

**KEY INFORMATION**

**Ward** Brackens

**Proposal**

Erection of new primary school and associated facilities

**Address**

Land south of Laird Street, Dundee

**Applicant**

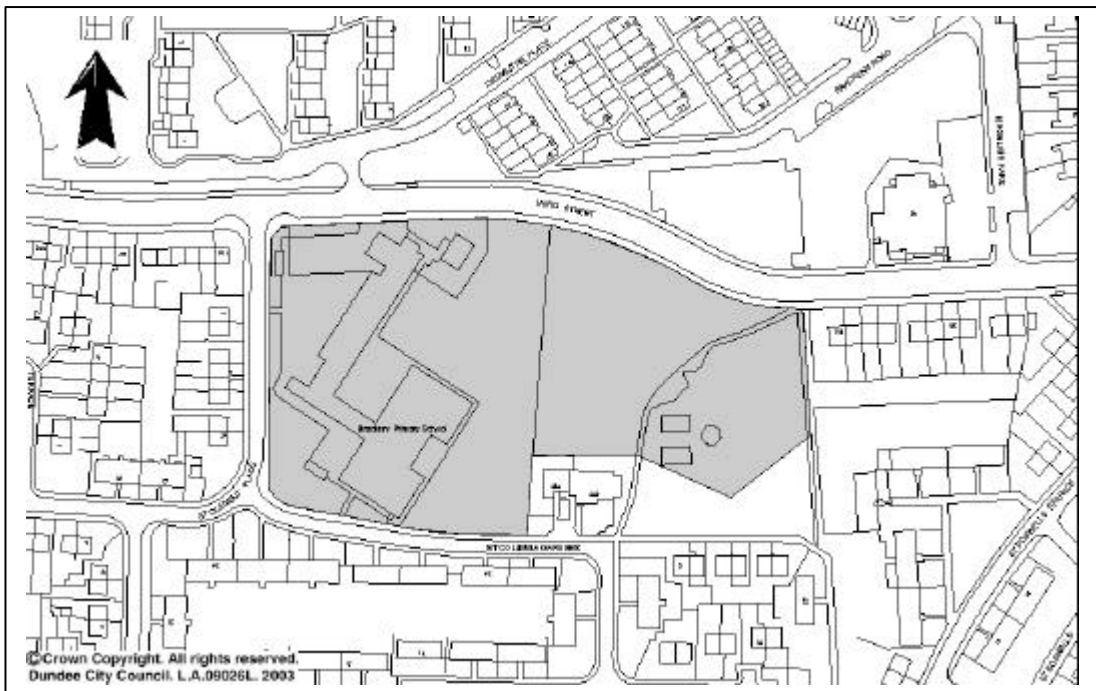
Robertson Construction  
Lomond Court  
Castle Business Park  
Stirling  
FK9 4TU

**Agent**

Holmes Partnership  
80 Commercial Street  
Leith  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6LX

**Registered** 11 Nov 2005

**Case Officer** Iain Ross



## Proposed New Primary School in Laird Street

The erection of a new primary school and associated facilities is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL subject to conditions**. Report by Director of Planning and Transportation

**RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the provisions of the development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that an exceptional refusal of planning permission is warranted. The application is recommended for **APPROVAL** subject conditions.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- Planning permission is sought for the construction of a new primary school with community use elements, pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements, external play areas recreation pitch, environmental garden and associated incidental open spaces and landscaping on land south of Laird Street.
- Planning permissions in outline were granted in 2003 for a similar proposal on the same site.
- In terms of the development plan there are no Structure Plan policies of relevance. However the application falls to be judged against Policies 1, 68, 72 and 56 of the Dundee Local Plan 2005. This plan was adopted by the Council in August 2005. For the reasons specified in the report it is considered that the proposals comply with the provisions of the development plan.
- Turning to other material considerations issues of appropriateness of land use; the provisions of the approved site planning brief; layout, design and the use of materials; drainage; tree protection and landscaping; noise and air quality; access and parking and the views of consultees. No objections from the general public were received.
- It is considered that a primary school and the facilities proposed is an appropriate land use for this site and having taken all the material considerations together none of them indicates that an exceptional refusal is merited in the face of the proposals compliance with the development plan.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a primary school comprising : nursery, infant, primary and SEN departments; games hall and ancillary internal facilities; a grassed pitch environmental garden; external surfaced play areas; incidental open spaces; car parking on land within the grounds of the former Brackens Primary School, south of Laird Street, Dundee. The existing school buildings have been vacated and the pupils decanted to schools in the Ardler area to allow for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of the new. When the construction works are complete Brackens Primary School will merge on this site with Macalpine Primary School.

The proposed school has accommodation to provide facilities for a school role of 30 nursery age children; 444 primary age children and 24 Special Educational Needs pupils. Community facilities are provided and planned in such a way as to allow their use during the school day with the opportunity for community use in accordance with the Council's policy on letting of school property. The applicants have confirmed that the grassed pitch to be located at the east of the site will not be available for community use and that no floodlighting of this facility is involved.

The proposals consist of 4654m<sup>2</sup> of internal accommodation. The application site occupies the same site as that which received the benefit of outline planning permission for a slightly larger facility in November 2003 (see Planning History below).

Vehicle access to drop off areas (nursery and SEN pupils only) and car parking is to be from Laird Street. separate service access is to be provided immediately to the east. Pedestrian access/egresses are proposed on Laird Street (X2) and St.Columbas Gardens. 35 staff, visitor, drop off, and disabled parking spaces are to be provided with an additional 20 overflow parking spaces being made available within the playground area to the south should these be exceptionally required for events outwith normal school hours. Cycle racks are to be provided at two locations within the site.

Foul and attenuated surface water drainage connections are to be made to the adjacent Scottish Water maintained sewer.

The Design Statement submitted by the applicants comprehensively provides a detailed description of the proposals, the design philosophy adopted in response to the Council's brief which related educational and community requirements to the most efficient and effective design of internal and external spaces, landscaping, access and parking. The proposed buildings are located largely on the footprint of the existing school presenting a main frontage to both St. Clement Place and Laird Street. The design process has been educationally led to promote new ways of organising and arranging the schools different types of internal and external space focussed on delivering a welcoming, functional and secure school entrance whilst ensuring an innovative approach to design detailing. The proposed grass pitch and environmental garden are to be located to the east and north of the school building respectively, fronting Laird Street. Enhanced landscaping is to be provided around the periphery of the site. The proposed building plan is to have four elements : a 'games hall wing', to include games hall and changing facilities; a dining hall/assembly area and various rooms for shared community use; a 'nursery/administration wing'; and an 'infant/primary/SEN school classroom wing' on two levels. The nursery/admin. wing and , dining/assembly facilities will be at ground floor level; the games hall will occupy a basement level; with the main teaching block on two levels. Therefore with the exception of the nursery/admin. block the development will give the appearance of a two storey building. However the games hall wing will give the appearance of three stories when viewed from the south east.

The materials proposed to be used are:

Walls : Mostly white smooth render with various coloured render elements (white, orange, yellow, blue and grey) introduced to distinguish the various functional elements of the building; high level cladding in PPC or equivalent finish (final colours to be agreed)

Windows: Glazing in PPC aluminium has a vertical emphasis on both storeys punctuated by grey render.

Roofs : Standing seam, stucco embossed mill finish aluminium sheeting.

External Surfaced areas : PCC slabs with coloured aggregate and coloured asphalt.

Boundary fences : The perimeter fencing will be 2m in height open mesh supported by steel posts. Inner security fencing will be of similar construction but 1.5m in height.

Trees and Landscaping : The submitted tree survey indicates the presence of over 100 mature and semi mature trees on the site. The proposals involve the removal of 30 trees which have been identified as being in poor condition. However it is likely that further trees will require to be removed to facilitate the construction of the new school building. The submitted plans indicate a tree replacement programme to supplement those trees to be retained.

The applicants have supported their application with the following information:

- a Design Statement which outlines factual information about the proposal, the philosophy which guided the approach to the design of the building and external spaces
- b A School Access Strategy and School Travel Plan Framework which together address issues of traffic generation, access for pedestrians and vehicles, parking/dropping off and proposals for the encouragement of pupils and staff to walk, cycle, car share or use public transport.
- c A Tree Survey and proposed Landscaping Plan which together indicate the location and condition of trees to be retained and where trees are to be removed proposals for replacement planting and other landscaping works.
- d A Public Art Strategy which outlines proposals for meeting the Council's commitment to encouraging public art.
- e A general lighting and CCTV location plan.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located to the north of St Columbas Gardens; to the east of St Clement Place; to the south of Laird Street; and to the west of residential properties accessed off St Boswells Terrace and a lit footpath joining Laird Street with St. Columbas Gardens. The application site extends to approximately 2.04 hectares which presently accommodates Brackens Primary School, the former janitor's house, car parking/servicing areas and associated playing field and play spaces. Mature and semi mature trees are present around the perimeter of the site and to the south east of the existing school buildings. The site slopes gently from west to east with areas of level ground at the west and east ends of the site. The existing vehicular accesses to the former school's servicing and staff parking areas is taken off Laird Street in a similar location to that now proposed. The main pedestrian access for pupils was located on St Clement Place. The existing school buildings and janitors house are vacant and boarded. The proposal is located in a predominately residential area comprised mainly of terraced flats or family housing. Sheltered housing at 23 St Columbas Gardens are located adjacent the proposal's southern boundary. A lit footpath crosses the existing playing field area. This will be removed as part of the proposals. The site is bounded by local distributor roads and footways. Laird Street facilitates a bus route with a bus stop adjacent the school gates. The surrounding streets are lit and carry no parking restrictions except at access points to the school grounds.

## POLICY BACKGROUND

The development plan comprises the Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016 (approved by Scottish Ministers with amendments in October 2002) and the Dundee Local Plan Review (adopted in August 2005).

### Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application.

## Dundee Local Plan Review 2005

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 1 : Vibrant and Sustainable Communities



This policy indicates that the City Council will promote vibrant communities, encouraging the development of an appropriate range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas. New development should be in accordance with other policies of the plan and seek to minimise any effect on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents by virtue of design, layout, parking and traffic movement issues, noise or smell.

Policy 68 : Dual Use of Open Space within School Grounds

This policy recognises that school grounds can provide opportunities for both formal sports and informal community recreational activities outwith school time.

Policy 72 : Trees and Urban Woodland

This policy indicates that new developments must have regard to existing healthy trees and where appropriate development proposals must be accompanied by a tree planting and landscaping scheme.

Policy 56 : Public Art

This policy indicates that the Council will support and promote public art in new construction projects.

## Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

The following statements of Government policy are relevant to the determination of this application:

- a Designing Places : A Policy Statement for Scotland which promotes excellence and best practice in the design of buildings and the spaces around buildings and includes reference to the preparation of Design Statements by applicants for planning permission.
- b NPPG 11 : Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space (1996) : This policy document advises against the redevelopment of playing fields and sports pitches unless it can be demonstrated that alternative provision is to be made or that in terms of a long term strategy there is excess provision which justifies the loss.
- c NPPG 17 : Transport and Planning (1999). This policy document promotes an integrated approach to land use, economic development, transport and the environment.
- d SPP 17 Addendum "Transport and Planning: Maximum Parking Standards" (2003). This document encourages Councils to adopt maximum car parking standards for certain categories of development to facilitate the use of alternative modes of transport to the car in the interests of sustainable development.

## Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

Reference is made to the decisions of the Council in May and December 2003 in respect of a consultation exercise which was undertaken into draft site planning briefs for each of the proposed PPP school sites. This exercise subsequently informed the design process which followed. Reports 320-2003 and 655-2003 are relevant.

## LOCAL AGENDA 21

Key Theme 4 is of relevance and seeks to ensure that local needs are met locally. The theme seeks to encourage the use of school buildings for community uses.

Key Theme 7 is also relevant and seeks to ensure that access to facilities, services, goods and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and are accessible to all.

The replacement primary school, nursery school and the provision of community facilities will maintain and improve existing facilities for residents in the surrounding area.

Key Theme 12 is also relevant and seeks to ensure that opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all. The incorporation of community provision in the proposals will meet the aims of this key theme.

## SITE HISTORY

Conditional planning permission was granted in outline for the construction of a 540 place primary school with community and associated facilities on 29 April 2003. (Application 03/00164/OUT refers).

Planning permission was also granted in outline with conditions for the construction of a 540 place primary school with community and associated facilities on 5 November 2003. (Application 03/00658/OUT refers). The boundary of this permission varies from that of the development which had previously been granted planning permission.

The application now before the Council is a full planning application requiring the discharge of the principle of the land use proposed but also comprehensive details of the development as a whole. The site boundary is equivalent to that which benefited from outline planning permission in April 2003.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The applicant has carried out the statutory notification of neighbours. No objections and representations have been received.

## CONSULTATIONS

The following consultations were undertaken the following comments were received:

- a Scottish Water. No objections received.
- b Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. No objections received.
- c SportsScotland has indicated that it has no objection to the proposals. However sportsScotland recommends the use of synthetic material as a substitute for the grassed pitch surface in order to promote wider sporting use of the facility.
- d The Director of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has indicated that as it has not been possible for the applicant to specify the precise design of plant and machinery it is appropriate to apply a condition, should planning permission be granted, to control noise output. The applicants have agreed to this approach. The Director is also satisfied that as the proposed pitches are to be confined to school use only noise breakout sufficient to disturb the amenity of neighbours should not be an issue.
- e The Director of Contract Services has no objection and supports the imposition of a condition concerning the submission of supplementary landscaping information.

## OBSERVATIONS

In accordance with the provisions of Section 25 of the Act the Committee is required to consider

- a whether the proposals are consistent with the provisions of the development plan; and if not
- b whether an exception to the provisions of the development plan is justified by other material considerations

## The Development Plan

The provisions of the development plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy Background section above.

It is considered that the proposals comply with the provisions of the development plan as follows :

Policy 1 : The proposal will result in a new and improved education facility being provided at an appropriate location within the community. The proposals also incorporate facilities for community use. Planning permission was granted in outline in 2003 for a similar scale of proposal and therefore the principal of the continued use of the site for education and community use purposes has been established and there have been no material change in circumstances since that date which would lead to a different view being adopted. As indicated in greater detail below it is considered that the proposals are satisfactory in terms of their location on the site, their design and relationship with neighbouring land uses. In addition it is considered having taken into account the submitted Schools Access Strategy that the car parking, vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements are satisfactory and will have a minimal impact on neighbours subject to the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Strategy. Accordingly it is considered, should Members be minded to approve the application, that a suitably worded condition be applied relating to the implementation of the Strategy. Again, as indicated below, the proposals give no cause for concern in terms of noise generation or issues of air quality. Accordingly it is concluded that the proposals are compliant with the terms of this policy.

Policy 68: The proposals incorporate sporting facilities which are intended for use by the local community subject to the letting policies of the Council as Education Authority. The Council's approved Pitch Strategy 2005-2011 considered the balance between supply and demand across a variety for pitches within and outwith school grounds across a variety of sports. The potential availability for dual use of the proposed pitch was not included in that assessment. Accordingly, whilst Policy 68 continues to have general application, it is not appropriate to enforce its provisions in respect of this application.

Accordingly it is concluded that the proposals are compliant with the terms of this policy.

Policy 72 : The applicants have provided a tree survey and landscaping plan to complement their proposals. As indicated above the schedules accompanying these plans indicate the removal of a considerable number of trees due to their poor condition. It is however proposed that replacement trees be planted and that an environmental garden is developed. Given the scale of the proposals, the necessary orientation of the new school building it is considered that reasonable attempts have been made to safeguard as many existing health trees as possible. New planting will compensate for the loss of existing trees. Accordingly it is concluded that the proposals are compliant with the terms of this policy.

Policy 56 : The applicants have submitted a public art strategy in support of their application. This proposes the dedication of a specified financial contribution for the provision and development of public art within each of the new school projects including Brackens. In addition, for the PPP project as a whole the applicant has agreed to finance the employment of an artist to work with the school communities to promote the strategy proposed. Given the scale of each individual project it is considered that, although the 1% for art criterion specified in the policy is not met, it is considered that the proposed strategy is imaginative in educational terms and will develop into the future as the school becomes established in the community. Accordingly it is concluded that the proposals are acceptable as a justifiable compromise solution within the broad objectives of the policy.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposals comply with the provisions of the development plan.

Accordingly the application falls to be considered in terms of other material considerations to determine whether an exceptional refusal of planning permission is merited.

### Other Material Considerations

The other material considerations to be taken into account are as follows:

- a Is the establishment of an educational use on the application site acceptable in principle?
- b Is the layout of the building(s) and other facilities on the site

acceptable taking into account surrounding land uses and their proximity and is the design of the building and the use of materials acceptable?

- c Are the vehicular/pedestrian access arrangements and on site car parking satisfactory in the context of the School Access Strategy and the School Travel Plan Framework for the development?
- d Does the proposal comply with the approved Site Planning Brief?
- e Are the proposals for the retention of any existing trees and landscaping appropriate?
- f Are the proposals for foul and surface water drainage acceptable?
- g Are there any issues relating to noise or air quality?
- h Are there any issues raised by statutory consultees, notifiable neighbours and the general public which indicate that planning permission ought to be refused?

Each issue is considered in turn below:

- a The principle of educational use. The present use of the site is for educational purposes. The principle of establishing a new school of an equivalent size on this site was established by the grant outline planning permissions in 2003. It is therefore considered that this land use issue is discharged.
- b Layout and design of the building(s) and exterior spaces and the use of materials. Pre application discussions with the applicant and their agents concerning a range of matters of detail. The layout of the buildings on the site, their design and the materials to be used are in summary described above and in greater detail in the submitted Design Statement. The distribution of uses on the site is appropriate given the location of adjacent housing and the likely impact of the development when viewed from perimeter roads. The site is not located in a conservation area. Nor are any listed buildings present which might have influenced design matters. In the light of the design

philosophy summarised earlier and outlined in greater detail in the submitted Design Statement the design of the school buildings is satisfactory. In this context the use of colour and the application of a palette of various materials, to be confirmed through the application of a condition will assist adding interest to the elevational treatment of the school building. Although the details supplied concerning perimeter security fencing appear acceptable in principle, it is appropriate to apply a suitable condition to cover all matters of detail.

- c Vehicular/pedestrian access arrangements and on site car parking. The submitted School Access Strategy and School Travel Plan Framework have been assessed. The School Access Strategy Report submitted by the applicant's transport consultants provides an assessment of existing facilities; discusses the estimated mode share characteristics and relates them to the future catchment area of the school; identifies key issues in relation to travel to school and provides recommendations to improve safe and sustainable access to the school. On site parking facilities comply with the 50% levels required by the Council in relation to staff and visitor parking. The proposed access points, arrangements for on site car parking/dropping off and the off site traffic and pedestrian safety implications are considered to be satisfactory. Nevertheless it is considered appropriate, should Members be minded to approve the application, to apply a condition relating to the implementation of the Strategy. The framework for a proposed School Travel Plan has been assessed and found to be satisfactory and its implementation can be governed by a suitably worded condition.
- d Compliance with the approved Site Planning Brief. The function and relevance of the brief is outlined above. The client and architect had reference to the approved brief (following community consultation) in

bringing forward detailed proposals. Therefore it is not to be expected that the final proposals match the brief in all detail and in this instance the broad term of reference of the brief are compatible with the application proposals.

- e Existing trees and landscaping. As indicated earlier details have been provided and the Director of Contract Services has raised no objection. This aspect of the proposals is considered to be satisfactory subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of additional information. The applicant is agreeable to this course of action.
- f Foul and surface water drainage. Both foul and surface water are to be drained to the public sewer. No flood related issues arise. Neither Scottish Water nor SEPA has objected.
- g Noise or air quality issues. The proposals are considered to have no air quality implications and provided a standard condition is attached concerning any noise breakout there may be from plant and machinery the Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection has no objections to the proposals.
- h Issues raised by statutory consultees, notifiable neighbours and the general public. No objections have been raised by either statutory consultees or the general public.

It is concluded from the foregoing that insufficient weight can be accorded to any of the material considerations such as to justify the refusal of planning permission contrary to the provisions of the development plan.

It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted with conditions relating to submission of construction materials, fencing and landscaping details; the protection of existing trees to be retained; compliance with the terms of the School Travel Plan Framework, the School Access Strategy recommendations, the Public Art Strategy and landscaping details; drainage details ; and noise limitations for plant and machinery.

## Design

The content of the design statement and the other information submitted by the applicant has been considered as outlined above and it is considered that the design of the buildings and external spaces and the use of materials are appropriate for their function and setting in the local community.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the proposal complies with the provisions of the development plan. The principal of locating a primary school and all the related facilities proposed on this site is acceptable in land use terms and in matters of detail, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within five years from the date of this permission.
- 2 Samples of the finishing materials proposed to be used shall be submitted to the Council for approval and if approved the development shall be carried out only in accordance with such approved details.
- 3 Details and samples of all boundary treatments shall be submitted to the Council for approval and if approved the development shall be carried out only in accordance with such approved details.
- 4 Development shall not begin until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Details of the scheme shall include :
  - a an indication of existing trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained and removed;
  - b arrangements for the protection, during construction works, of trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained in accordance with revised BS 5837,2005;
  - c the location of proposed new trees, shrubs and hedges keyed to a schedule

of species, plant sizes and density/numbers;

- d a programme for the undertaking of the landscaping works and arrangements for subsequent maintenance.

For the avoidance of doubt all landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the scheme to be approved in writing by the Council.

- 5 The design and installation of any plant, machinery or equipment shall be such that any associated noise complies with NR35 as measured 1 metre from the facade of any residential property.
- 6 A School Travel Plan shall be prepared and submitted in writing to the Council for approval in accordance with the details contained in the submitted School Travel Plan Framework submitted to the Council by the applicant under cover of their letter of 16 November 2005.
- 7 The Public Art Strategy for the proposed school shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the strategy received by the Council on 22 December 2005.
- 8 Details of the proposed surface and foul drainage arrangements shall be submitted for the written approval of the Council in consultation with Scottish Water and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved. If approved the proposed arrangements shall be carried out only in full accordance with such approved details.
- 9 The grass pitch indicated on the approved plans shall be for school use only and shall at no time be made available for shared community use.
- 10 The Access Strategy for the proposed school shall be implemented in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the strategy document received by the Council on 6 January 2006.

Reasons

- 1 To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 2 To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.
- 3 To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.
- 4 To ensure the retention of existing landscaping worthy of protection and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of the amenity of the area.
- 5 In the interests of residential amenity.
- 6 To encourage alternative travel options to reduce the number of vehicle trips to the school and to raise awareness about travel issues such as air pollution and road safety.
- 7 In support of Policy 56 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005
- 8 In order to ensure the proper drainage of the site.
- 9 In the interests of the amenity of nearby residents.
- 10 In the interests of pedestrian and traffic safety and residential amenity.