overall height of the buildings is not increased. Because of this it is considered that the proposal would not result in any adverse impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties by virtue of loss of daylight, sun light or result in any feeling overbearing.
- 8.19 A number of comments have been received in relation to the potential of increased noise disturbance both during the demolition / building process and when the building / grassed area is in use.
- 8.20 The application has been supported with a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Environmental Protection have also been consulted as part of the application process.
- 8.21 Environmental Protection have raised no objection to the principle of application. Any noise created in association with the proposed demolition and building works is likely to be relatively short-term.
- 8.22 Section 3.17 of the CEMP sets-out noise mitigation measures and hours of working:
- No work is permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays
  - No noisy working before the hours of 08:00am on Monday to Saturday
  - No noisy work after the hours of 18:00pm on Monday to Friday
  - No noisy work after the hours of 13:00pm on Saturdays

The noise mitigation measures and hours of noisy working shall be secured via condition.

- 8.23 Environmental Protection have raised a concern relating to the proposed bi-fold doors to the north elevation of the proposal:

“A communal space is proposed in the extended building with bi-fold doors on the northern façade....., it would seem that noise is likely to be created from time to time....., any noise from the communal space will propagate freely towards the residential properties to the north.”

A number of comments have also been received in relation to the potential of increased noise disturbance.

- 8.24 The application site is an established educational facility that has been in operation on the site since the late 1950's. Part of the existing building to be extended is currently in use as classrooms, and although not currently used frequently, the 'garden area' is available for use by staff and children during school opening hours.
- 8.25 While the proposed bi-fold doors have the potential (if open) to allow noise to propagate towards the residential properties to the north, it is considered unlikely to result in any significant increase in noise levels that currently exist, and that such noise levels are to be reasonably expected when living in close proximity to a school.

- 8.26 A comment has been received stating that the proposal will result in increased overlooking opportunity. The proposal would increase the number of windows that face the northern boundary. Although the addition of windows would be capable of providing additional overlooking opportunities, due to the separation distances and existing boundary treatment it is considered unlikely to result in any significant increase in mutual overlooking opportunities that currently exist.
- 8.27 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LHW4 of the Revised Local Plan.

### **Landscape**

- 8.28 The application has been supported by an arboricultural survey and arboricultural impact assessment. The Tree Team have also been consulted, and have raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. No trees protected by Tree Protection Order (TPO) will be affected and the site is not within a conservation area.
- 8.29 The proposal will require the removal of two trees, a Norway Maple (Tree 3 of the Tree Protection Plan) and a Sycamore (Tree 4 of the Tree Protection Plan) as well as a small element of understorey shrubs. Although these trees do provide some public amenity in the form of softening and screening the buildings, due to the proximity to the existing buildings they are not considered suitable for long term retention, protection by TPO or as a constraint to the sites development. The proposal also includes the removal of two low quality Cherry trees. These will be replaced.
- 8.30 Subject to the works being undertaken in accordance with the arboricultural impact assessment (secured via condition) the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy E2 of the Revised Local Plan.

### **Impact on parking provision**

- 8.31 The proposal will result in the loss of one parking space. The school site currently has 137 spaces and an application that would increase this to 140 is currently being considered under application 23/00805/FULLS on balance it is considered that the loss on one parking space would not significantly reduce the available parking provision within the site as a whole and so the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy T1 of the Revised Local Plan.

### **Other Matters**

- 8.32 Third party comments have been received about not being consulted by the school, however, this is not a requirement prior to submitting the application.
- 8.33 Comments received state that this application should be linked to the other application 23/00805/FULLS - 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. This application is still pending consideration, and will be assessed on its own merits.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

9.1 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the Test Valley Borough Council Revised Local Plan (2016).

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

### **PERMISSION subject to:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers;  
Location Plan – 28153-PD100  
Block Plan – 28153-PD111  
Topographical Plan – 28153-PD099  
Proposed Floor Plan – 28153-PD112  
Proposed Elevations – 28153-PD114 B  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The external materials to be used in the construction of external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in complete accordance with the details specified on the submitted application form.  
Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual relationship of the new development with the existing in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E1.
4. Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Section 5 of the EIA by ECOSA (July 2023) and the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).  
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.
5. External lighting will follow best practice guidelines outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals (Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK). Prior to installation of any external lighting, a detailed lighting strategy for the construction and operation phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with any such approved details, with the approved lighting strategy maintained in perpetuity.  
Reason: To prevent disturbance to protected species in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Revised Test Valley Local Plan 2016.
6. Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures and times set out in section 3.17 of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

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

- 7. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in full accordance with the provisions set out within the Arbor-Eco Consultancy Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement reference MB230120-01 dated February 2023.**

**Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E2.**

**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 the development. Should this occur, further advice should be sought from Natural England and/or a professional ecologist.**
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