

**Full Planning Application  
at  
294 Colinton Road  
Edinburgh  
EH13 0PT**

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**Development Quality Sub-Committee  
of the Planning Committee**

**Proposal:** Erect 100 bedroom sixth form boarding house, with associated relocation of playing field, access, front and rear landscape spaces and general landscape works including tree removal

**Applicant:** Merchiston Castle School

**Reference No:** 03/00984/FUL

**1 Purpose of report**

To recommend that the application be **GRANTED** subject to;

**Conditions**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than five years from the date of this consent.
2. The applicant shall contribute £2,500 towards the Council's safe routes to school programme.
3. The permission shall not be issued, nor have any effect, until a legal agreement has been concluded in respect of the requirements of condition/s 2.
4. All accesses shall be open for use by the public in terms of the statutory definition of 'road' and shall be the subject of an application for road construction consent.

5. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy, having first been agreed by the City Archaeologist.
6. A drainage system shall be provided that prevents surface water run-off into the adjacent properties in Broomyknowe.
7. Details of the proposed drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site.
8. The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented within six months of the completion of the development, and thereafter shall be maintained by the applicants and/or their successors to the entire satisfaction of the planning authority; maintenance shall include the replacement of plant stock which fails to survive, for whatever reason, as often as is required to ensure the establishment of the approved landscaping scheme.

## **Reasons**

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to safeguard the interests of road safety.
3. In order to secure implementation of condition 2.
4. In order to safeguard the interests of road safety.
5. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.
6. In order to prevent flooding as a result of the development.
7. In order to enable the Head of Planning & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
8. In order to ensure that a high standard of landscaping is achieved, appropriate to the location of the site.

## **2 Main report**

### **Site description**

The application site is an area of land occupied by three modern detached staff house, a junior rugby pitch and clusters of small to medium trees to the north east of Rogerston House within Merchiston Castle School grounds. The principal school buildings by W J Walker Todd dating from 1929-30, lie to the north of the development site. These are category C listed (item no. 277) and comprise a symmetrical Renaissance style group of two storey pebbledashed buildings with sandstone dressings. The former Colinton House, a two storey and basement classical style building dating from 1801-6, is situated to the west of these buildings and is category A listed (item no. 329).

The L-plan ruin of the 16th and 17th century Colinton Castle, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and category B listed (item no. 300), lies to the north-west of the development site. Colinton House Stables, approximately 60 metres from the main entrance, are category C(S) listed (item no. 277) and date from the early 19th century. The single storey entrance lodge by Dick Peddie and Walker Todd, which is contemporary with the main school buildings, is accessed via the original gates to Colinton House. The latter structures are category C(S) listed (item no. 277).

The grounds of Merchiston Castle School are extensive with mature trees forming a landscape boundary with Colinton Road and Colinton Dell and an avenue along the main drive. Sports pitches occupy the east section of the site. The School and its grounds are situated within Colinton Conservation Area.

### **Site history**

April 1997 - consent granted to demolish the existing music department buildings and erect new music/IT buildings (97/00059/FUL).

April 1997 - consent granted to erect a portable one storey temporary building for 10-15 years (97/00558/FUL).

December 1998 - consent granted to modify an existing building to form a school library, office, entrance lobby and toilets (98/02882/FUL).

May 1999 - consent granted to erect a pitched roof over the arts department building (97/02974/FUL).

October 2001 - consent granted to erect junior school classrooms and ancillary facilities in a wooded area to the south west of the main school buildings (01/02890/FUL).

## **Development**

The application is for the erection of an L-plan, three storey, modern style sixth form boarding house on the area of land to the immediate north east of Rogerston House. The proposed structure, which contains 100 bedrooms, is finished in natural pebbledash render with a coursed sandstone plinth and areas of horizontally slatted oak cladding around powder coated windows and doors. The east elevation contains a three bay section of balconies formed by square oak posts with galvanised steel balustrades. The three stairwells are articulated externally with oak louvres. The roof is finished in copper with standing seams and the wall head dormers are copper clad.

The original scheme proposed less articulated external elevations finished in pebbledash render with more extensive areas of sandstone and glazed stairwells.

The current proposals also involve landscape restructuring in the affected area, including the removal of various trees to the east of Rogerston House and replacement with groupings of deciduous, native trees in twos and threes. The peripheral tree belts adjacent to the existing residential area to the north east of the site will be reinforced with mixed shrubs and ground cover. A formal landscaped area comprising gravel roadways, feature trees, grass verges and setted pedestrian crossing points will be created in front of the principal elevation of the new boarding house. The existing junior rugby pitch will be relocated to the north east of the application site.

## **Supporting Statement**

A copy of the supporting statement by the architect is available for viewing in the Members' Group Rooms.

## **Consultations**

### **Transport**

No objections, subject to the application of a condition requiring all accesses to be open for use by the public in terms of the statutory definition of 'road' and be the subject of an application for road construction consent. The developer is also required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to provide the sum of £2,500 towards the Council's safe routes to school programme, prior to the occupation of the boarding house.

### **Transportation - Structures**

This area causes flooding to the houses in Broomyknowe from the area that is to be levelled for a sports pitch. The school should therefore be required to put in a drainage system which will prevent this.

### **Environmental and Consumer Services**

No objections.

## **Culture and Leisure**

Although no archaeological sites have been found within the site boundaries, the site lies within the centre of the historic grounds associated with both Colinton Castle and House. As such the site is considered as lying within an area with the potential for containing isolated significant archaeological remains associated with the medieval and later periods of occupation of the estate. It is therefore essential that a suitable programme of works should be carried out at the site by a professional archaeologist to record any remains uncovered during any ground moving operations. In order to secure the necessary programme of works, it is recommended that an appropriate condition is attached.

## **Education**

As the application is for student accommodation, this will not generate additional pupil numbers going to catchment schools. Accordingly this department has no objections to this application.

## **Sportscotland**

The development proposals attempt to minimise the impact on the playing fields. Although the plans show the loss of a junior rugby pitch, this will be replaced within the school grounds by an extension to the playing fields. As this would result in no net loss of playing field area, Sportscotland has no objections to this proposal.

## **Craiglockhart Community Council**

### **Scheme 1**

The Community Council has two principal concerns about the proposals. Firstly, careful consideration should be given to drainage as an integral part of the application, as the proposals increase the amount of hardstanding. Secondly, the roofline of the proposed boarding house is hard and unsympathetic and needs to be stepped down to improve the relationship with the outstanding parkland setting and retain quality in a highly significant public view of the grounds.

### **Scheme 2**

Changes in materials and elevation treatment create a more domestic character for the proposed boarding house, but do not overcome the problem of the roofline. The building is large and the failure to vary the ridge line results in an unfortunate appearance which does not reflect the quality of the school buildings and their setting.

## **Representations**

### **Scheme 1**

The application was advertised on 9 May 2003. Seven letters of representation were received, including letters from the Scottish Civic Trust, Cockburn Association and Colinton Amenity Association, which included objections to the proposals on the following grounds:

- adverse effect on the setting of the listed buildings on the site;

- commercial appearance which is out of keeping with the domestic style of the original buildings;
- poor articulation and architectural expression;
- unsympathetic roofline due to shallow pitch;
- aluminium and copper are inappropriate materials;
- no rhythm to the fenestration;

Other concerns expressed were the need for the installation of a proper drainage system to address flooding problems in Broomyknowe and an increase in traffic flows on the surrounding residential streets.

The Colinton Amenity Association also commended the design of the spaces between the new and existing buildings.

The comments regarding the internal layout of the building are non-material to this application for planning permission.

## **Scheme 2**

The Cockburn Association and Colinton Amenity Association have submitted further comments on the revised proposals stating that the detailing of the facades has improved the appearance of the building. However, the Colinton Amenity Association remains concerned about the design of the roof and extensive use of copper on the roof and dormers.

## **Policy**

The site is located within the South West Edinburgh Local Plan in an area of Housing and Compatible Uses, and the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan in an Urban Area and area of Open Space.

### Relevant Policies:

Policy E3 establishes that within all Conservation Areas, the Council will exercise careful control over all development in order to preserve and enhance the special character of the areas. *Demolition of buildings and structures will not be permitted if likely to affect adversely the character of the area.*

Policy E4 establishes that the retention and restoration of architectural and historic character will be the overriding consideration in dealing with proposals for the alteration or development of listed buildings. Alterations or development in the surrounding area will not be permitted if likely to affect adversely the character of such buildings.

Policy E6 seeks to preserve and protect ancient monuments and archaeological sites.

Policy E18 seeks to enhance the environment through the achievement of as much tree planting as possible, by developers and the Council.

Policy DQ14 seeks to safeguard the character and setting of listed buildings and will support and encourage; their retention in viable uses; the preservation and repair of historic fabric and features; the removal of inappropriate additions; the use of high quality materials and sympathetic design in alterations; and proposals which would enhance their setting.

Policy DQ15 protects listed buildings against demolition, alterations or extensions which would result in the loss of historic fabric or damage the architectural integrity, and development which would diminish the setting.

Policy DQ17 states that development or redevelopment proposals within a conservation area will only be permitted where the proposal is of a high design standard and would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

Policy DQ7 states that the new development should include proposals for new tree planting and robust landscaping to achieve a suitable visual setting for new building and enhance open spaces and boundaries, and should be designed to minimise its impact on any trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order and other healthy trees worthy of retention.

Policy DQ20 protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments against development which would adversely affect their setting

Policy GE09 states Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of:

- a) public parks (shown on the proposals map);
- b) public and private playing fields and sports pitches (shown on the proposals map)
- c) other areas of open space of recreational, amenity or social value (including allotments)

However, in assessing proposals the Council will take into account the function and importance of the open space and the need for, or benefits to be gained from allowing, the development proposed.

Policy T4 The Road Network, states that planning permission will not be approved if development would result in an inappropriate use of surrounding roads. With new development required to fund improvement measures in accordance with 'Movement and Development' standards.

Non-statutory guidelines on the 'SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS' supplement local plan conservation and design policies, providing guidance for the protection and enhancement of the setting of listed buildings.

Non-Statutory guidelines on 'QUALITY OF LANDSCAPES IN DEVELOPMENT' sets detailed design principles for hard and soft landscaping, including the retention of existing features, and relates these principles to different types of development.

### 3 Conclusions and Recommendations

#### DETERMINING ISSUES

The determining issues are:

- do the proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area? If they do, there is a strong presumption against the granting of permission;
- do the proposals preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses? If they do not, there is a presumption against the granting of permission. For the purposes of this issue, "preserve", in relation to a 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 comply with the development plan?
- if the proposals do comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?
- if the proposals do not comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

#### ASSESSMENT

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

- a) whether the proposals have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- b) whether the proposals have an adverse impact on open space and landscape qualities of the site;
- c) whether the proposals adversely affect the listed building or its setting;
- d) whether the proposals adversely affect the Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting;
- e) whether the proposals are detrimental to residential amenity or road safety.

a) The character of the Colinton Conservation Area is described in the South West and draft West Edinburgh Local Plans as follows:

*"The old village of Colinton grew up by the Water of Leith where the river was used to power the mill machines. A mix of commercial and housing uses still exist (this being the main commercial focus of the area) with many listed buildings. The amenity of this core area is, however, affected by traffic congestion, particularly in Bridge Road.*

*With the advent of public transport and rail towards the end of the last century, considerable expansion took place to the north and south of the village. These suburban developments of 1890-1914 have some of Edinburgh's most important suburban architecture.*

*This is reflected in the number of villas from this period which have been listed, including some by Sir Robert Lorimer such as the Rustic cottages and Laverockdale House, (the latter falls within the proposed extended conservation area).*

*Many of these Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian stone built villas are set within extensive grounds and their quality and the spaciousness of their setting contributes significantly to the character of the conservation area. There has been considerable pressure for development in the garden areas of these villas and the council will require any new development to respect the character and setting of these houses and gardens and will apply its "villa policy" within this conservation area.*

*The north-eastern corner of this conservation area is dominated by Merchiston Castle School and its extensive and well wooded grounds, which are the setting for a number of listed structures including the remains of Colinton Castle."*

The architect's supporting statement details the reasons why the school requires a new boarding facility to remain at the forefront of the boarding school market and the rationale behind the proposed location to the north east of Rogerston House. This is the optimum site for the new facility in practical terms at the east end of the main complex of school buildings.

The proposed site is acceptable in principle as the existing staff houses on the land are of no historic or architectural significance and there will be no loss of playing field area with the relocation of the existing junior rugby pitch to the north east of the application site. The location for the new boarding house will also restore a degree of symmetry to the layout of the school, as the majority of later extensions and additions are positioned to the west of the original complex, which was erected on a north-south axis centred on the main school drive. Principal views of the listed buildings from the main approach route will remain relatively unaltered and the new structure will not impinge on views from the main complex to Craiglockhart Hill.

The proposed structure is a stylistically modern building, which relates to the original school buildings in terms of its three storey scale, simple plan form of adjoining wings, elevational articulation and natural materials. However, the design also incorporates contemporary elements and contrasting materials to distinguish the new structure from the historic buildings. The most contentious of these is the copper clad shallow pitched roof, the ridgeline of which does not vary in height in marked contrast to the undulating, deep pitched roof profiles of the original buildings. This detail is considered acceptable as a demarcation of the age of the structure. The design has been modified in the revised scheme to incorporate wall head dormers that create the illusion of a deeper pitch. Also, the use of traditionally detailed copper will provide an attractive green coloured feature within the mature landscape setting of the school. This material was approved for the roof of the recently erected Junior School to the south west of the main complex.

The site is occupied by 3 houses and part of a pitch. Sportscotland has no objections to the pitch re arrangements and the loss of open space is not material.

b) The proposed landscaping works will preserve and enhance the open space and landscape qualities of the site through the removal of various trees to the east of Rogerston House, which are not of parkland tree character or stature in terms of their small to medium scale and tight grouping. The replacement trees will extend the existing parkland character around the new boarding house and provide a sense of division between the new development and playing field area. The reinforcement of the peripheral tree belts adjacent to the residential area to the north east of the school site will create additional screening and retain amenity in the longer term. The proposed formal landscaped area to the front of the new boarding house complements the existing forecourt areas of the original buildings.

c) The proposed structure is subservient in height to the original school buildings and will be located well behind the building line of the main block and its flanking houses. The layout, design and materials of the new boarding house are sympathetic to the original structures and the proposed landscaping works will redress the loss of any green space in an appropriate manner. The development will not therefore adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings.

d) The proposed development is a significant distance from Colinton Castle, although there could be archaeological remains in the affected area. A condition has therefore been applied to protect any important remains in accordance with the Archaeological Officer's recommendation.

e) Transport has raised no concerns regarding the effect of the proposed boarding house on traffic flows within the surrounding residential streets. However, the school has agreed to contribute £2,500 towards pedestrian improvements on Colinton Road to mitigate any detrimental impacts of an increase in traffic levels on pedestrian safety.

As regards potential flooding problems in Broomyknowe, a condition has been applied requiring details of the proposed drainage system for written approval prior to the commencement of any works on site.

The proposals comply with the development plan and non-statutory policies, have no adverse effect on the character or appearance of the conservation area or the setting of the listed building and scheduled ancient monument, and have no detrimental impact on residential amenity or road safety.

There are no other material planning considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

It is recommended that the Committee approves this application, subject to the conditions stated.

  
PP **Alan Henderson**  
Head of Planning and Strategy

**Contact/tel** Clare Macdonald on 0131 529 3510

**Ward affected** 43 -Colinton

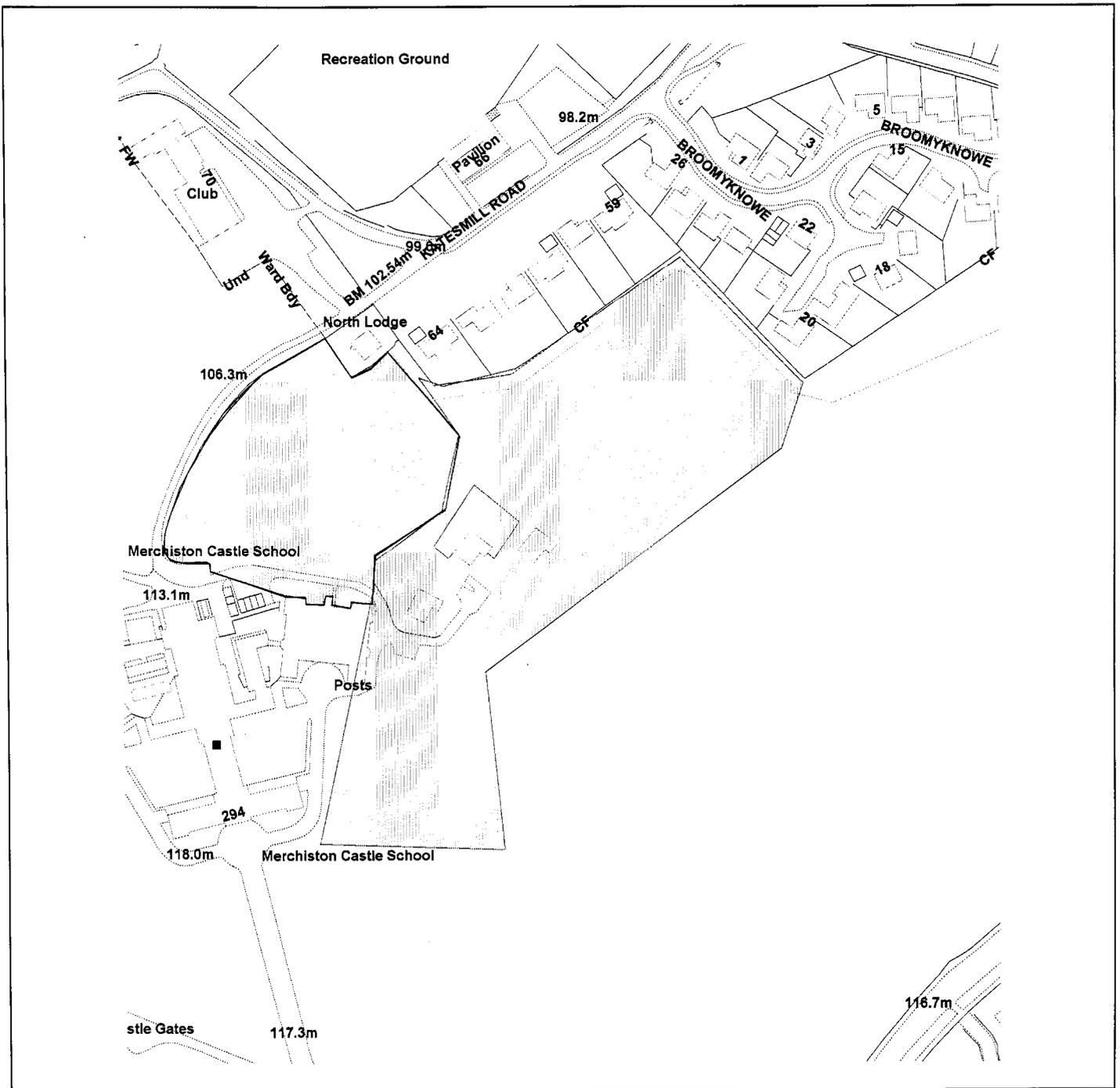
**Local Plan** South West Edinburgh and Draft West Edinburgh

**Statutory Development  
Plan Provision** Urban Area and Area of Open Space

**File** 6095

**Date registered** 17 April 2003

**Drawing numbers/  
Scheme** 03-06 + 14-21  
Scheme 2



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# **PLANNING APPLICATION**

<b>Address</b>	<b>294 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH13 0PT</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Erect 100 bedroom sixth form boarding house, with associated relocation of playing field, access, front and rear</b>		
<b>Application number:</b>	<b>03/00984/FUL</b>	<b>WARD</b>	<b>43- Colinton</b>
<b>THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL</b>			
<b>THE CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT- PLANNING &amp; STRATEGY</b>			