

# Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 3 December 2014

**Application for Listed Building Consent 14/03464/LBC  
At 210 Lanark Road West, Edinburgh, EH14 5NX  
Demolition of existing primary school building and out-  
buildings. Erection of 48 residential units - 12 flats for rent,  
15. flats for sale, 14 terraced houses for sale, 7 detached  
houses for sale, and associated landscaping works.**

<b>Item number</b>	6.1(b)
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	A02 - Pentland Hills

## Summary

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The proposals comply with the development plan, Edinburgh planning guidelines and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP). The proposed demolition of the former primary school and single storey link building connecting the public library to the south is considered acceptable in that they are not considered to be of special architectural and historic interest. The proposed demolition would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## Links

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<a href="#">Policies and guidance for this application</a>	RWE32, RWE33, RWE35, RWE36, NSLBCA, CRPCUR,
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# Report

## **Application for Listed Building Consent 14/03464/LBC At 210 Lanark Road West, Edinburgh, EH14 5NX Demolition of existing primary school building and out- buildings. Erection of 48 residential units - 12 flats for rent, 15. flats for sale, 14 terraced houses for sale, 7 detached houses for sale, and associated landscaping works.**

### **Recommendations**

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1.1 It is recommended that this application is Granted.

### **Background**

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#### **2.1 Site description**

The application site (1.06 hectares) lies to the north east of the junction with Lanark Road West and Curriehill Road.

The site is occupied by the Category C listed, former Curriehill Primary School (originally Curriehill High School). The former board school, now a public library, which also forms part of the list description, lies adjacent to Lanark Road West immediately to the south of the application site.

The buildings were listed on 9 August 2005, Listed Building reference: - 50143.

The former board school represents the older building on the site and dates from 1903. The former primary school buildings comprise a mix of buildings dating from the early to mid 20th century. The buildings were vacated in 2007, and now lie semi derelict with the site overgrown.

The original part of the primary school building is formed of a linear block, with hipped slate roof, approximately 75 metres in length and featuring 22 bays with regular fenestration. This block is aligned in a south westerly to north easterly direction with a two storey frontage forming a backdrop to the public library located 12 metres to the south. These buildings are linked via a modern, flat roofed corridor.

The site levels fall steeply to the rear of the block, with the buildings rising to 4 storeys in height. These include a gambrel roofed gym block to the centre, with modern 4 storey teaching block to the east and former assembly hall and kitchen to the west.

The buildings are predominantly finished in grey render with concrete cills, dressings and a deep concrete block basecourse. The modern extensions to the rear are predominantly flat roofed with buff brick and rubblestone detail.

The buildings are situated within open grounds to the north and south. The area to the front of the former primary school comprises hard surfaced open space with limited tree planting. This has served historically as playground and also provided limited car parking. Grass embankments and former hard surfaced games court lie to the rear.

The sandstone plinth walls and cast iron railings to the southern and western boundaries also form part of the list description. These date from 1903 and are contemporary with the original board school.

The former primary school buildings are included on the Buildings at Risk Register Scotland (Reference number; 4747). However, the public library, to the south of the site is not considered at risk and is excluded from this entry.

The southern part of the application site lies within the Currie Conservation Area. All the listed structures are located inside the conservation area designation.

## **2.2 Site History**

1 April 1998 Permission granted for the change of use from clinic to public library (Application reference; - 97/00075/CEC).

## **Main report**

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### **3.1 Description of the Proposal**

The proposed demolition of all the Category C listed former Curriehill Primary School buildings to allow for the redevelopment of the site for residential use.

The former board school, now a public library lies outside the scope of the application and is to be retained as part of the proposals. However, the single storey corridor which links this building with the former primary school building to the north is identified for demolition.

The sandstone plinth walls and iron railings to the southern and western site boundaries would also be retained as part of the scheme.

A Listed Building Demolition Statement which includes a SHEP test for the proposed demolition has been submitted by the applicant in support of the application.

### **3.2 Determining Issues**

In considering whether to grant consent, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. For the purposes of this issue, preserve, in relation to the building, means preserve it either in its existing state or subject only to such alterations or extensions as can be carried out without serious detriment to its character.

Do the proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area? If they do, there is a strong presumption against granting of permission.

### 3.3 Assessment

To address these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether:

- a) the principle of demolition of the listed former primary school buildings and impact upon the character of the conservation area are acceptable; and
- b) that representations have been addressed.

#### a) Principle of demolition and impact on the conservation area

The applicant has undertaken a Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) test in relation to the proposed demolition of the listed former primary school. Information has been submitted in relation to the four SHEP test criteria; including the importance of the building, its current condition, the economic viability of re-using the building and the wider public benefits of demolishing the building. SHEP states that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. Planning Authorities should therefore only approve such applications where they are satisfied that the building is not of special interest.

In terms of the architectural and historic importance of the former primary school buildings, these include a mixture of early and mid 20th century buildings of a style and design which are fairly typical of educational buildings of that era. The original building features a long, narrow plan designed to increase levels of cross ventilation, which contrasts with earlier Victorian designs including that of the original board school to the front of the site. However, the clarity of the design of the original building has also been diluted by unsympathetic extensions to the north in a variety of architectural styles. The northern and western elevation lack architectural coherence and distinctiveness. There is little of internal interest, with the exception of gym hall timber flooring and changing room panelling which have survived relatively undamaged.

The older public library which dates from 1903 is of a superior architectural quality in terms of its visual appearance, intricacy of detailing and material finishes which include dressed stonework. In comparison, the former primary school building lacks any significant architectural refinement which makes the public library stand out as an important landmark in the area. Whilst, the former primary school buildings form a visual backdrop to the library offering some limited townscape interest to the conservation area, this interest is diminished by their limited architectural and historic value.

The external fabric of the school has deteriorated significantly since the buildings were vacated in 2007. Although the school appears to be structurally stable, the external envelope has suffered through neglect and vandalism with much of the exposed glazing now broken. There is evidence of deterioration to the roof fabric, both to the slate and metal finishes with rainwater pipes and fixtures also being removed. This has led to water ingress and damage to the interior of the building.

The Council has sought to market the buildings and the wider site since they were vacated in 2007. Several bidders with proposals for a variety of uses have been identified, however, to date none of these have secured planning approval for redevelopment.

The applicant has considered the economic viability of converting the former primary school buildings, including the repair and reuse of the buildings for residential use. The nature of building plan form, the configuration of windows, internal spaces and the sloping site do not readily lend themselves to residential conversion. The positioning and scale of the buildings in relation to the steeply sloping areas of the site, would also compromise the ability to develop the remainder of the site for residential uses to the north, due to overshadowing. In conclusion, they have stated that the conversion of the buildings to residential uses would be economically unviable, in that they would create expensive, inefficient properties which would be difficult to market in the location. The school buildings are no longer considered suitable for modern educational requirements and deemed surplus to requirements by the Education Authority.

The applicant has also identified that wider public benefits could be derived were the building to be demolished to allow redevelopment of the site. These include the development of modern, energy efficient building stock, enhanced public access through the site and improved public open space, as well as an enhanced role for the public library, which could act as a central focal point for the area thus promoting its community use.

The applicant has concluded that demolition of the building meets all criteria of the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) test for demolition as set out in Paragraph 3.50, in that the former primary school buildings are of minor architectural or historic importance, the building is now in poor condition, the repair and reuse of the building would be unviable and that the redevelopment of the site would result in wider public benefits.

Whilst the various issues regarding the economic viability of converting the building, its current condition and potential public benefits of redeveloping the site are noted, these factors do not justify demolition in their own right. The issues regarding the current condition of the building are surmountable and despite a level of marketing which has taken place, alternative uses could be found for the buildings, albeit at unknown cost and timescale.

However, it is accepted that the former primary school buildings are of minor architectural and historic importance. Their style and design are fairly typical of educational buildings from the early to mid 20th Century. The clarity of the design of the original building has also been diluted by unsympathetic extensions to the north in a variety of different architectural styles, with the northern and western elevations lacking in architectural coherence and distinctiveness.

The original board school, now the public library represents the older part of the listed building and would be retained as part of the proposals. This is considered to be of greater architectural quality and interest. This library building is also identified in the conservation area character appraisal as being the most significant element within the conservation area. Whilst the former primary school buildings, particularly the frontage, are of some townscape interest within the conservation area, these are considered to be of minimal architectural and historic importance.

The impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, arising from the proposed demolition of the listed buildings has been further considered as part of the accompanying full planning application, 14/02658/FUL. This has concluded that the overall impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area would be neutral.

In view of these factors, it is concluded that the former primary school buildings are not of special architectural or historic interest and demolition would therefore be acceptable. The proposed demolition would not adversely affect the special architectural and historic interest of the remaining parts of the listed building. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of RWELP Policies E32, E33, E35, E36 and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) as previously outlined above.

It is recommended that a conditions are attached to the permission requiring that the building is subject to a Level 2, Historic Building Survey (to include annotated plans, photographic and written report) prior to demolition. It is also recommended that demolition works do not commence until a Notice of Initiation of Development for the new development (14/02558/FUL) has been lodged with the Planning Authority.

The Council is required to notify the Scottish ministers of its intention to grant Listed Building Consent to the demolition of a category "C" listed building prior to the determination of the application.

#### b) Representations

Representations have identified the following issues which have been addressed as follows:

- Regret to the loss of the former High and latterly Primary school building - Noted, issues addressed in section 3.3a).
- Proposals to redevelop the site should seek to re-use the listed building as an integral part of any redevelopment - issue addressed in section 3.3a).
- Demolition will damage the historic character of the centre of Currie - Noted, issue has been addressed as part of the accompanying Full Planning application (14/02658/FUL).
- The Council should demand a replacement quality building of similar or better architectural quality that complements the character of the conservation area - Noted, issue has been addressed as part of the accompanying Full Planning application (14/02658/FUL).
- Concern regarding the generic architectural quality of the proposed corner block, which would not address the prominent corner and would have a negative impact upon the character of the conservation area - Noted, issue has been addressed as part of the Full Planning application (14/02658/FUL).
- Position of the corner block would block the prominent view of the library from the west, a contribution to the character of the village which is noted in the list description - Noted, issue has been addressed as part of the Full Planning application (14/02658/FUL).

- The Council have allowed the building to fall into a dilapidated states making justification for demolition easier - The Council have sought to market the buildings since the buildings were vacated in 2007 with minimal interest. Any proposal to demolish the buildings has to be justified in accordance with national policy requirements (Scottish Historic Environment Policy -SHEP) and Local Plan policy.
- Proposal would contravene Local Plan Policies - addressed in section 3.3a).
- It is recommended that this application is Granted.

### **3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives**

1. The Scottish Ministers shall be notified of the Council's decision to grant listed building consent prior to its determination.
2. That the former primary school buildings are subject to an historic building survey (Level 2: Annotated plans, photographic and written report) with details submitted and agreed by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of demolition works.
3. No demolition shall start until the applicant has confirmed in writing the start date for the new development by the submission of a Notice of Initiation.

#### **Reasons:-**

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to record the architectural and historic details of the listed building to provide a permanent public record.
3. In order to safeguard the character of the conservation area.

#### **Informatives**

It should be noted that:

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.
2. No development shall take place on the site until a 'Notice of Initiation of Development' has been submitted to the Council stating the intended date on which the development is to commence. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of planning control, under Section 123(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
3. As soon as practicable upon the completion of the development of the site, as authorised in the associated grant of permission, a 'Notice of Completion of Development' must be given, in writing to the Council.

## **Financial impact**

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### **4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:**

The application site and buildings are owned by the Council and currently subject to disposal.

## **Risk, Policy, compliance and governance impact**

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5.1 Provided planning applications are determined in accordance with statutory legislation, the level of risk is low.

## **Equalities impact**

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### **6.1 The equalities impact has been assessed as follows:**

An equalities and human rights impact assessment has been completed for the accompanying full planning application, 14/02658/FUL.

## **Sustainability impact**

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### **7.1 The sustainability impact has been assessed as follows:**

This application is not subject to the sustainability requirements of the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

## **Consultation and engagement**

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### **8.1 Pre-Application Process**

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

### **8.2 Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments**

Two letters of representation have been received including one from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and raise the following issues;-

- Regret to the loss of the former High and latterly Primary school building
- Proposals to redevelop the site should seek to re-use the listed building as an integral part of any redevelopment.
- Demolition will damage the historic character of the centre of Currie.
- Council should demand a replacement quality building of similar or better architectural quality that complements the character of the conservation area.
- Concern regarding the generic architectural quality of the proposed corner block, which would not address the prominent corner and would have a negative impact upon the character of the conservation area.
- Position of the corner block would block the prominent view of the library from the west, a contribution to the character of the village which is noted in the list description.
- Council have allowed the building to fall into a dilapidated states making justification for demolition easier.



- Proposal would contravene Local Plan Policies.

## **Background reading/external references**

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- To view details of the application go to
- [Planning and Building Standards online services](#)

**Statutory Development  
Plan Provision**

Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan - Within Settlement  
Boundary, Conservation Area.

**Date registered**

27 August 2014

**Drawing numbers/Scheme**

01-02, 03A, 04-14,

Scheme 2

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**Links - Policies**

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**Relevant Policies:**

Policy E32 seeks to ensure that proposals affecting a listed building will be considered for their effect on the character of the building. The restoration of architectural character will be an overriding consideration. Alterations will only be permitted where they respect the architectural integrity of the building.

Policy E33 says there will be a presumption in favour of the retention of a listed building or restoration to its original use

Policy E35 states that developments in Conservation Areas will only be permitted where all features which contribute to the special character and appearance of the areas are retained.

Policy E36 states that Development proposals in a conservation area should take into account the area's special interest and how its character and appearance may be preserved or enhanced

**Non-statutory guidelines** 'LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS' provides guidance on repairing, altering or extending listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

The Currie Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises the vernacular form of development, the natural setting of The Water of Leith and the predominant residential use.

# Appendix 1

## **Application for Listed Building Consent 14/03464/LBC At 210 Lanark Road West, Edinburgh, EH14 5NX Demolition of existing primary school building and out- buildings. Erection of 48 residential units - 12 flats for rent, 15. flats for sale, 14 terraced houses for sale, 7 detached houses for sale, and associated landscaping works.**

### **Consultations**

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#### **City of Edinburgh Archaeological Service**

*Further to your consultation request I would like to make the following comments and recommendations concerning this application;-*

*The site comprises the vacated (2007) mid-20th century Curriehill Primary school buildings, built as extensions to the original listed 1903 Primary School now in use as the local library The site lies on the historic edge of the medieval Village of Currie. The origins and development of the medieval village are not well known however the Parish Kirk dedicated to St Kenitgern at Currie is known to date from at least the 13th century and possibly as early as the 11th century AD, with the name Currie first recorded in 1210 (Harris S, The Place Names of Edinburgh).*

*Therefore this application must be considered under terms of the Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Scottish Historic environment Policy (SHEP) and also CEC's Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan policy E30. The aim should be to preserve archaeological remains in situ as a first option, but alternatively where this is not possible, archaeological excavation or an appropriate level of recording may be an acceptable alternative.*

*The proposed scheme will see the demolition to the former Curriehill Primary School considered to be local historic interest and may also disturb archaeological remains associated with the medieval and later village of Currie. The demolition of the school will have a significant impact, however one which is considered to be moderate in terms of archaeological interest. It is recommended therefore that prior to its demolition that a historic building survey (level 2: annotated plans, photographic and written report) is linked to an appropriate level of documentary research in order to provide a permanent record of this historic structure.*

*In addition ground-breaking works associated with both demolition of the former school and construction of the new development could disturb significant remains associated with the medieval and later village of Currie. Accordingly demolition of the school must be confined initially to above ground level. Archaeological evaluation of the site (max 10%) will then be undertaken as the first phase of a programme of works, the scope of any future works being determined by the results from this initial phase of investigation.*

