

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

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

**Proposal:** Erect 15 staff accommodation units with gardens and associated access, parking and landscape works  
**Applicant:** Merchiston Castle School  
**Reference No:** 03/00986/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. 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 the 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 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 a green area of land bounded by mature trees with smaller trees along the western boundary to the north of Rogerson 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 15 staff units in a circular arrangement on the area of land to the immediate north of Rogerston House. The group comprises a staggered terrace of 2 three-bedroom and 2 five-bedroom terraced houses with a central pent, two groups of 3 three-bedroom terraced houses and a block of 4 two-bedroom flats with 1 four-bedroom maisonette.

These houses will replace the existing five staff houses, which are located to the south west of the school site. These existing units are to be demolished and replaced with a private residential development that is the subject of a separate application by Applecross Properties Ltd at 1-9 The Cedars (03/00560/FUL).

The terraced houses are one and a half storey, Scandinavian style structures with low slated roof pitches incorporating wall head dormers to the front and rear. The front dormers have French windows leading to small metal balconies and there are timber pergolas with decks at ground level on the rear elevations. All windows, rooflights and doors are timber framed and the walls are finished in cream coloured wet dash render. The flatted block is also Scandinavian in style with wall head dormers to the front and French windows leading to metal balconies on the gable elevations. The same palette of materials as above will be used with the addition of cedar boarding between windows.

The staff units will be accessed via the existing drive, which links the school with Katesmill Road and parking spaces at the rate of one per dwelling will be provided to the rear of the houses and to each side of the flatted block. Four visitors spaces will be accommodated in a central landscaped area, which includes a communal seating area.

All mature trees on the site will be retained and tree protection fences will be erected to protect the root systems during construction work. Additional pairs of deciduous, native trees will be planted around the new structures and individual gardens will be demarcated by hedges and pedestrian crossing points will be formed in sets.

### **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 staff units.

#### **Transportation - Structures**

No comment.

#### **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**

The site is located within the catchment areas of Oxfangs Primary School, Firrhill High School, St Mark's Roman Catholic Primary School and St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School. All four of these schools are operating below capacity and could accommodate this development therefore this department has no objections to this application.

## **Sportscotland**

Sportscotland has had previous discussions with the school regarding the proposed development and is pleased to note that the proposals attempt to minimise the impact on the playing fields. The area affected by the application is primarily an grassed amenity area which does not form part of the school's formal playing fields therefore Sportscotland has no objections to this proposal.

## **Craiglockhart Community Council**

The extent of access from Katesmill Road is noted. This road carries a significant amount of traffic because of its use by commuters, sports people, clients of the children's nursery, residents and walkers, in addition to school personnel. The potential difficulties for emergency vehicles may not be fully catered for by the small scale layouts proposed.

## **Representations**

The application was advertised on 9 May 2003. Three letters of representation were received, including letters from the Scottish Civic Trust and Colinton Amenity Association, commenting on the proposals as follows:

- supports the construction of 15 staff units to replace the existing accommodation;
- considers the location well chosen in terms of integration of old and new buildings and minimal impact on the setting of the listed building;
- should give consideration to the visual relationship of the new staff houses with the existing buildings and specify natural stone and slate, astragalled windows and pebble dashed walls;
- concerned regarding the loss of some trees.
- concerned about an increase in traffic flows on the surrounding residential streets.

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

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 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 new staff housing and the rationale behind the proposed location to the north of Rogerston House. Essentially, the land on which the existing staff houses are accommodated had to be released to fund the new boarding house (subject of application no. 03/00984/FUL). The school prefers the new staff units to be grouped as a single community and the only area large enough to accommodate the number of units required without significantly compromising the setting of the school is the area of land to the north of Rogerston House. This land is not sufficiently extensive for playing field provision and the proposed low lying development will not affect principal views of the listed buildings from the main approach route. A new cohesive development will also improve the appearance of the northern approach to the school, which is marred by an ad hoc arrangement of small-scale structures including portacabins, containers and sheds.

The proposed buildings are appropriately domestic in scale and incorporate sustainable design principles of Scandinavian architecture, including solar gain from large ridge lights and natural construction materials. The proposed finishing materials relate sufficiently well to the listed structures on the site whilst complementing their parkland setting and contemporary design elements, such as plate glass windows, demarcate the age of the new buildings without having a detrimental impact on the existing architecture.

b) The use of part of the school grounds for development required for school purposes does not result in unacceptable loss of open space.

The proposed landscaping works will preserve and enhance the open space and landscape qualities of the site through the planting of new trees that will extend the existing parkland character around the new staff units. No existing mature trees will be removed. The location of the associated parking spaces to the rear of the houses will have least visual impact on the existing landscape.

c) The proposed structures are subservient in height to the original school buildings and will be located to the rear of the main block and its flanking houses. The layout, design and materials of the new staff units 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 staff accommodation 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.

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

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**Ward affected** 43 -Colinton

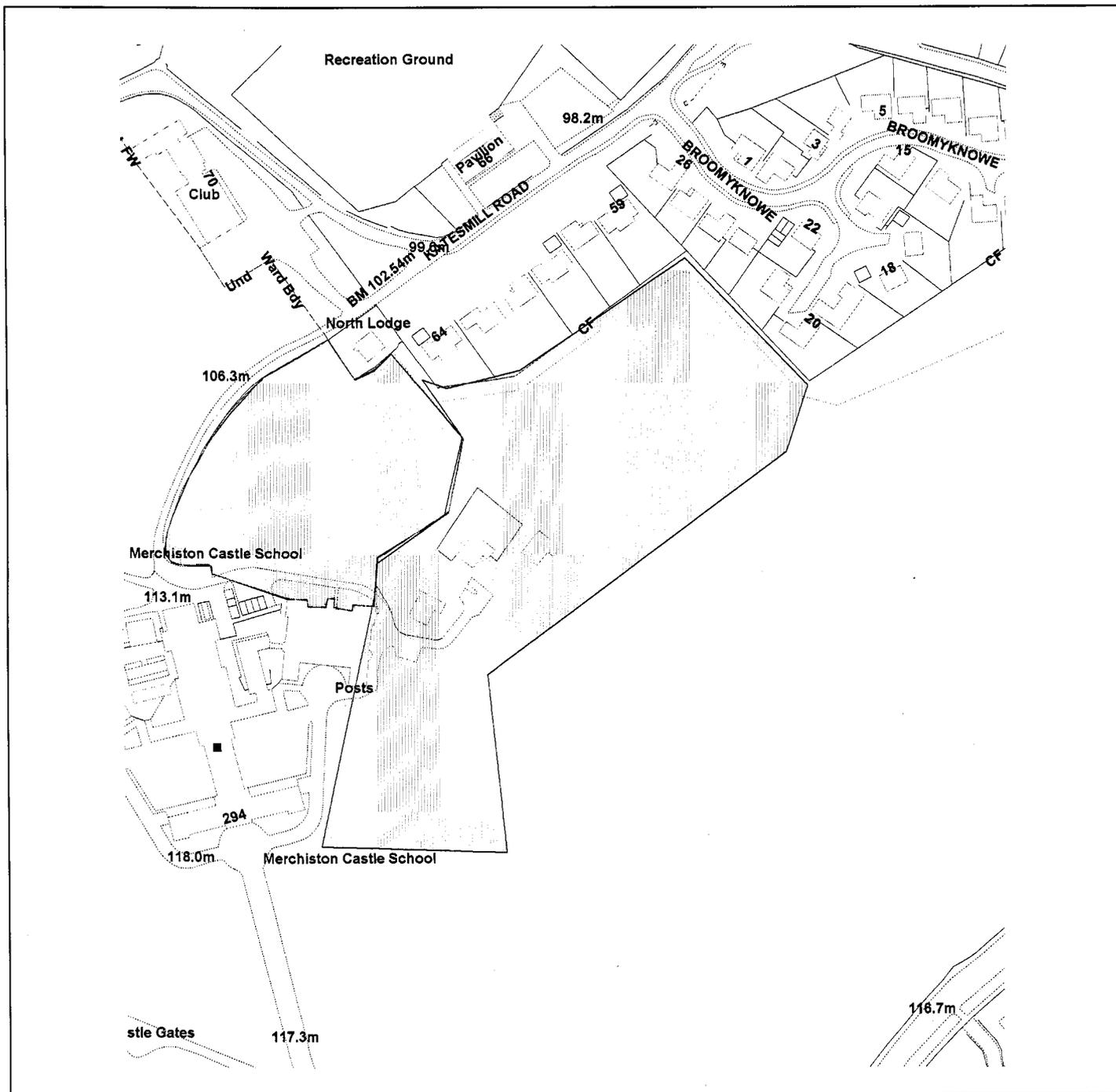
**Local Plan** South West Edinburgh and Draft West Edinburgh

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

**File** 6095

**Date registered** 11 April 2003

**Drawing numbers/  
Scheme** 02-04, 07-09 + 11-18  
Scheme 1



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# **PLANNING APPLICATION**

<b>Address</b>	<b>294 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH13 0PT</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Erect 15 staff accommodation units with gardens and associated access, parking and landscape works</b>		
<b>Application number:</b>	<b>03/00986/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>			