

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration

Planning Committee: 22 October 2014

DC14/193: Erection of primary school with associated car park, sports pitch, landscaping and an early education and childcare centre at St Peter's Primary School, Howatshaws Road, Dumbarton by West Dunbartonshire Council.

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This report relates to an application which raises issues of local significance, and under the terms of the approved Scheme of Delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** **Grant** full planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Section 9.

3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1** The site is currently occupied by the vacant St Peter's Primary School and its grounds, which include a grass playing field to the rear. The site is on a hillside which rises to the north-east and it is terraced into two level areas, with the existing school building and access fronting Howatshaws Road at the south-west side of the site, and the playing field at the rear at a significantly higher level accessed via a steep flight of stairs. The existing school building is broadly L-shaped, with the main three storey element positioned at an angle to Howatshaws Road and a projecting single storey wing with significant underbuilding at the south end of the site. The site is located within a residential area although there is open land on the hillside to the rear (which has planning permission to be developed as a mountain bike trail). To the south and east of the site are a mixture of residential properties and St Peter's RC Church. To the north west of the site are four blocks of high-rise flats which are currently in the course of demolition. The Council has indicated that this site is the preferred location for the new Our Lady and St Patrick's High School and at present a Proposal of Application Notice has been submitted.
- 3.2** It is proposed to clear all of the existing buildings and playing fields on site and replace these with a new shared educational campus containing replacements for the existing St Peter's Primary School, Aitkenbar Primary School and St Peter's Early Education and Childcare Centre (EECC). At present children and staff from all these facilities are temporarily accommodated within the grounds of Aitkenbar Primary School, further down Howatshaws Road.

- 3.3** The new school building would be positioned on the lower part of the site where the existing school building is located, although the new building would be orientated to run parallel to Howatshaws Road. The main part of the building containing the classrooms would be two storeys in height, with a broad central pedestrian access leading to the main doors of the two schools on either side of a shared administrative area in the middle of the building. The two primary schools would each occupy a wing on either side of this, with the shared gym/assembly and dining halls in a projecting block to the rear. The EECC would occupy a single storey wing which would project forward of the main building at the north end of the frontage, with its own separate pedestrian entrance onto Howatshaws Road. The building would be of a contemporary design with the use of a limited palette of materials, including a mixture of dark and buff facing brick, metal cladding panels, glazing and an aluminium standing seam roof. It would feature very shallow (almost flat) roof pitches with a maximum height of approximately 8m, although there would also be some underbuilding at the south end of the site. The front elevation would have extensive glazing which would be broken up at regular intervals with projecting single storey cloak rooms, the roofs of which would be accessible from the first floor classrooms as external terraces. Other than the EECC wing wrapping around the northern side of the building, the front elevation would be almost symmetrical in appearance.
- 3.4** Whilst all pedestrian access would be onto Howatshaws Road, the car park and vehicular entrance would be off Allan Crescent, in order to maximise the separation of pedestrians and vehicles. A total of 48 car parking spaces would be provided on site, along with a dedicated drop off area within the car park. A pedestrian footpath would link the car park to Howatshaws Road. In addition, two disabled parking spaces would be provided in a layby off Howatshaws Roads itself, and a service access for deliveries and refuse collection would be created at the south end of the site.
- 3.5** To the rear of the building, in addition to the playground area on the low level ground immediately behind the building, a new all-weather synthetic sports pitch would be created on part of the upper part of the site, which is currently occupied by a grass pitch. This would be accessed by way of the existing external stairs, which would be upgraded and a stair lift for disabled pupils would be provided. The new pitch would be floodlit and enclosed by 5m high ball stop fencing, and in addition to use by the schools it is intended that the sports pitch will be available for use by the wider community. The remainder of the upper terrace, together with various sloping parts of the site and a grass area at the north end of the Howatshaws Road frontage, would all be landscaped.
- 3.6** A Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Statement/Travel Plan, Design and Access Statement, an Ecological Appraisal, a Site Investigation Report and an Acoustic Strategy Report have all been submitted as part of the application, in order to address the various technical issues.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1** Sportscotland has no objection to the proposal and considers the proposed synthetic pitch to be appropriate for a 2-stream primary school of this size. They also welcome community use of the facilities. Whilst they are not a statutory consultee in respect of indoor sports facilities, they have commented that the indoor sports facilities are smaller than what their guidance recommends and therefore does not meet their recommended standards.
- 4.2** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Service has no objection to the proposal subject to suitable traffic calming of adjacent roads. They have indicated that the number of car parking spaces is sufficient with 40 spaces provided which equates to 1 space per 1 staff member. The Roads Service has also indicated that they intend to extend the 20mph zone along Howatshaws Road.
- 4.3** West Dunbartonshire Council Environmental Health has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions relating to contaminated land, dust, floodlighting, noise and provision of a grease trap.
- 4.4** West of Scotland Archaeology Service has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.
- 4.5** Glasgow Airport has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition which requires the submission and implementation Bird Hazard Management Plan.
- 4.6** West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Section and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have no objection to the proposal.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1** No representations have been received.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 6.1** The school site is identified as a Public Service Opportunity, where Policy PS3 states that the Council will encourage improved or new public services. When considering a development proposal, consideration will be given to locating developments in areas of social and economic need, areas in close proximity to new housing and locations that may facilitate future development opportunities. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy PS3.
- 6.2** Policy GD1 is a general policy which applies to all development, and which states that all new development is expected to be of a high standard of design and respect the character and amenity of the area in which it is to be located. Policy T4 is also applicable and states that sites should be well integrated into walking, cycling and public transport routes. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with these policies.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (WDLDP), Proposed Plan

- 7.1** The site is identified as a Community Facility Opportunity site, where Policy BC4 identifies the site as suitable for a shared early and primary education campus. Policy DS1 requires all development to contribute towards creating successful places and refers to the six qualities of a successful place which are: distinctive, adaptable, resource-efficient, easy to get to /move around, safe and pleasant, and welcoming. Policy DS3 requires significant travel generating uses to be located within 400m of the public transport network and where relevant, measures to ensure accessibility by active travel or sustainable means should be employed. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with all of these policies for the reasons discussed below.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – Playing Fields

- 7.2** The SPP indicates that playing fields are an important resource for sport and should be provided in sufficient quantity, quality and accessibility to satisfy current and likely future community demand. Local authorities are expected to develop a playing fields strategy in consultation with SportsScotland, as part of their wider open space strategies. For many sports and recreation developments, locations within or close to residential areas will be the most appropriate location and advice will be available from SportsScotland in this regard. In this case, SportsScotland have confirmed that they are satisfied with the dimensions and type of pitch that is proposed as part of the development. In addition, they are pleased to note that the pitch is intended to be available for community lets which will benefit the surrounding area.

Principle of Educational Use

- 7.3** The site has been used as a primary school for many years, and it also previously contained an early education and childcare centre. The proposal would result in the continuation of these uses and would replace the existing buildings, which are no longer of an appropriate standard, with modern facilities. The proposal involves the co-location of a second primary school onto the site. The existing school building on the site was designed for a larger school roll (317) than St Peter's currently has, and the site is therefore large enough to comfortably accommodate both schools. The combined capacity of the two proposed schools is 434 pupils. The site has been allocated for educational purposes, specifically a new primary school/EECC campus, in both the adopted local plan and the emerging local development plan, and the proposal is consistent with these designations. It is therefore considered that the principle of redeveloping the site as a new educational campus is acceptable, and that the provision of significantly improved school facilities for children in the Bellsmyre area is to be welcomed.

Design, Layout and Materials

- 7.4** The proposed building would be of contemporary design, comprising a linear 2 storey building with single storey wings to the north and rear (east). The

building would be set back sufficiently from Howatshaws Road to ensure that its height and size will not unduly dominate the street, and the new building would in any event be lower in height than the existing (3 storey) school building. The main entrances of the primary schools will be positioned centrally on the Howatshaws Road frontage in order to create a readily identifiable feature entrance. Each school would have a separate entrance in order to retain their own identities and this was specifically requested by both the Parent Council and Archdiocese. The fact that the building would be positioned to directly face Howatshaws Road is considered to be an improvement over the layout of the existing buildings

- 7.5** Most of the elevations of the main two storey block would be finished in dark facing brick, although the front elevation in particular also has an extensive amount of glazing. The cornice would be clad in aluminium panels, which would wrap around the first floor on the end elevations, whilst the small projecting W.C./cloakroom blocks and the large rear hall/dining wing would use a contrasting buff facing brick. The use of this palette of materials will help to enhance architectural features and create a visually interesting building. Glazing has been used in the design to make the most of natural light and ventilation whilst the glass type will reduce solar transmissions and assist with temperature control. Overall, the proposed building is considered to be of an attractive modern design which would enhance the appearance of the street.

Vehicular Access

- 7.6** The vehicular access into the current school is direct from Howatshaws Road, with the car park being located at the front of the site. The proposal is to re-site the access and car park onto Allan Crescent, in order to better separate vehicles from the pedestrian access being taken from Howatshaws Road and a separate vehicular access from Allan Crescent. These linkages will allow easy access into and throughout the school campus. Sufficient staff parking will be available in the car park whilst the provision of a dedicated drop off point within the car park would assist traffic circulation. A separate service access and yard will be provided to the south of the school building which will be accessed directly from Howatshaws Road.

Impact on Residential Property

- 7.7** Although the building will be two storey and closer to the road than the existing school that is on the site, it will not raise any overlooking issues or cast any shadow over nearby properties. At present there are no occupied properties on Allan Crescent, where the new access will be, as the high flats on that street are currently being demolished. Schools are by their nature busy locations which generate a lot of activity at either end of the school day, and noise from children playing outdoors at intervals/lunchtime, but the site has until recently been used as a school for many years and it is not likely that its redevelopment will increase the impacts on nearby residents. In addition, there have been no representations received from local residents who have been neighbour notified and the proposal has also been advertised in the local press.

- 7.8** The proposal would add a floodlit all-weather pitch at the rear of the site, and it is intended that this would be available for use by the wider community outwith school hours. In this case the pitch would back onto open land and the former high flats site, with the only residential properties close to the pitch being the janitor's house which is owned by the Council and 5-storey flats at Murroch Avenue some distance to the south east, all of which are built at lower ground levels than the pitch. An acoustic strategy report has been provided in support of the application, which assesses the potential of noise from the floodlit synthetic pitch. The report recommends that in order to prevent any unacceptable noise impacts on nearby residential properties during evenings, weekends and holiday periods, a 2m high acoustic fence would be required. Subject to this acoustic fence being constructed then it should be possible to permit community use of the facility outwith school hours.

Technical Issues

- 7.9** Prior to the submission of the planning application, two surveys were undertaken which included a building inspection and a bat survey. The surveys did not find evidence of bats and the report concluded that the building had no features of high or moderate potential to be used by bats for roosting. Therefore the building was considered to have negligible potential for use by bats as a roost and this issue does not require to be addressed by condition.
- 7.10** A site investigation was undertaken and a report submitted which identified that there was a small area of ground within the site which contained some contamination. In order to ensure that this contamination is addressed, suitable conditions will be attached to ensure that the site is suitable for its intended use.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The proposal would provide high quality primary/early education and childcare facilities for the Bellsmyre area, on a site which has a long history of use for educational purposes. The site has been allocated for this purpose in both the adopted local plan and the emerging LDP, and the proposal is consistent with all relevant planning policies. The proposed new building has been designed and positioned to provide an enhanced civic presence within the local community, and the design is considered to be of a quality modern design. The impact upon nearby residents is considered to be acceptable subject to noise mitigation works relating to community use of the synthetic sports pitch, and access/parking arrangements are also considered to be appropriate.

9. CONDITIONS

- 1. During the period of construction no delivery or removal of material from the site shall take place outwith the hours of 8am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays, and not at**

all on Sundays or Public Holidays unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

- 2. During the period of construction, all works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other places that may be agreed with by the Planning Authority shall be carried out between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.**
- 3. Prior to the commencement of development full details of the foul and surface water drainage system shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority and shall be implemented as approved prior to the occupation of the new school. The drainage system shall incorporate the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within its design, and shall thereafter be implemented as approved.**
- 4. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external materials shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site and shall thereafter be implemented as approved.**
- 5. Prior to the commencement of works on site full details of all ground surfaces including play surfaces, social space, roads and pathways shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and implemented as approved prior to the occupation of the new school.**
- 6. Prior to the commencement of works, full details of the design and location of all bin stores, walls and fences (including retaining walls), acoustic fencing and ball stop fencing to be erected on site shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and shall be implemented within a timescale to be agreed by the Planning Authority.**
- 7. Details of the design and height of any sprinkler tanks shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site and shall be implemented thereafter as approved, prior to the school being brought into use.**
- 8. Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of the design and siting of all external lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site and shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the new school.**
- 9. Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of the design and location of all external furniture, including cycle shelters shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the**

commencement of development on site and shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the new school.

10. Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of all external signage shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site and shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the new school.
11. Notwithstanding the approved plans, final landscaping details to include the number, siting and type of trees, shrubs and plant species shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site. Planting shall be undertaken within a timescale to be agreed by the Planning Authority and no later than the next planting season after occupation of the school. Any trees or shrubs removed without the consent of the Planning Authority or seriously damaged at any time thereafter shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size or species.
12. The sports pitch on site shall only be available for community use once an acoustic fence is erected on site and the pitch shall thereafter only be available for community use in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays during the following hours:
 - 9am to 9pm Mondays to Fridays;
 - 9am to 5pm on Saturdays; and
 - 10am to 5pm on Sundays.
13. No development shall take place on site until such time as details of the floodlights, including their exact location, design and lighting specification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The floodlights shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained in this condition. Any subsequent changes to their position or specification shall be subject to the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.
14. The floodlights shall be switched off and shall not be in use after 9pm Monday to Friday and 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.
15. Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of the specification and surface of the synthetic grass pitch shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site. These details shall include appropriate safety margins around the outside of the playing surfaces of the pitch and appropriate drainage. The synthetic grass pitch shall be operational within a timescale to be agreed by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

- 16. Prior to the commencement of development on site a School Travel Plan and Workplace Travel Plan shall be submitted for the further approval of the Planning Authority and any actions arising from it shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the new school and shall be maintained thereafter.**
- 17. Prior to the occupation of the school traffic calming measures shall be provided on the adjacent roads. Details of these measures shall be submitted to and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site.**
- 18. Prior to the commencement of development on site, details of an adequate sized grease trap shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and thereafter it shall be implemented prior to the school being brought into use and maintained as approved.**
- 19. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme for the control and mitigation of dust shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The scheme shall identify likely sources of dust arising from the development or its construction and identify measures to prevent or limit the occurrence and impact of such dust and thereafter shall be implemented as approved.**
- 20. The ground investigation report (Dated June 2014 by Waterman Energy, Environmental & Design Limited) identifies an area of ground at the south of the site which is contaminated with hydrocarbons (TPH and PAHs) and requires to be removed. No development shall take place until further information has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority which demonstrates the effect of reusing this contaminated land on the groundwater regime.**
- 21. No development (other than investigative works) shall commence on site until such time as a detailed remediation scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall be prepared by a suitably qualified person and shall detail the measures necessary to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property, and the natural and historical environment. The scheme shall include details of all works to be undertaken, the remediation objectives and criteria, a timetable of works and/or details of the phasing of works relative to the rest of the development, and site management procedures. The scheme shall ensure that upon completion of the remediation works the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part IIA in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.**

- 22. The approved remediation scheme shall be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority shall be notified in writing of the intended commencement of remediation works not less than 14 days before these works commence on site. Upon completion of the remediation works and prior to the site being occupied, a verification report which demonstrates the effectiveness of the completed remediation works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority**
- 23. The presence of any previously unsuspected or unencountered contamination that becomes evident during the development of the site shall be brought to the attention of the Planning Authority within one week. At this stage, if requested, a comprehensive contaminated land investigation shall be carried out and any remediation works carried out within a timescale to be agreed by the Planning Authority.**
- 24. No development shall take place within the development site until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and approved by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.**
- 25. Development shall not commence on site until a Bird Hazard Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Glasgow Airport. The submitted plan shall include details of the management of any flat/shallow pitched/green roofs on buildings within the site which may be attractive to nesting, roosting and “loafing” birds. The management plan shall comply with Advice Note 8 ‘Potential Bird Hazards from Building Design’. The Bird Hazard Management Plan shall be implemented as approved on completion of the development and shall remain in force for the life of the building. No subsequent alterations to the plan shall take place unless first submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Glasgow Airport.**

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Date: 7 October 2014

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Appendix: None

Background Papers:

1. Application documents and plans;
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010;
3. West Dunbartonshire LDP - Proposed Plan;
4. Consultation responses; and
5. Scottish Planning Policy.

Wards affected: Ward 2 (Leven)