

**REPORT TO: PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 14 JANUARY 2008**

**REPORT ON: DOWNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL - SITE PLANNING BRIEF**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION**

**REPORT NO: 7-2008**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a Draft Site Planning Brief for the site of the Downfield Primary School (including Downfield Primary School Annexe), East School Road as the basis of consultation with the local community and interested parties.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a approve the Draft Site Planning Brief for consultation purposes;
  - b remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to consult with the local communities and interested parties on the Draft Site Planning Brief; and
  - c remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to report back on the results of the consultation at the March Committee meeting.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 As the site is Council owned and it is intended to sell the land on the open market, this brief has the potential to influence the value of the site.

## **4 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 It has been agreed that Downfield Primary School will be replaced by a new school on a new site in August 2008. This presents the opportunity to redevelop the two sites that comprise Downfield Primary School. Given the surrounding land use the development of housing is considered the most appropriate use of the site.
- 4.2 The school campus is split across two sites. The main school building and playground is located on the south side of East School Road. The annexe is located in a large area of grassed open space to the north of the road. Both have vehicle access from East School Road.
- 4.3 The school site is designated as protected open space in the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005. Local Plan Policy 66A: Protection of Playing Fields and Sports Pitches has a presumption in favour of retaining the playing field. Such playing fields should not be redeveloped unless the Council is satisfied that they are no longer required for their original purposes and there is a long term excess of pitches, playing fields and public open space in the wider area, having regard to the sites recreational and amenity value plus the needs of future generations. Other relevant criteria are that compensatory open space of at least equal benefit and accessibility will be provided in or adjacent to the community most directly affected, resulting in an overall improvement to existing facilities and the amenity of the area.

- 4.4 In this case the replacement school will provide a new sports pitch which will be available for community use. The replacement school is located on Haldane Crescent, a short distance from the current East School Road campus, and as such will be accessible and available for use by the community most directly affected by the loss of the playing field. As an all-weather pitch the replacement is also a significant improvement on the East School Road playing field and will be of greater benefit to the school and the community. For these reasons it is considered acceptable in this instance to allow the redevelopment of the East School Road site and the loss of the school playing field. Sport Scotland will be consulted on the Draft Site Planning Brief.
- 4.5 The Draft Site Planning Brief sets clear guidelines for the redevelopment of the site. The key points of the Draft Site Planning Brief are:
- consider the reuse of the main school building by converting it into apartments or townhouses;
  - retaining the stone boundary wall around the main school playground;
  - promoting a mix of house types, sizes and markets including some terraced and semi-detached houses;
  - through quality urban design create good pedestrian links to the surrounding community, services, amenities and public transport;
  - front gardens will not be dominated by parked cars and will be enclosed by walls or hedges;
  - consideration must be given to how the existing trees can be enhanced by new planting or, where existing vegetation is of poor quality, a new pattern of substantial tree and hedge cover can rapidly be established; and
  - the provision of an appropriate area of public open space/playspace within the development site.
- 4.6 The Draft Site Planning Brief is attached to this report.
- 4.7 The Draft Brief will be the subject of consultation with both the community and interested parties.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

The major issues identified are:

a Sustainability

The Site Planning Brief accords with the Council's Sustainability Policy, particularly the key principles of "Transport and Travel" and the "Built Environment". The Draft Brief anticipates the redevelopment of brownfield land,

and highlights the opportunity to provide pedestrian links within a location already accessible by public transport and close to local services and amenities.

The current Building Standards require any development to meet certain criteria in terms of the Sustainability Principles of "Environmental Legislation", and "Energy and Water use".

b Anti-Poverty

The Brief promotes the provision of affordable housing.

c Equality Impact Assessment

The Brief falls outwith the need for an Equality Impact Assessment and its contents are believed to have no effect on equal opportunities.

d Risk Management

The brief has no implications on Risk Management.

## 6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Dundee Local Plan Review 2005.

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IGSM/AH/KM

20 December 2007

Dundee City Council  
Tayside House  
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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DOWNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST SCHOOL ROAD - DRAFT SITE PLANNING BRIEF**

#### **Introduction**

The decision by Dundee City Council to relocate Downfield Primary School on a new campus a short distance away on Haldane Crescent presents the opportunity to realise a high quality redevelopment of the two brownfield sites on East School Road.

This Site Planning Brief has been prepared as supplementary planning guidance to the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005. The intention of the Brief is not to prescribe how the school site should be developed but to set clear guidelines which will ensure the successful and sustainable redevelopment of the site.

Housing is the prevailing use in the surrounding area and is the preferred use for this site. The opportunity exists to provide a mix of house types and sizes which will create affordability, choice and, in an appropriate layout, add interest to the development as a whole.

The Dundee Local Plan 2005 particularly at Policy 4, Policy 55 and Appendix 1 sets the general standards for housing development in this part of the city. In accordance with Policy 55, developers shall refer to the Dundee Urban Design Guide. This sets out the broad principles which development in Dundee is expected to follow and discusses the importance and benefits of good urban design.

#### **Location**

The site lies to the north of the Kingsway and has excellent transportation connections, access to recreation facilities, shopping facilities and primary and secondary schools.

The site is unusual for a primary school campus in that it is split across two sites either side of East School Road. The main school building is of traditional stone construction and occupies the northwest corner of the southern site. Although not Listed the building is distinctive and its prominent corner location adds to the character of both streets. Tall stone boundary walls run along the north and west boundary of the 0.31 ha site and further add to the character of the area.

The school annexe occupies a small part of a 1.27 ha site on the north side of East School Road. The remainder of the site comprises open grass areas containing trees and landscaping. Vehicle and pedestrian access is solely from East School Road.

The school site is not allocated for housing in the Local Plan but is identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map as being a protected open space - school ground, within a Suburban area. In Suburban areas the Local Plan seeks the development of houses, although the Local Plan does accept the development of flats through the conversion of buildings of merit where the conversion to houses is not suitable or achievable. In this case the main school building is considered to be of merit and worthy of retention. The City Council would consider the conversion of this building to flats subject to sufficient evidence that it is not suitable for conversion into townhouses.

**House Type/Mix**

The City Council considers that two options exist for the redevelopment of the southern site. One is to retain and convert the main school building and develop a small number of houses on the remainder of the site. The other option is to clear the site and develop it all for housing.

The option to retain and convert the main school building is driven by the design and prominent position of the building on the corner of East School Road and Bank Avenue. If retained it should be converted into townhouses. A flatted conversion would be an acceptable alternative subject to evidence that it is not possible to convert into townhouses. In accordance with Appendix 1 of the Dundee Local Plan Review flats should have generous internal space standards and 2 or more bedrooms. The land around this building would provide the amenity space and car parking for the conversion.

The clearance of the site would allow the whole site to be developed. If this option were pursued only housing would be acceptable. This would be in the form of detached or semi-detached housing comprising a mix of dwelling types and designs.

The northern annexe site shall be developed with housing only. To create a diverse environment and to meet the demand for affordable, owner-occupied housing, the development will provide a mix of house types and sizes with a minimum of 40% semi-detached and/or terraced houses.

Appendix 1 of the Local Plan requires 75% of housing in new developments to contain, as a minimum, 3 or more bedrooms or to have a minimum gross internal floor area of 100 square metres.

**Form**

It is not the intention of the Brief to stipulate the layout of the new development but to set clear guidelines which will ensure the successful redevelopment of the site.

In this attractive and mature part of the city architecture and the design of the public realm should complement the existing character of the area, and provide contemporary design solutions, which reflect modern functions and styles and the diversity of people.

It is suggested that 2-3 bedroom houses may offer the best mix for this site; built as two-storey houses with potentially a third storey in the roof profile.

To create choice of housing it may be appropriate to develop a small number of terraced houses within the larger site. These should not be sited on the existing street frontages where it is important to retain the integrity and character of the current streetscene.

Dwellings sited on Camperdown Road should be set back at least 5 metres from the footway edge to allow space for landscaping in the interests of the visual appearance of the streetscene.

If retained, the distinctive main school building shall be converted with the characteristic fenestration and detailing imaginatively incorporated into the scheme.

If this building is demolished the City Council seeks a creative redevelopment of this prominent site. Any redevelopment should respect the views of the site from Strathmartine Road and the prominence of the building on Bank Avenue and East School Road.

Developers should submit a design statement to show how they have arrived at their design solution for this part of the site.

Provision should be made within each plot for car parking space in accordance with the standards contained within Appendix 1 of the Local Plan. To avoid the situation where front gardens are dominated by parked cars, front gardens should be enclosed by hedges and garages and car parking spaces should be sited to the rear of properties (although access can still be taken through the front garden).

### **Materials**

New development should use a palette of predominantly locally used materials and/or colours to provide coherence with existing development, especially the stone school buildings and with the surrounding built and landscape environment. Developers are encouraged to use sustainable construction systems and techniques and to promote good environmental practice in the redevelopment of this brownfield site.

### **Sustainability**

The City Council actively promotes sustainable development and would encourage developers to embrace the principles of sustainable development. In this case developers are encouraged to design and orientate houses to maximise passive solar gain and where possible exceed the Building Standards in relation to energy efficiency and water use. To encourage recycling all dwellings should provide adequate space for the storage and use of recycling bins.

### **Amenity/Garden Space**

Appendix 1 of the Local Plan requires new housing development in suburban locations to provide a minimum private useable garden ground area of 120 square metres and for 40% of the whole development to have more than 160 square metres of useable garden ground.

These guidelines may be applied more flexibly in respect of any terraced dwellings on this site, although none should provide less than 100 square metres of private useable garden ground. If flats are formed in the main school building they should be served by a communal garden comprising 100 square metres of private useable space or 10 square metres per flat whichever is greater. Drying areas are to be provided in addition.

### **Movement, Access and Parking**

A permeable network of streets and pathways should provide access and a choice of routes through the development, linking with surrounding areas. These should be overlooked by the fronts of new development to ensure routes are attractive, well lit, interesting and benefit from natural surveillance.

Vehicle access to the northern annexe site can be taken from Camperdown Road and/or East School Road. Vehicle access to the southern school site will be from Bank Avenue only, although pedestrian access could be from elsewhere.

Appendix 1 of the Dundee Local Plan sets out the requirements for levels of car parking within new developments. All houses must provide 1 car parking space within the curtilage whilst houses with three or more bedrooms should have at least 2 car parking spaces. In addition 50% of houses should have a garage or provide space for a garage. Flats shall be provided with a minimum of 150% car parking. It may be difficult to meet the requirement for curtilage car parking in connection with townhouses in the converted main building and therefore it may be acceptable to locate some of these spaces outside of the curtilage.

**Landscaping**

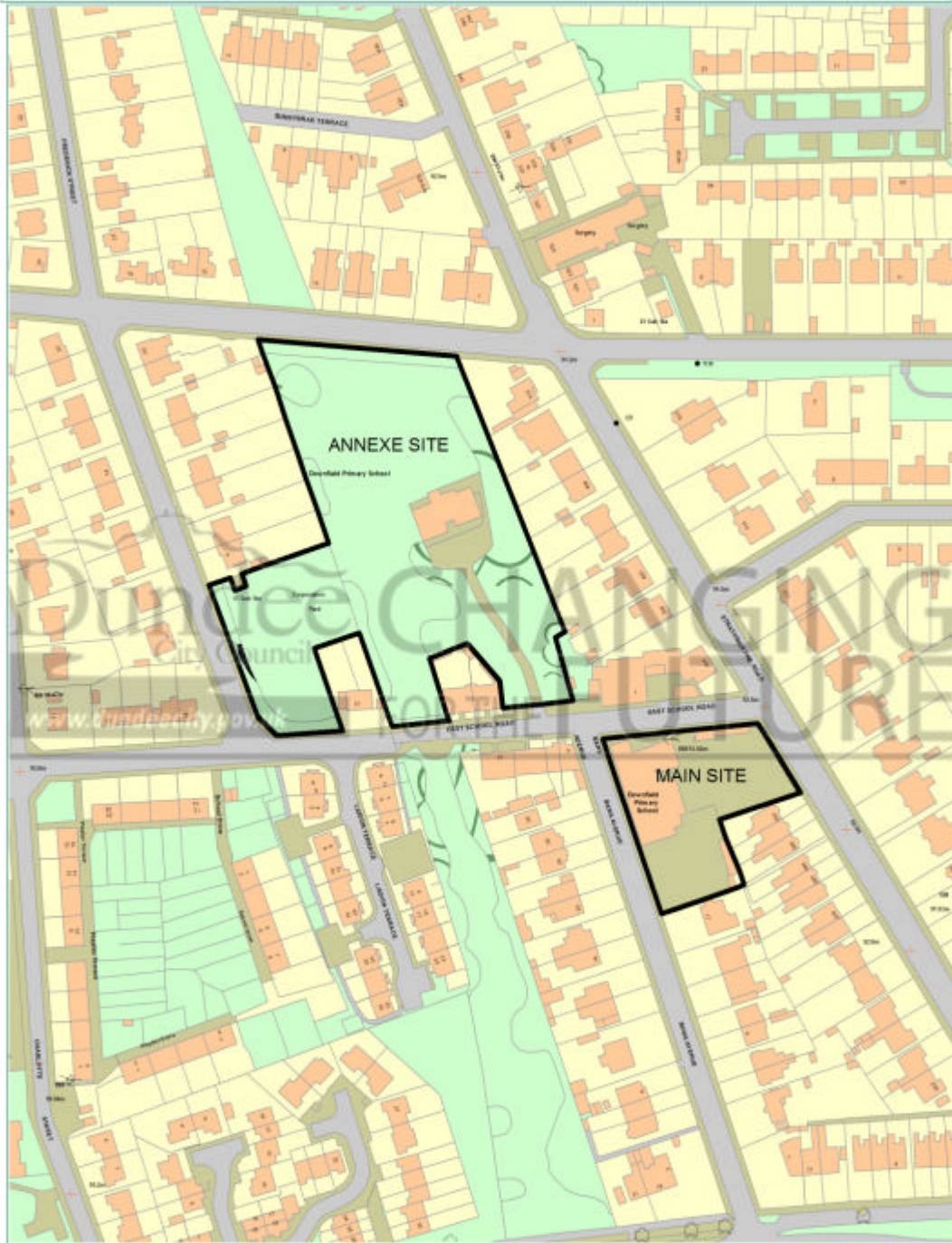
A high quality public realm is expected to complement the wider setting of the development site. It is expected that trees and established landscaping will be retained where possible. New boundary treatments should have regard to and generally allow for the natural surveillance of surrounding streets, pathways and open space. Public realm proposals should fully take into consideration potential for improvements to the biodiversity of the site and its surroundings.

In the interests of the amenities of the occupiers of the new dwellings and those in the existing neighbouring dwellings the landscaping along the shared boundaries of the site shall be retained and improved where appropriate.

Given the size of the site and the area of open space that will be lost to development there is a need for appropriate provision of shared open space within the site. Appropriate provision is considered to be a pocket park or similar and this is likely to be provided within the larger northern site. This should be designed to be a focal point within the development.

Communal spaces tend to be better used when they are overlooked by and directly linked to the properties they serve, where general public access is discouraged through perceived territoriality or by physical obstacle.

# DOWNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Department: Planning and Transportation

Printed by: Lesley Coultts

Print date: 17/12/07

