
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	1st June 2011
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	11/0031/IC 06/11
			Major Application Development
Contact Officer:	David Ashman	Contact No:	01475 712416
Subject:	Demolition of existing high school and janitors house and erection of new campus school, central server room and enterprise centre at Former Port Glasgow High School Site, Kilmacolm Road, Port Glasgow		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of the grounds of Port Glasgow High School and the former Slaemuir Primary School. The site is located at the entry point to Port Glasgow from Kilmacolm and sits in a prominent position on the western side of Kilmacolm Road.

It is bound to the south by open moorland and on the three other sides by housing. To the west the housing consists of flatted blocks that are in the process of being vacated prior to demolition, and terraces. To the north the houses are mainly established terraces. To the east, on the opposite side of Kilmacolm Road, is a petrol filling station and new residential development is presently under construction.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construct a new shared school campus in one building to accommodate Port Glasgow High School, St. Stephen's High School, and Lilybank and Glenburn Special Needs Schools. The site is also designed to accommodate an enterprise centre and a new central computer server in the form of an annexe to the schools. The central server annexe will house the Council's communications equipment and data storage for all shared computer drives.

The building rises to a maximum height of three storeys and spreads outwards in four directions from a central civic hub. The two secondary schools focus on this hub, form a crescent around the main entrance to the building from Kilmacolm Road (there are additional pedestrian entrances from Marloch Avenue and Campsie Road). To the south and west of this feature runs a wing containing indoor sports provision, associated changing facilities and further classrooms. The secondary schools are designed to share facilities. This wing also contains the central server annexe. To the north and west another wing contains the special needs schools, largely within a single storey unit. The external finish to the building is to be mainly a mix of light buff coloured bricks, punctuated by small areas of render. A contrasting facing material is to be used on part of the external walls forming the main entrance to the building and on the walls of the sports hall. This will have the appearance of reconstituted stone.

The grounds around the building are also to be developed to provide hard and soft landscaping for the use of pupils, staff and visitors, including the provision of car parking and bus turning/waiting facilities. The landscaping includes the provision of two full size floodlit all weather pitches, a floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA) and a further unlit MUGA. The pitches will all be enclosed by fencing. A car drop off/pick up point is to be provided on Marloch Avenue, a few metres to the north of the schools' site boundary.

Development of the site will acknowledge sustainable objectives and, to this end, it is proposed to introduce a range of methods of electricity and heat generation. These include solar roof panels and enhanced insulation to the external envelope of the building. Maximising natural daylight/sunlight has informed the design of the building.

The application is supported by a range of documents including a pre-application consultation report (as a "major" application under the new planning system a full community consultation procedure was engaged by the applicant), a design and access statement, a transport assessment and a flood risk and drainage impact assessment.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Local Plan Policy H1 - Safeguarding the Character and Amenity of Residential Areas

The character and amenity of existing residential areas, identified on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded, and where practicable, enhanced. New residential development will be acceptable, in principle, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies.

Local Plan Policy H9 - Non-Residential Development Proposals within Residential Areas

The introduction of new, or the extension of, non-residential uses in existing residential areas will be acceptable only where such uses are compatible with the character and amenity of the area and satisfy other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

Local Plan Policy DS1 - Preference for Development on Brownfield Sites

A sustainable settlement strategy will be encouraged by having a clear preference for all new development to be located on brownfield land within the urban areas of existing towns and smaller settlements.

Local Plan Policy DS5 - Promotion of Quality in New Building Design and in Townscape/Landscaping

The urban environment and built heritage of Inverclyde will be protected and enhanced through controls on development that would have an unacceptable impact on the quality of this resource. Quality in new building design and landscaping will be encouraged to enhance Inverclyde's townscapes.

Local Plan Policy TA2 - Accessibility of Major Developments

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will seek to reduce the need to travel by private car by directing new major travel-generating developments to locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Developers may be required to submit Transport Assessments and Green Transport Plans demonstrating that such developments will be easily accessed by means other than the private car.

Local Plan Policy - TA7 Promotion of Walking and Cycling

In order to increase the use of walking and cycling as a means of transport, Inverclyde Council will require that:

- (a) major destinations, including town and local centres, educational establishments, centres of employment and public transport nodes, are accessible and linked by clearly signposted, and well lit and direct footpaths and cycle routes; and
- (b) the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are recognised in new developments and considered in Green Transport Plans.

Local Plan Policy UT1 - Sustainable Use of Existing Infrastructure

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will seek to direct new development to areas where connections to existing service infrastructure and public utilities are available, and will work with developers, public utility companies and other providers of service infrastructure to ensure that the most efficient use is made of existing infrastructure. The Council will also encourage continued investment in existing infrastructure, with a view to improving service provision.

Local Plan Policy UT3 - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will encourage the inclusion of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in appropriate developments, and where included will require agreement to be reached in respect of the continual maintenance of the proposed system prior to planning permission being granted.

CONSULTATIONS

Head Of Safer and Inclusive Communities - No objection, subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of Japanese Knotweed, contaminated land, cooking odour control, waste container provision and lighting control.

Scottish Water - No objection.

Biodiversity Officer - There are no significant habitats or species of conservation concern near the site. Advice can be provided on enhancement of outside spaces for biodiversity.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency West – No objection.

SportScotland - No objection, although it is suggested that ideally there should be a mix of grass and synthetic surfaces. Consideration should be given to the loss of pitches at St. Stephen's School.

Head of Environmental and Commercial Services – Clarification is required on maintenance of storage tanks under the football pitch. The proposed floodlighting which will be within expected luminance levels for the location.

Land Use Consultants - The landscaping requires to respond more to the complexity and scale of the building; circulation space requires clarification; more intimate and sheltered spaces should be created; the quantity of asphalt requires to be re-examined. Landscaping around the frontage parking spaces is welcomed.

Architecture and Design Scotland – The proposed site layout appears to be constrained. The landscape and building proposals should be considered further in response to both the immediate and wider context, to contribute more effectively to the community and to establish a sense of place. As part of this they request that ways be found to rationalise the level of car parking, reduce the level of hard surfacing throughout the site, and create more sheltered areas outwith the building. They question the landscape proposals being defined by the shape of the building and consider that the landscaping does not clearly define the entry points. Whilst acknowledging

orientation of buildings taking advantage of aspect and prevailing climatic conditions, there is concern that this may result in territorial domination of one school over the others and the dominance of places with no obvious function in the design.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 4th March 2011 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

SITE NOTICES

The nature of the proposal did not require a site notice.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was the subject of neighbour notification and press advertisement. One representation was received. Strathclyde Passenger Transport seek clarification on the drop off arrangements for the temporary relocation of Port Glasgow High pupils to St. Stephen's School, they welcome the provision of bus bays within the school grounds but ask if they will sufficiently address pupil transfer requirements and for the bays to be clearly marked out to ensure their efficient use.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in determination of this application are the Local Plan, the applicant's supporting information, the visual and amenity impact of the proposed building on the vicinity, the consultation replies and the letter of representation.

As the proposed schools are to be located on the site of the existing Port Glasgow High School and, therefore, the use of the site for education facilities is long established, it follows that compliance with policies H1, DS1, UT1 and H9 (in respect of aspects of character) is achieved. On this basis, the proposal is acceptable in principle and determination of the acceptability of the details of the proposal, with respect to policies DS5 and H9 (amenity considerations), depends upon the visual impact of the building and associated facilities including the sports pitch provision, the quality of landscaping, access arrangements and traffic impact.

The applicant's design and access statement addresses issues in respect of the design and visual impact of the building. I am satisfied with the justification provided. I note that the building is of considerable size but consider that the correct balance between height and horizontal spread has been achieved and that the design is appropriate to the local area context and with respect to design established by those new schools already developed across the Council area. The size of the school also has to be viewed in the context of the overall site and, in this respect, I also consider that the design and bulk of the school is appropriate.

The sports pitch provision will improve the facilities available to the new schools and the local community with floodlighting allowing most of the facilities to be used outwith daylight hours.

The landscape layout and planting drawings show the approach to landscaping being taken across the site. Most areas to be used by pupils are hard landscaped with a variety of types and colours of surfacing. Other areas to be shared by pupils, staff and visitors are a mix of hard and soft landscaping. Some hard landscaping incorporates car parking and bus parking/manoeuvring space. As the main access is to be from Kilmacolm Road these parking facilities are mainly located between the school and the road. Although levels differences will help to reduce some impact, it is important that soft landscaping also be employed to soften the general visual impact of parking areas. I am satisfied that by introducing planting close to the car parking bays this will be achieved, especially over time as the planting matures. I also note a leading edge of planting along the

southern boundary of the site in particular. Combined with boundary fencing this will help define but also soften the edge of the school grounds as viewed on approach from Kilmacolm, which is an appropriate response to the settlement boundary setting of the schools. Overall, I consider the building and surrounding landscaping to be of appropriate quality in compliance with policy DS5 and H9.

The site layout also largely separates pedestrian and vehicular access. The vehicular access is regarded as acceptable with the introduction on Kilmacolm Road of a roundabout to facilitate access to the school. I also note that the school is adjacent to a public transport (bus) route, within close walking distance of nearby housing, and the landscape layout shows the provision of cycle storage facilities. Compliance with policies TA2 and TA7 has therefore been achieved.

The drainage strategy on the site is founded on porosity of surfacing materials and sustainable water treatment of site runoff. I note that both the Council's Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, in his capacity as Flooding Officer, and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency do not raise any concerns in this regard, hence I consider that compliance with policy UT3 is achieved.

It is my overall conclusion that the proposal accords with the Local Plan. It remains to be considered, however, if any material considerations suggest that planning permission should not be granted. In this respect I shall now refer to the consultation replies that have not yet been addressed in the above policy analysis.

The responses of Scottish Water, SEPA and the Council's Biodiversity Officer require no further comment.

Potential contaminated land issues raised by the Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities may be addressed through the attachment of conditions and advisory notes to a grant of planning permission.

The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services requires clarification on access to sustainable urban drainage storage tanks for the purposes of maintenance. This matter may be addressed by condition.

I note that Sportscotland has no objection in principle but has suggested that, ideally, a mix of grass and synthetic surface pitches should be introduced. I also note, however, that the introduction of 3G pitches allows the greater curriculum needs of the school to be met and maximises the opportunities for greater community use. On this basis, I am satisfied that appropriate needs are being met in the proposed sports pitch provision. The provision is also considered to address the loss of facilities at St. Stephen's.

LUC, the Council's landscaping consultants, suggested some changes to the landscaping layout and have questioned the relationship between the landscaping and the building. I consider, however, that there is a robust landscape framework in place which responds well to the complexity and scale of the building; the circulation space appears clear with the main entrance to the school performing a mix of functions (welcoming space, social space etc); and the layout already creates some sheltered spaces, including under the sail canopies and some canopies around the building. The sweeping curves of the main school entrance are reflected in the car parking layout. Visually, this helps to reduce the impression of any sense of dominance of car parking. It also helps the development to be read as a contextual whole rather than a sum of its parts. With respect to quality of surfacing material, I am satisfied with the details provided on the plan although I note that surfacing requires variation to define the differing roles of the outdoor spaces, with some areas of greater porosity to address drainage issues. A condition regarding the submission of samples of materials is an appropriate response.

Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS) had suggested changes to aspects of the proposed site layout, concentrating in particular on rationalising car parking, reducing hard surfacing, redefining

the relationship between the building and the associated landscaping and creating sheltered areas. The car parking provision is necessary to ensure that adjacent roads are not adversely affected by on-street parking. Since the A+DS review, additional screen planting has been introduced to the plans around the most visible parking areas (i.e., those nearest to Kilmacolm Road). This will help to soften the visual impact of the parking provision. A+DS also express reservations over the way the proposal relates to the immediate environment and how the schools and landscaping relate to each other. I consider that it will form a new centre of attention rather than it necessarily having to relate to the immediate context. The opportunity has been taken to make a positive architectural statement of renewal. With respect to landscaping defining the entry points to the school, I consider that these are well defined by alterations to road geometry, boundary fence treatment and associated hard and soft landscaping in the vicinity of the entrances. Overall, I do not share A+DS concerns over the design approach. I do not view the plans as providing dominance of one school over another. Although containing different schools, the building reads as a whole.

With respect to the letter of representation, the bus waiting area is based on projected requirements for the amalgamated schools at the time of opening, which is likely to be the maximum at any one time. The applicant has stated that safe accommodation of all vehicles required for pupil transfer will be provided and that bays will be clearly marked out. The temporary arrangements to be put in place for pupils transferring to St. Stephen's School are not a consideration material to this application.

There are no other material considerations to consider and, of those assessed above, none suggest that planning permission should not be granted. I therefore consider that planning permission should be granted, subject to the use of appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. That the development to which this permission relates must be begun within 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. That prior to the start of development, details of a survey for the presence of Japanese Knotweed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and that, for the avoidance of doubt, this shall contain a methodology and treatment statement where any is found. Development shall not proceed until treatment is completed as per the methodology and treatment statement. Any variation to the treatment methodologies will require subsequent approval by the Planning Authority prior to development starting on site.
3. That the development shall not commence until a risk assessment, including any necessary remediation strategy with timescale for implementation, of all pollutant linkages, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The investigations and assessment shall be site-specific and completed in accordance with acceptable codes of practice. The remediation strategy shall include verification/validation methodologies. This may be incorporated as part of a ground condition report and should include an appraisal of options.
4. That on completion of remediation and verification/validation works and prior to the site being occupied, the developer shall submit a Completion Report for approval, in writing by the Planning Authority, confirming that the works have been carried out in accordance with the Remediation Strategy. This report shall demonstrate that no pollutant linkages remain or are likely to occur and include (but not be limited to) a collation of verification/validation certificates, analysis information, remediation lifespan, maintenance/aftercare information and details of imported/disposed/reused materials relevant to the site.

5. That the presence of any previously unrecorded contamination or variation to reported ground conditions that becomes evident during site works shall be brought to the attention of the Planning Authority within one week. Consequential amendments to the Remediation Strategy shall not be implemented unless it has been submitted to and approved, in writing by the Planning Authority.
6. That no material shall be imported onto the site until written details of the source of the imported material have been submitted for approval, in writing, by the Planning Authority. The details, which shall be submitted no later than four weeks prior to the material being imported onto the site, shall include; the source of the imported material, any potential source(s) of contamination within 50 metres of the source of the material to be imported and verification analysis information. The material must not be imported on to the site until written approval has first been received from the Planning Authority. The material from the source agreed only shall be imported in strict accordance with these agreed details.
7. That samples of all facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to their use.
8. That prior to the commencement of development, remaining details of the hard and soft landscaping scheme hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority including the following:
 - (a) details of the maintenance and management of the landscaping;
 - (d) samples or catalogue details of the variety of hard surfacing.
9. That any trees, shrubs or areas of grass which die, are removed, damaged or become diseased within five years of completion of the landscaping shall be replaced within the following year with others of a similar size and species.
10. That notwithstanding the terms of condition 8 above, all soft and hard landscaping, including the drop off parking provision on Marloch Avenue shall be completed, and all approved fences erected prior to the first of the schools being brought into use.
11. That the outdoor sports pitches shall not be in use outwith the hours of 8am to 9pm Mondays to Fridays, and 8am to 6pm at weekends.
12. That all surface water drainage from the site shall be treated in accordance with the principles of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Manual (C697) (CIRIA 2007). Before development commences, details of the maintenance regime for the water detention areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall include clarification of access arrangements for maintenance of detention tanks.
13. That the bus bays shall be marked out prior to the first of the schools being brought into use.
14. That the floodlights hereby permitted shall be baffled in order that the threshold vertical luminance at the nearest residential property does not exceed 5 lux.

Reasons

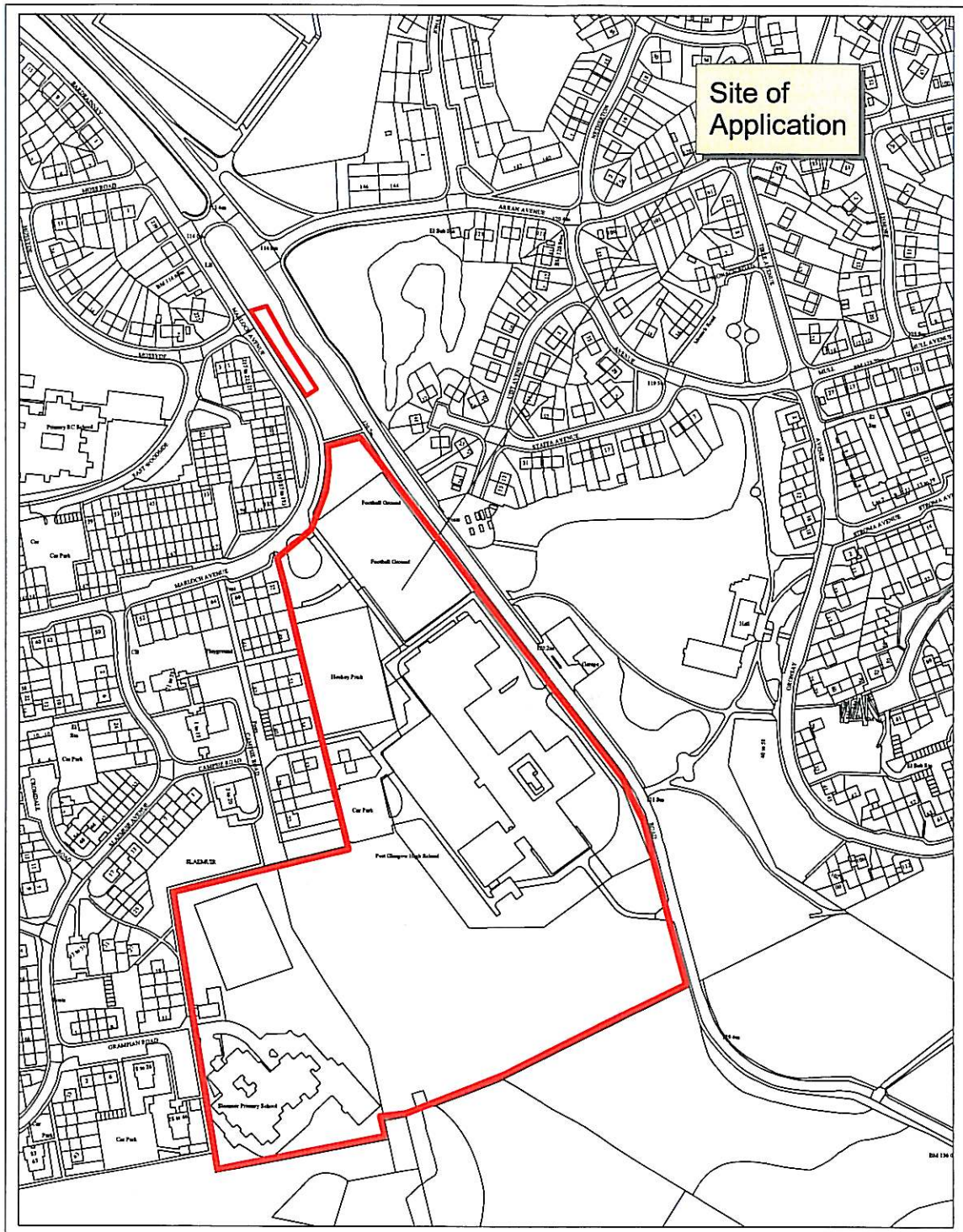
1. To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
2. To help arrest the spread of Japanese Knotweed in the interests of environmental protection.

3. To satisfactorily address potential contamination issues in the interests of environmental safety.
4. To provide verification that remediation has been carried out to the Authority's satisfaction
5. To ensure that all contamination issues are recorded and dealt with appropriately.
6. To protect receptors from the harmful effects of imported contamination.
7. To ensure the suitability of the colour and fabric of materials.
8. To ensure the adequacy of implementation of the landscaping scheme.
9. To ensure the retention of the approved planting scheme in the interests of visual amenity.
10. In the interests of public safety.
11. In the interests of residential amenity.
12. To control runoff from the site to reduce the risk of flooding.
13. To ensure that adequate provision for bus parking is made.
14. In the interests of residential amenity.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans
2. Applicant's supporting information
3. Inverclyde Local Plan
4. Consultee responses



Drawing No. 11/0031/IC former Port Glasgow High School Site.

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