

KEY INFORMATION

Ward The Ferry

Proposal

Conversion of former school building to office accommodation and formation of community sports facility

Address

Grove Academy
18 Camperdown Street
Broughty Ferry

Applicant

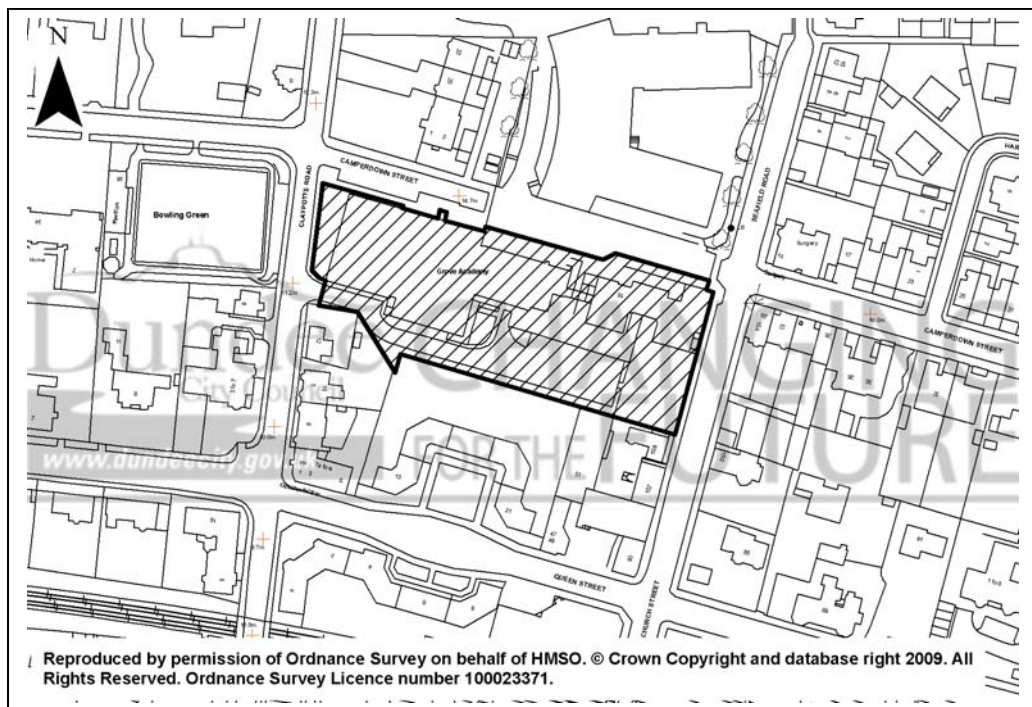
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Registered 15 Jan 2010

Case Officer Paul Macari



Proposed Council Offices and Sports Facilities in Former Grove Academy

The conversion of a former school building to office accommodation and community sports facilities is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** subject to conditions. Report by Director of City Development.

RECOMMENDATION

Through the adoption of the recommendations of the Travel Plan the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the Development Plan. The concerns of the objectors are not supported. Accordingly, the application is recommended for **APPROVAL** subject to conditions.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- This application seeks planning permission to redevelop the former Grove Academy secondary school to form office accommodation.
- Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities), Policy 59 (Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings), Policy 60 (Alterations to Listed Buildings), Policy 61 (Development in Conservation Areas), Policy 81 (Pedestrians) and Policy 82 (Cycling Facilities) of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 are relevant to the outcome of this planning application.
- 13 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents concerned about: inadequate on-street parking facilities to accommodate traffic associated with proposed office and sports hall development, road safety, pedestrian safety, and the fact that Camperdown Street should be opened up as a public thoroughfare.
- The proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of the Development Plan.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of a vacant secondary school to office accommodation and use of the existing changing rooms, games hall and squash courts as a community sports facility at the former Grove Academy, 18 Camperdown Street, Broughty Ferry.

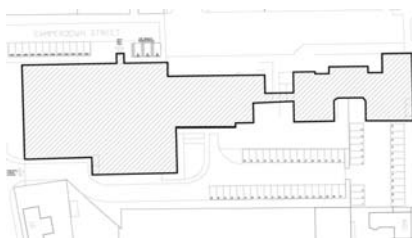
It is proposed to relocate approximately 362 staff from the Council's Education and Social Work Departments working across the city into one office. Following a recent property audit where existing Council offices at Balmerino Road and Rockwell High School were found to be of a poor quality with excessive maintenance costs. Alternative sites were identified and explored with the former Grove Academy buildings considered the most suitable location for relocating staff. This was because the building presented the opportunity to bring staff from the Council's Education and Social Work Department who work together closely under one roof. Further, the site is ideally situated in close proximity to a host of local services as well as transport links. The re-use of the former Grove Academy buildings also present the Council with the opportunity to provide additional sports facilities for the local community.

The proposals do not involve any external alterations with the only internal alterations being the installation of security doors to separate the office accommodation from public areas of the building as well as the installation of a new toilet facility in an existing cupboard on the ground floor of the building. The proposals will also involve the installation of modern multi-media infrastructure.

The applicant has submitted a Traffic Impact Assessment and Travel Planning Solutions Report in support of the proposed conversion of the former Grove Academy to form office accommodation and a community sports facility.

The proposed office accommodation will have a floor area of 5,325m² while the community sports facilities will have a floor area of 1,178m². The proposals fall within the meaning of a "Local" planning application as

dictated by Paragraph 15 Circular 5: 2009 "Hierarchy of Developments" as they involve the conversion of an existing building as opposed to the construction of a new building. However, had the proposals involved the erection of new buildings, the relevant thresholds for the proposed development would not have been exceeded and the proposals would still have fallen within the category of a "Local" planning application.



This application requires to be submitted to the Council's Development Quality Committee as the Council (Architectural Services) is the applicant.



SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located between Claypotts Road and Church Street to the west and east. To the north and south the site is located between the New Grove Academy and 3 storey flats which front on to Queen Street.

The application site comprises of 2 two storey B listed stone built buildings with slate pitched roofs. The buildings are joined by a modern 2 storey glazed corridor with a slate pitched roof. The lower walls of the glazed corridor are finished in lead cladding. The B listed buildings have white timber framed single and grouped large multi-pane windows with top and bottom hoppers. There is a modern brick built extension

on the west most B listed building which provides additional administrative space and sports facilities. The extension has modern multi pane vertical window openings and a hipped/flat roof finished in plastic coated aluminium.

The former school buildings are centrally positioned on the application site. The new Grove Academy is separated from the former Grove Academy buildings by Camperdown Road which used to extend from Church Street to Claypotts Road. However, part of this stretch of road was closed to allow dedicated pedestrian access to the new and old schools. This area has been separated from the remaining areas of Camperdown Street that are accessible by cars by fencing and has been surfaced in monoblock. Vehicular access from Claypotts Road along Camperdown Street has been retained with 15 car parking spaces located immediately to the north of the school buildings on either side of the main entrance to the buildings. There is another vehicular access from Claypotts Road to the south of the school buildings. This access is enclosed by a 2m high blue painted steel gate.

The eastern and northern boundaries of the former Grove Academy are formed through a B listed stone wall and railings. To the south the application site is bound by a combination of 1.8m high fencing and walls. The southern boundary of the application site is reinforced by mature shrubbery and trees.

The existing playgrounds to the south of the former school buildings are surfaced in tarmac with the eastern area of the play ground laid out as a 56 space car park.

Surrounding the application site are a variety of building types including single storey houses to the south east on the eastern and western sides of Claypotts Road. There are 3 storey flats to the south of the application site and 3 storey town houses on the eastern side of Church Street and along Camperdown Street. To the north of the application site is the new Grove Academy which is spread over multiple levels. The new Grove Academy benefits from a multi-storey car park to the west of the school building.

The application site is located within Grove Conservation Area.

During several site visits at 9.30am, 11.00am, 1.00pm and 3.00pm the surrounding streets to the north and west of the application site were largely unoccupied by on-street parking. Church Street, Camperdown Street as well as Harley Street although congested were not saturated by on-street car parking.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016

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

Dundee Local Plan 2005

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities) is supportive of proposals that will provide an appropriate range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas. However, only those proposals that 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 will be supported.

Policy 59 (Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings) stipulates that proposals to change the use of listed buildings will only be considered where it is necessary to secure their future. Proposals to change the use of listed buildings will be supported where works to adapt the building respect the historic fabric and features of architectural importance.

Policy 60 (Alterations to Listed Buildings) requires proposals to have regard to the preservation of enhancement of the architectural or historic character of listed buildings.

Policy 61 (Development in Conservation Areas) stipulates that development proposals within conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the character of the surrounding area.

Policy 81 (Pedestrians) is supportive of proposals that consider ease and safety

of pedestrian access as a priority over all modes.

Policy 82 (Cycling Facilities) requires new developments to provide cycle parking facilities.

Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

There are no statements of Government policy relevant to the determination of this application.



Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

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



SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The proposal involves the re-use of a former secondary school for Class 4 office purposes. The amount of conversion works to be undertaken are relatively minimal and consequently, it is considered that there are no specific sustainability policy implications arising from this application.

SITE HISTORY

There is no planning history that is relevant to the outcome of this application.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Council has followed the statutory neighbour notification procedures stipulated by Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

13 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents. The concerns raised include:

- inadequate on-street parking facilities to accommodate traffic associated with proposed office and sports hall development;
- road safety;
- Camperdown Street should be opened up as a public thoroughfare; and
- pedestrian safety.

Members will already have had access to these letters/correspondence and the points raised are considered in the Observations Section of this Report.

CONSULTATIONS

Broughty Ferry Community Council has stated that while the re-use of the former Grove Academy school buildings is welcomed, there is concern that the number of staff relocating to the premises (370) would give rise to significant issues of traffic congestion with the number of cars parking on street increasing greatly.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has expressed concern that the proposed community sports facilities may give rise to issues of noise disturbance. However, the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has recommended a condition restricting the hours of operation to prevent instances of noise disturbance from arising.

OBSERVATIONS

Section 25 of the Act provides that an application for planning permission (other than for a national development) shall be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In accordance with Section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

In accordance with Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Development Plan

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

Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities) is supportive of proposals that will provide an appropriate range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas. However, only those proposals that 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 will be supported.

The proposals involve the conversion of the former Grove Academy secondary school building to an office for 362 employees working in the Council's Education and Social Work Departments in locations across the city. The proposals will also involve the conversion of the existing sports hall, changing rooms and squash courts to a community sports facility. No external alterations are proposed to the existing buildings with existing access and parking arrangements within the application site retained.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has confirmed that any instances of noise disturbance arising from the use of the proposed community sports facilities can be overcome through a condition

restricting the hours of operation. In the interests of maintaining the level of environmental quality afforded to neighbouring residents it is proposed to restrict the hours of operation of the community sports facilities to between the hours of 0900 and 2200 Monday to Saturday and between the hours of 0900 and 1900 on Sundays.

In terms of design and layout, no external alterations are proposed to the exterior of the building. Therefore, the appearance of the building will be maintained and will not impact on the level of environmental quality afforded to neighbouring residents. As no external alterations to the existing buildings are proposed, the re-use of the former Grove Academy for office accommodation and community sports facilities is not considered to impact upon the historic character of the listed building or the setting of the surrounding Grove Conservation Area.

With regard to parking and traffic movement issues, the relocation of 362 workers from locations across the city into one building with parking provision for approximately 71 cars on site (56 staff car parking spaces, 12 visitor spaces and 3 disabled parking bays) is likely to give rise to significant issues of traffic congestion in the surrounding streets. This would be caused by an increase in traffic movements and cars parking on streets surrounding the application site. However, as part of the planning submission a detailed Traffic Impact Assessment and report on Travel Planning Solutions have been incorporated into the proposals which highlight the potential transportation issues associated with the proposals as well as the possible solutions which would significantly decrease dependence on the private car.

The TIA has estimated that the relocation of 362 staff from across the city to the former Grove Academy would generate 243 vehicles which would require parking with only 71 parking spaces available within the application site. This would mean that 172 vehicles would require to be parked on the streets surrounding the application site.

The submitted Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) identifies instances of traffic congestion to be most significant between 0745 and 0900 hours and between 1630 and 1730 hours. Approximately 67% of workers

arriving/ departing by car will be in transit during these times. To reduce this percentage to a figure that is manageable by the local road network, the Travel Planning Solutions Report explores methods of reducing the need to travel while suggesting ways to change the way necessary journeys are made.

The Travel Planning Solutions Report suggests that the implementation of flexible working practices such as working from home, compressed working week, changes to the number of days worked and hot desk/ satellite office working could reduce the number of staff travelling to the application site by 9.5% (25 cars) each day with a reduction in single car commuter travel of up to 30% (66 cars per day). Cumulatively these practices alone could reduce the number of vehicles travelling to and parking in the streets surrounding the former Grove Academy by up to 90 vehicles per day.

Given current business travel practices detailed in the TIA and Travel Planning Solutions Report, it is evident that approximately 55 members of staff (19%) would not be in the office at any one point during the working day, of which 45 would use their own car, thus removing 45 cars from the number of vehicles parking in and around the application site.

The Travel Planning Solutions Report concludes that through the adoption of flexible working patterns a reduction in commuter travel equating to 90 cars could be achieved with a further reduction of 45 cars readily achievable due to daily business travel requirements. Taking the achievable cumulative reduction in the requirement for car parking in and around the application site of 135 spaces from the 171 on street car parking spaces required by the proposed development leaves a deficit of only 36 on street car parking spaces. The TIA has indicated that there are 68 on street car parking spaces available in the streets surrounding the application site during the morning and 79 spaces available in the afternoon/ evening hours. It is therefore considered that through the adoption of the working practices detailed in the Travel Planning Solutions Report, the level of traffic generated by the proposed development can be accommodated within the proposed on site car park and surrounding street

network without impacting upon the level of environmental quality afforded to surrounding properties or giving rise to significant issues of road safety or traffic congestion. Should the Committee be mindful to grant planning permission, a condition requiring the submission, approval and adoption of a detailed Travel Plan will be incorporated into the decision notice.

With regard to the proposed community sports facilities, the reduction in cars associated with the office development identified by the Travel Planning Solutions Report has highlighted sufficient capacity within the surrounding road network to accommodate traffic associated with this development during the working day. During evening hours when the working day has ended there will be sufficient capacity within the application site to accommodate all traffic associated with the proposed community sports facility.

Initially there were concerns that the proposed office development and community sports facility would give rise to significant issues of road and pedestrian safety. However, following the recommendations of the Travel Planning Solutions Report and the resultant traffic numbers projected for this development through the adoption of a Travel Plan it is considered that the proposals will not give rise to significant issues of road or pedestrian safety. Principally this is because the level of additional traffic generated by the proposed office development and community sports facilities will be accommodated in the surrounding street network. Furthermore, access to the main car parking area serving the former Grove Academy is separated from pedestrian access routes to the New Grove Academy and therefore it is unlikely that conflict between pedestrians and vehicles entering the former Grove Academy car park will arise. This is reinforced by the provision of crossing patrol officers on Claypotts Road and Queen Street prior to school starting, during lunch times and when the school day ends. Pupils will therefore be provided with safe crossing facilities to prevent conflict with vehicular traffic from arising.

By virtue of design and layout the proposals satisfy the requirements of Policy 59, Policy 60 and Policy 61. This is because no external alterations are proposed to the B listed buildings

with the only internal alterations being of a sensitive scale and design so as to retain the historic fabric of the listed building. The re-use of the building for office accommodation will ensure that minor interventions only are required to adapt the building. The proposals are therefore considered to safeguard the future of the buildings while also maintaining the historic character of the listed buildings and the setting of the surrounding Grove Conservation Area.

The application site is very accessible from all locations with public footpaths providing access from the north, east, south and west of the site such is the surrounding street pattern. In addition to this the application site is located no more than 100m from two bus stops providing public transport through out Dundee and Angus. The application site is located no more than 270m from Broughty Ferry District Centre and no more than 450m from Broughty Ferry Train Station. There are various pedestrian crossing facilities in the form of dropped kerb crossing point and signalised crossings surrounding the application site which promote pedestrian and road safety as well as accessibility for all. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the requirements of Policy 81 of the adopted Local Plan.

In terms of Policy 82 (Cycling Facilities) the application site is located between the Dundee Green Circular Route to the north and National Cycle Route 1 to the south. Given the strength of the local road and footpath network surrounding the application site these routes are very accessible to the former Grove Academy. In addition to retaining existing linkages to the Dundee Green Circular Route and National Cycle Route 1, it is proposed to upgrade the existing cycle parking bays to provide 20 sheltered secure cycle racks.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposal complies with the provisions of the development plan.

Other Material Considerations

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

A - Views of Objectors

11 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents. The concerns raised involve:

- Inadequate on-street parking facilities to accommodate traffic associated with proposed office and sports hall development.

These concerns have been addressed in the Observations section of this Report. Accordingly it has been demonstrated that through the adoption of flexible working practices the number of vehicles associated with the proposed development can be successfully accommodated within the streets surrounding the application site without impacting upon the level of environmental quality afforded to neighbouring properties. These concerns are not supported.

- Road and pedestrian safety.

These concerns have been addressed in the Observations section of this report. Accordingly it is considered that no additional road safety concerns will arise from the proposed development as the level of additional traffic generated by the proposed office development and community sports facilities will be accommodated in the surrounding street network.

Access to the main car parking area serving the former Grove Academy is separated from pedestrian access routes to the New Grove Academy and therefore it is unlikely that conflict between pedestrians and vehicles entering the former Grove Academy car park will arise. This is reinforced by the provision of crossing patrol officers on Claypotts Road and Queen Street prior to school starting, during lunch times and when the school day ends. Pupils will therefore be provided with safe crossing facilities to prevent conflict with vehicular traffic from arising. These concerns are not supported.

- Camperdown Street should be opened up as a public thoroughfare.

This suggestion is not material to the outcome of this planning application and has not been taken into account in the

assessment of the current proposals.

B - Views of Broughty Ferry Community Council

The Community Council is supportive of proposals to re-use the former Grove Academy buildings. However, concern has been raised over the level of traffic that will be generated by the proposed office development and community sports facility, and, the associated road safety and parking problems that may arise from this.

These concerns have been addressed in the Observations section of this report and can be overcome through the incorporation of the recommendations of the Travel Planning Solutions Report into an adopted Travel Plan. A condition requiring the submission, approval and adoption of a Travel Plan will be incorporated into the grant of planning permission should the Committee be minded to approve this application.

C - Statutory Duty

In accordance with the provisions of Section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural interest which they possess. The proposed re-use of the B listed building will safeguard the future of the buildings while the sensitive internal alterations will not impact upon either the character or setting of the building. Accordingly the statutory duty is discharged in the assessment of the proposals against the Development Plan.

In accordance with Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. In the assessment of the proposals against the requirements of the Development Plan it was concluded that the proposals will respect the setting of the Grove Conservation Area. Accordingly the statutory duty is discharged.

It is concluded from the foregoing that insufficient weight can be accorded to

the material considerations such as to justify the refusal of planning permission. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted with conditions.

Design

The proposals do not involve any external alterations to the exterior of the B listed buildings or the modern extension to the west most B listed building. The proposals therefore raise no design issues.

CONCLUSION

Through the adoption of a Travel Plan which incorporates the recommendations of Travel Planning Solutions Report the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the Development Plan. The concerns of the Objectors are not supported. Accordingly it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that consent be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years from the date of this permission.
- 2 The proposed community sports facilities hereby approved will be operational between the hours of 0900 and 2200 only.
- 3 Development shall not begin on site until a comprehensive Travel Plan that sets out proposals for reducing dependency on the private car is submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, the Travel Plan should follow the Travel Plan Framework set out in the Traffic Impact Assessment by Colin Buchanan dated October 2009 and should include measures to reduce the impact of on street car parking in the area surrounding the application site. Prior to the occupation of the new office accommodation, the developer shall submit evidence relating to the implementation of the Travel Plan for written approval by the Council. Thereafter, the

developer shall provide evidence that demonstrates the continued implementation of the Travel Plan as and when requested by the Council.

Reasons

- 1 To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.
- 2 In the interests of safeguarding residential amenity and preventing instances of noise disturbance from arising.
- 3 In the interests of reducing dependence on the private car and to prevent instances of traffic congestion and illegal parking from occurring.