

Committee Minutes

Development Management Sub-Committee of the Planning Committee

Edinburgh, 23 February 2011

Present:- Councillors Lowrie (Convener), Burgess, Child, Hinds, Keir, McIvor, Milligan, Morris, Mowat, Munn, Paisley, Peacock, Rose and Thomas.

Also in attendance – Councillors Beckett, Bridgman and Hawkins.

1 Portobello Park and Golf Course, 20 Stanley Street, Edinburgh

The Head of Planning gave details of an application for planning permission (no 10/02830/FUL) for the erection of new Portobello High School and associated ancillary buildings, site works, car parking, landscaping, pitches and floodlighting. The Sub-Committee agreed to consider the application by means of a hearing. The Sub-Committee had previously visited the site.

A pre-application report on the proposals to identify key issues had been considered by the Sub-Committee on 22 September 2010.

The Head of Planning gave details of the application and the planning considerations involved.

The Head of Planning considered that the proposals were contrary to the development plan as the site was zoned for open space and the proposals did not meet the criteria for building in these areas. However, there were other material considerations that had been taken into account which outweighed the development plan land use allocation. These included the benefits to the local community and the upgrading of the pitches on the site.

In conclusion, he recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions and informatives as contained in his report.

The Sub-Committee heard representations on behalf of:

- a) Portobello Community Council
- b) Portobello Park Action Group
- c) Towerbank School Council
- d) Director of Children and Families, City of Edinburgh Council

Portobello Community Council

John Stewart on behalf of the Community Council indicated that they recognised the need for a new school, the issue had been contentious for the community and as such the Community Council had decided to neither object to nor support the application, but would present the differing views within the Community Council, which reflected those in the wider community:

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT

DESIGN

The design was excellent and would provide a flexible, stimulating learning environment. It would also integrate well with and be sympathetic to the surroundings, retaining natural features such as the existing tree line, minimising the visual impact and preserving the amenity of neighbours.

FACILITIES

Portobello High School was an excellent school but the shortcomings of the existing campus were clear. Not only was the building at the end of its useful life, but the extremely small site had never supported adequate facilities. The new school will provide much improved educational and sporting facilities meeting current and future needs, but would also deliver wider benefits through improved amenity and by creating a stimulating, high quality environment for the community to enjoy.

THE SITE

Given the inadequate size, redeveloping the existing site was far from ideal, especially given the considerable cost and disruption of a likely extended decant. The proposed site is the best of what were very limited options and does have many advantages; it is well located within the catchment, was easily accessible, could accommodate all the facilities required by the school alongside public Open Space, and provided a suitably prominent location for an important public building.

OPEN SPACE

The benefits to the community of the new school outweighed the partial loss of Open Space and the proposals would improve the quality, character and amenity of the local environment.

An improved path network would increase accessibility, the golf course and public Open Space would remain, views of the Forth and Arthur's Seat would still be enjoyed, and accessible all-weather pitches would be a considerable improvement over the poor quality grass pitches at present. The additional off-site Open Space enhancements should bring further local benefits.

The existing park is of limited leisure value and was not widely used, but the school and park combined could create a very valued environment, with a real sense of place and vitality, that could be a new focus for activity within the community.

ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC

As the Transport Assessment demonstrates, the relocation of the school would have a minimal impact on traffic and the wider road network. Any changes in travel patterns and drop-offs were likely to be small, dispersed, and with no significant effect.

Road safety issues had been well addressed in the submitted planning application with many welcome features; the additional signalled crossing point, the timed 20mph zone, the circulation area set back from Milton Road, and the segregated foot and cycle ways.

Additional off-site improvements (speed activated signs, barriers, pavement widening, improvements to the pedestrian bridge etc.) should be considered as the school Travel Plan is developed, in further consultation with the community.

COMMENTS OF OBJECTION

LOSS OF GREENSPACE

Placing the school on the park resulted in the irretrievable loss of major, accessible open space (25% of Portobello's parkland). The council reneged on their promise to replace open space lost. Offering the community £150,000 "compensation" was inadequate and unacceptable.

COMMON GOOD

The Council agreed that the Park was common good land, and documentation shows the intention that it be held for recreational use in perpetuity. It had not been confirmed in court that the Park could be built on.

SITE SELECTION

The selection of the park as the site for the school was the result of a seriously flawed feasibility study followed by a biased consultation process. Rebuild on site (Atkins Feasibility study 2003), or use of the vacant Lismore school site had not been given serious consideration at any stage. The open debate promised about the use of the park site at the planning stage had not been allowed to happen.

TRAFFIC

The relocation of the school to the Park would increase delays on Milton Road with queuing on Milton Link and other adjacent roads, together with re-routing through Portobello becoming more frequent. The impact of the concentration of pupils crossing Duddingston Park and Milton Road was likely to result in an increase in accidents and would be difficult to mitigate. Additional damage-only accidents will cause significant delays. The proposed drop-off measures will impact severely on local residents.

TOWNSCAPE

The visual impact of the school would be "Significant Adverse"; the protected views to Arthur's Seat and the Forth will be lost. The site would be surrounded by fencing up to 5m and floodlighting columns of 13.5m.

DESIGN

The design of the school has very little architectural merit with no sense of an important civic building. It was disappointing that the design team was only hoping to achieve a "very good" BREEAM rating - the minimum expected for a school.

AMENITY

Loss of amenity will result from:

- HGVs collecting refuse and delivering via Park Avenue;
- A high level of lighting/floodlighting, causing severe light pollution for residents.
- Noise pollution: nuisance from the sports pitches, school plant and noise from traffic introduced to quiet residential streets.
- Loss of 50% of millennium planting plus other trees, detracting from the environment, leading to a loss of habitats for birds and mammals, especially bats.

Building on the Park and installing tarmac paths around the golf course would aggravate flooding and drainage problems.

SPORTS FACILITIES

The proposed school would provide replacement sports facilities, with only one additional pitch. Access to the facilities will be limited and was not guaranteed.

GOLF COURSE

The site boundary for the application included the Golf Course, which indicated an expectation that the school would encroach onto the course. Its future was in question; this could lead to wholesale development of the area.

Portobello Park Action Group

Diana Cairns, Alison Connolly, Ian Ross and Thea Teale advised that that they were representing the views of local residents.

The proposals were contrary to Structure Plan and Edinburgh City local Plan policies in respect of open space and would result in the loss of a community asset with no significant gain.

The design of the new school was not of a high quality and would be detrimental to the character of the area and detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. The materials to be used in construction were not in keeping with the surrounding buildings and were visually unexciting and would have a significant adverse impact on the townscape and the protected view of Arthur's Seat from Hope Lane.

The transport assessment did not address the wider issues of the east and south of the city or the congestion and significant road safety issues on the adjoining road network that would be created if the school was built on this site.

The development would also be detrimental to the biodiversity of the area in particular to bats with the loss of the Millenium planting with no alternative provision being made.

In conclusion the group were of the opinion that the site selection process had been fundamentally flawed and that the benefits to the community did not outweigh the loss of open space and that the best proposal was to rebuild the school on its existing site, and requested the committee to refuse the application.

Towerbank School Council

Sean waters of Towerbank School Council advised that they had carried out a consultation with parents and that there was overwhelming support for the proposals.

The existing school required to be replaced and while this was not the ideal site it was the best available from the limited options. The School Council still had concerns but most of these had been addressed. The design was flexible and sympathetic to its surroundings and would not effect the amenity of neighbours.

The benefits to the community of the new school with the community facilities outweighed the loss of underused community open space.

In conclusion he indicated that more people were in support of the proposals than opposed to them and requested the Sub-Committee to grant the application.

Director of Children and Families, City of Edinburgh Council

Billy MacIntyre, Head of Resources, Children and Families Department and Peigi MacArthur, Head Teacher, Portobello High School advised that the present High School was in urgent need of replacement with an estimated three and a half million pounds required to be spent on the building before any new school would be completed

From the criteria used to identify sites Portobello Park was the only one that met all of them. The new school would be a prime educational and community facility.

The proposals were of a high quality of design and used high quality materials, and adequate road safety measures were proposed. Staff and pupils at the existing school had been involved at the design stage and the local community had been consulted throughout the process

In conclusion it was considered that the new school would provide excellent educational and community facilities and asked the Sub-Committee to grant the application.

Councillor Bridgman and Hawkins were heard as local ward members.

Decision

To approve the recommendation by the Head of Planning to grant planning permission, subject to the conditions, informatives and traffic orders as contained in his report.

(Reference – report by the Head of Planning, submitted).

Dissent

Councillor Burgess requested that his dissent be recorded to the above decision.

2 Pre-Application Report – 2 Carrington Road, Edinburgh – Teaching Facility and Auditorium

The Head of Planning gave a pre-application report on forthcoming proposals by Fettes College for a new teaching facility and auditorium at 2 Carrington Road, Edinburgh. He listed the key issues that would require to be addressed. The Sub-Committee was invited to give any additional views on matters to be addressed.

Decision

To approve the recommendations on key issues to be addressed, as listed in the report by the Head of Planning.

(Reference – report by the Head of Planning, submitted.)

3 Pre-Application Report – 2 Carrington Road, Edinburgh – New boarding House

The Head of Planning gave a pre-application report on a forthcoming planning application by Fettes College for a new boarding house for sixty pupils at 2 Carrington Road, Edinburgh. He listed the key issues that would require to be addressed. The Sub-Committee was invited to give any additional views on matters to be addressed.

Decision

To approve the recommendations on key issues to be addressed, as listed in the report by the Head of Planning.

(Reference – report by the Head of Planning, submitted)

4 Other Applications

The Sub-Committee considered the Other Applications on the agenda.

(Councillor Beckett was heard in connection with item 11, 2 West Port, Edinburgh (application no. 10/03626/FUL)).

Decision

To determine the other applications as detailed in Appendix 1 to this minute.

(Reference – reports by the Head of Planning, submitted)

OTHER APPLICATIONS

Note: Detailed conditions/reasons for the following decisions are contained in the statutory planning register.

Agenda Item No.	Address/ Reference No	Details of Proposals	Decision
3	Portobello Park and Golf Course, 20 Stanley Street, Edinburgh	Erection of new Portobello High School and associated ancillary buildings, site works, car parking, landscaping, pitches and floodlighting (10/02830/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions, informatives and traffic orders as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.
4	2 Carrington Road - Fettes College	Pre Application Report - proposed new teaching facilities and auditorium	To note the key issues as described in the report
5	2 Carrington Road - Fettes College	Pre Application Report - proposed new boarding house for 60 pupils	To note the key issues as described in the report
6	58 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh	New replacement exterior lighting, existing windows/doors/ frames re-painted/ new paving to side of property/new roof ventilation fans to low level flat roof (as amended) (10/02588/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions and informatives as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.

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Agenda Item No.	Address/ Reference No	Details of Proposals	Decision
7	65 Drum Brae Drive, Edinburgh (Land 101 Metres West of)	1. Elevational alterations from the existing consented scheme for natural ventilation purposes. 2. Removal of clerestorey light above library and replacement with 3 rooflights. 3. Allowance of a domestic cooker and use thereof in the day care centre for rehabilitation purposes. 4. The existing footpath to Drum Brae Drive be retained due to existing utilities (10/03499/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.
8	28 Harvester's Way, Edinburgh (Land 30 Metres North of)	Proposed Healthy Living Centre containing a range of Edinburgh Council Services, NHS primary care services and GP practice. (10/02091/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions, Informatives and a legal agreement as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.
9	3 Murrayburn Road	Proposed partial demolition of existing depot building, proposed new engineering workshop, relocation of staff car park, temporary fuelling and washing bays. (10/02855/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions, informatives and a legal agreement as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.

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Agenda Item No.	Address/ Reference No	Details of Proposals	Decision
10	50 Pilrig Street, Edinburgh	Erection of five storey building to form 8 residential apartments with associated parking and amenity space (09/03284/FUL))	To continue consideration of the application for:- 1. the applicant to submit an amended design that would be in keeping with the existing properties in the neighbouring conservation area 2. a site visit
11	2 West Port, Edinburgh (Art Roch Hostel)	Proposed alteration to fabric to create a hot food bar at ground floor to West Port (10/03626/FUL)	To GRANT planning permission subject to conditions as recommended by the Head of Planning and detailed in his report.