

**KEY INFORMATION**

**Ward** Lochee

**Proposal**

Construction of a new 2 X 1 stream primary school incorporating a child and family unit

**Address**

St Clements RC Primary School  
Balgarthno Place  
Dundee

**Applicant**

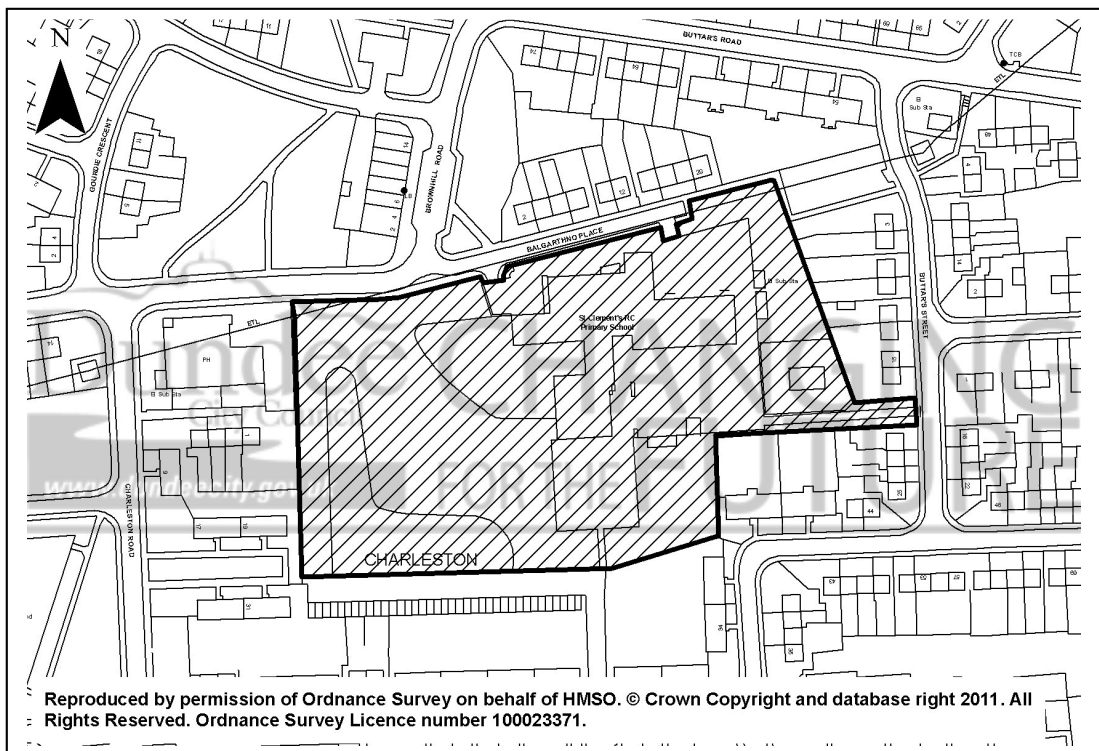
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**Agent**

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**Registered** 17 Dec 2010

**Case Officer** Paul Macari



## New Shared Campus Primary School at Balgarthno Place

The construction of a new 2 X 1 stream primary school incorporating a child and family unit is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** subject to conditions. Report by Director of City Development.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The proposals comply with the requirements of the Development Plan. There are no material considerations that would justify laying aside the provisions of the Development Plan to withhold planning permission. The application is therefore recommended for **APPROVAL** subject to conditions.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new 2 x 1 stream primary school and nursery school on the site of the existing St Clements RC Primary School, Balgarthno Place, Dundee.
- The site is to become a shared campus between three existing schools. The schools to be transferred to the new building are St Clements Primary School, Charleston Primary School and Lochee Primary School.
- Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities), Policy 55 (Urban Design), Policy 56 (Public Art) and Policy 72 (Trees and Urban Woodland) of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 are relevant to the outcome of this planning application.
- No objections or adverse comments from Consultees have been received.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new 2 x 1 stream primary school and nursery school on the site of the existing St Clements RC Primary School, Balgarthno Place, Dundee.

The new school building shall incorporate denomination and non-denomination faiths and shall therefore be set out as 2 single stream schools with 4 additional classrooms, a child and family centre and nursery. The 4 additional classrooms shall be transferable between the denomination and non-denomination schools depending on their pupil rolls.

The site is to become a shared campus between three existing schools. The schools to be transferred to the new building are St Clements RC Primary School, Charleston Primary School and Lochee Primary School.

Although housed under one roof, the two schools are to remain separate, each with their own pupil's entrance with the 'shared' parts being the main entrance, the 4 "floating" classrooms, the assembly hall, kitchen, stage, music and dance studio, gymnasium, changing areas, the library, heating plant and other minor accommodation. The "separate" school accommodation is located at the 2 storey west end of the building with the shared facilities in the middle. The child and family centre shall be located at the eastern end of the building with the nursery located at the northern end of the building at the end of the administration wing which also includes the main entrance to the building.

The nursery will function separately, but will be attached to the school as there will be a requirement to share some of the proposed facilities such as assembly hall and gym. The child and family unit shall make use of the school facilities outwith the working day.

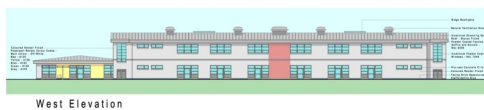
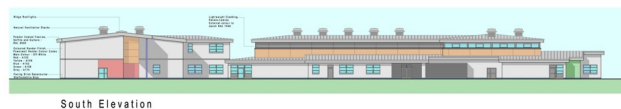
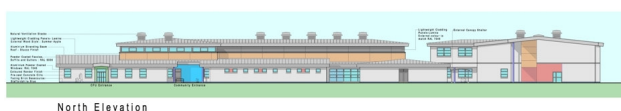
The grounds and playground shall also be shared. A new 7-a-side playing surface is to be provided in the north eastern corner of the application site. A new vehicular and pedestrian access to the application site shall be formed

from Buttars Street and shall lead to a car park providing 67 car parking spaces, 8 accessible parking spaces and 10 cycle spaces. The car park shall be located between the proposed sports pitch and the eastern elevation of the school building. 5 of the proposed car parking spaces shall be dedicated to the Child and Family Unit. A service yard is to be formed of the southern elevation of the building serving the school's kitchen, plant room and sprinkler tank. The service yard shall be accessed from Charleston Road also. There shall be emergency



vehicle access to every part of the proposed school building.

A secure green playing area serving the child and family unit shall be located in the south eastern corner of the site. The remainder of the application site shall be surfaced in tarmac with a landscaped buffer following the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site.



The existing vehicle and pedestrian entrance to St Clements Primary School from Balgarthno Place shall be converted into a pedestrian only access with a new pedestrian access from Charleston Road created in the south western corner of the site and a

pedestrian access from Balgarthno Road created in the north western corner of the site.

The proposed school building shall be of a modern design with a low pitched roof finished in an aluminium standing seam cladding system. The walls of the proposed school shall be finished in facing block, smooth render with rain screen cladding.

It is proposed to maintain the existing fencing bounding the application site where possible. Where new fencing is required, this shall match the existing fencing bounding the application site.

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation this application is being reported to the Development Management Committee as the Council is the land owner and applicant.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the southern side of

Balgarthno Place and is the site of the existing St Clements RC Primary School. The site is enclosed by 2m high galvanised steel pale type fencing with steel railings forming the northern boundary of the site.

The existing school building is positioned in the north eastern corner of the application site with vehicle access to the site taken from Buttars Street. Access to the service yard which lies to the south of the building is taken from Charleston Road via a small access road leading to lock up garages. The remainder of the eastern sector of the site that is not taken up by the existing school building or car parking area is surfaced in tarmac and forms the playground. The western sector of the site is surfaced in grass and forms and extensive playing field.

The existing school building is spread over 2 levels and is of a flat roof design. The building has steel framed casement windows and walls finished in grey roughcast and red facing brick.

There is a difference in level between the application site and Balgarthno Place.

There is pedestrian access to the site taken from Balgarthno Place.

The application site is surrounded by a mixture of 2 storey terraced houses and 2, 3 and 4 storey blocks of flats. These buildings are of uniform finishing materials with grey roughcast walls and red/ brown concrete roof tiles. Overhead power cables pass through the application site following the northern boundary.

**POLICY BACKGROUND**

Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application.

Dundee Local Plan 2005

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities) of the adopted Local Plan is supportive of proposals that seek to maintain or enhance the level of environmental quality afforded to neighbouring properties by virtue of design, layout, parking and traffic movement issues, noise disturbance and smell.

Policy 55(Urban Design) is supportive of proposals that seek to create new public places and points of interest which incorporate architectural and landscape features and reflect and enhance historic street layouts, significant views and vistas. The City Council require the use of Design Statements for planning applications for new buildings on significant sites whereby all developments will, in its design and layout, be expected to contribute to an environment which is safe and accessible to all.

Policy 56 (Public Art) requires all developments with construction costs in excess of £1, 000, 000 to contribute 1% of these costs to the provision of public art.

Policy 72 (Trees and Urban Woodland) promotes development proposals that have regard for existing healthy mature trees where their retention should be encouraged through sensitive design. Where appropriate development proposals should be accompanied by a tree planting and landscaping scheme that justifies the removal of existing trees on site and specifies replacement planting.

Policy 75 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all appropriate

development proposals to be accompanied by a sustainable drainage scheme at the time of submission of a formal planning application.

Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

There are no statements of national policy or guidance relevant.

Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

There are no non statutory statements of Council Policy relevant.

**SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no specific sustainability policy implications arising from this application.

**SITE HISTORY**

There is no planning history relevant to the outcome of this planning application.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Statutory Neighbour Notification procedure was carried out by the Council in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures)(Scotland) Order 2009.

No letters of objection have been received.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Council's Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has requested that all noise from mechanical and electrical plant is restricted to no more than NR35 as measured 1m external to the facade of neighbouring residential properties. Should the Committee be minded to approve this application, this matter can be addressed by condition.

Sport Scotland is satisfied that the proposals shall include sufficient indoor and outdoor sports and activity space provision.

The applicant has submitted emails from Rathmel Archaeology, SNH and Scottish Water.

Rathmel Archaeology has confirmed that there is no requirement for an archaeological study to be carried out given that this area of Dundee was developed post WW2 and that its previous use was farm land.

SNH has confirmed that there is no requirement for a Bat Survey as the proposed school building shall not affect the local bat population.

Scottish Water has accepted the Council's proposals to connect the proposed school to the existing network.

**OBSERVATIONS**

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Section 25 of the Act provides that an application for planning permission (other than for a national development) shall be determined in accordance the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

**The Development Plan**

The provisions of the development plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy background section above.

It is the aim of Policy 1 (Vibrant and Sustainable Communities) to support development which aims to enhance the range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas. While the provision of such facilities can be considered positive development only proposals that seek to minimise any effect on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents by virtue of design, layout, parking and traffic movement issues, noise or smell will be supported.

The proposed primary school will replace the existing St Clements Primary School, Charleston Primary School and Lochee Primary School with a purpose built contemporary school building. Internally the school has been designed to provide pupils with modern learning, dining and welfare facilities as well as a spacious gym hall, stage and assembly hall. Externally the proposed school will benefit from a new 7-a-side sports pitch and playground space which includes an orchard as well as extensive landscaped buffers along the northern, western and southern boundaries.

The school building has been designed to minimise the impact upon the surrounding built form and this is reflected in the low profile design of the 2 storey building. There is a heavy emphasis on replacement and additional planting to reinforce the boundaries of the application site as

well as shield the school building and playgrounds and sports pitch from neighbouring houses.

The layout and design of the proposed access road and car parking areas will not give rise to issues of traffic congestion. This is because there is sufficient car parking facilities to serve the proposed school in terms of staff parking and visitor parking as well as drop off and collection facilities at peak times during the school day. This has been demonstrated by the Transport Assessment submitted by the Applicant in support of the proposals.

The TA recommends that a School Travel Plan is required and a framework for this is provided within the TA. However, it is considered that the Travel Plan should be drawn up and actions taken at the earliest opportunity to allow measures to be put in place to reduce the numbers of cars travelling to the school and thereby reducing the potential on street parking issues associated with pick-up/drop off. In this respect it is intended to place a condition on any permission granted that requires the submission of a Travel Plan for consideration within 12 months of the first use of the school.

It is proposed to maintain the existing main entrance to the school grounds from Balgarthno Place and in addition create a pedestrian access from Charleston Road in the south western corner of the application site.

The school facilities (stage, gym hall and outdoor sports pitch) will be available for community use outwith school hours. Access to these areas will be separated from the main school building through internal doors and externally the play grounds, car park and orchard will be separated from areas available for use by the local community by fencing and gates. During school hours, the purpose of the fencing and gates is to separate children and vehicular traffic as well as to ensure that the children are safe and secure while outside the school building. The fencing is of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the landscaping and design of the proposed school.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has confirmed that no significant issues of noise disturbance should occur. However, to ensure that any instances of noise disturbance are minimal a condition

restricting mechanical and electronic plant noise will be incorporated into the grant of planning permission should the Committee be minded to approve this application.

By virtue of design, scale, massing, finishing materials and landscaping the proposed school will not have a significant impact upon the level of environmental quality afforded to neighbouring properties. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the requirements of Policy 1 of the adopted Local Plan.

Policy 55 (Urban Design) stipulates that all development proposals in their design and layout will be expected to contribute to an environment which is safe and accessible to all.

In exploring the options for locating the new schools on the site, the shape of the site and the need to construct the new building adjacent to the existing building while it was still functioning as a fully operational school dictated that the building (or at least the main part of the building) would require to be orientated East to West with elements of the school lying North to South.

A number of layouts were examined in detail with the conclusion reached that, given the restrictions of the site, the optimum solution from educational and operational perspectives was a model with two main entrances to the building, one being the main shared schools entrance and the other being a Nursery entrance. However there is also a separate entrance which will be used by community users accessing the assembly hall, stage and sports facilities and an entrance to the dedicated Child and Family Unit.

Similarly, various configurations for the internal layout of the building were tested against preferred educational and operational adjacencies and the requirements of the users of the different areas of accommodation; the main areas being the Nursery, Infants (Primaries 1 - 3) and Upper Primary (Primaries 4 - 7) for each school, 4 additional shared classrooms, Gym, Assembly/Dining, Kitchen and Administration.

The resultant layout is based on a well-tested model with Infants (Primaries 1 -3), the Assembly/Dining, Kitchen and Gym all located on the Ground Floor, and Upper Primary (Primaries 4 - 7) and library on the First Floor. The

Administrative offices, meeting and interview rooms are grouped around the main school entrance which should help reduce unnecessary access to teaching areas by visitors. The Nursery has a dedicated entrance to allow independent operation from the rest of the building but has direct internal access through the main schools administration area to the schools' joint facilities.

The final layout maximises the playground available for pupils, the bulk of which will lie on the west side of the schools with a connecting path to the grass area on the East side of the site.

Vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the building were investigated taking account of the existing site entries, arrangements and concerns raised. Vehicular access to the car park will be from Buttar's Street from which there will also be a separate fenced pedestrian entrance. Other pedestrian access points to the school are from Balgarthno Road, Balgarthno Place, and via a footpath from Charleston Road. It is envisaged that the pedestrian entrances to the playground will be 'managed' allowing pupils direct access at specified times of the day and locked during 'class time', to provide a secure boundary and playground area. Visitors and latecomers will access the school by the main entrance, off Buttar's Street.

The building has an L-shaped footprint as a result of being built around the existing school building. The orientation of the proposed school allows for the required accommodation to be fully provided within the area of the site initially available for development whilst also allowing for adequate external hard play. Only after the existing school has been demolished can the whole site be fully utilised and the remaining car park and playing field works completed.

The 2-storey primary classroom wing runs north to south as does the single storey administration/nursery wing. The shared area runs east to west and is a combination of single and double volume accommodation. The child and family unit accommodation shall be located at the eastern end of shared wing of the school building and shall benefit from a secure landscaped area for soft play. This unit although part of the school building shall be

accessed externally and shall not be linked through into the school.

It is considered that the two storey design of the school building is appropriate in this instance. The building sits comfortably on the site without dominating the setting of the surrounding area. The interchanging projections and roof configuration of the design breaks-up the overall massing of the structure and allows the landscape to flow between the various building elements to further reduce the scale of the development. The proposed finishing materials highlight and complement the contemporary design of the school building. Given that the surrounding buildings are finished in a bland pallet of grey roughcast and concrete roof tiles, the proposed school by virtue of its scale, modern design and complementary finishing materials shall have the appearance of being a landmark within the local area.

The Design and Access statement demonstrates clearly that the requirements of PAN 78 (Inclusive Design) and The British Standards Design of Buildings and Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People (BS 8300:2009) have been incorporated into the design and layout of the proposed school. This is reflected in the open and accessible layout of the application site and the school building.

In light of the above, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the aims of Policy 55.

In compliance with the requirements of Policy 56 (Public Art) the applicant has specified that a work of public art will be located within the school grounds or building. A local artist will be commissioned for the works with the design being influenced through consultations with the existing primary schools. While the proposals comply with the requirements of Policy 56, a condition securing the provision of public art will be incorporated into the grant of planning permission should the Committee be minded to approve this application.

With regard to Policy 72 (Trees and Urban Woodland), there exists on site pockets of deciduous trees. In order to create the proposed vehicular access road, car park, erect the school building and create areas of hard play and the 7-a-side sports pitch it is proposed to fell some of these trees.

These removals have been agreed with the Council's Forestry Officer with the loss of trees compensated by a detailed landscape plan accompanying the proposals. The landscaping plan includes the planting of specimen trees within certain specific areas of the site including locations along the northern, western and southern boundaries. In addition, extensive shrub planting is proposed. The remaining trees on site shall be protected by temporary fencing in accordance with BS 5837:2005 during any construction works.

It is considered that the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of Policy 72 of the Plan.

Policy 75 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all appropriate development proposals to be accompanied by a sustainable drainage scheme at the time of submission of a formal planning application.

It is proposed to surface the car parking areas in porous surfacing with the access roads and hard play areas surfaced in tarmac. Run off from the school building, access roads and areas of hard play shall be stored in the storm cells to be located along the western boundary of the site with controlled discharge into the existing drainage network. Run-off from the proposed sports pitch shall drain directly existing culvert passing through the site. SEPA and Scottish Water have approved proposals to connect to existing water and foul drainage networks as well as divert the existing culvert running through the application site.

The proposals therefore comply with the requirements of Policy 75 of the Adopted Local Plan.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposal complies with the provisions of the development plan.

### **Other Material Considerations**

The other material considerations to be taken into account are as follows:

### **The Effects of Electro-Magnetic Fields**

In the last ten years there has been much debate surrounding the proximity of public buildings to electro-magnetic fields. Research on this matter is inconclusive and therefore there is no statutory

requirement to distance buildings from overhead power cables.

In this instance the existing overhead power cables are not considered to pose a threat to children's health due to the voltage of the cables, their distance from the proposed school building and their height above the ground.

These concerns above are of insufficient weight to justify refusal of planning permission.

### **Design**

The proposed school building is of a modern low profile design that is to be finished in modern materials. By virtue of scale, design and finish the proposed school shall enhance the appearance of the Balgarthno Place streetscape.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposals comply with the requirements of the Development Plan. There are no material considerations that would justify laying aside the provisions of the Development Plan to withhold planning permission. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that consent be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 All noise from mechanical and electronic plant shall not exceed NR35 when measured 1m external to the facade of neighbouring residential properties.
- 2 Details of a proposed public art scheme within the application site shall be submitted to the Council for approval before any development is commenced and if approved the development shall be carried out only in full accordance with such approved details.
- 3 Full details of the proposed tree removal, retention, protection and replacement planting as per BS5837: 2005 shall be submitted to the Council for approval before any development is commenced and if approved the development shall be carried out only in full accordance with such

approved details. The trees and shrubs to be retained shall not be cut down, grubbed out topped, lopped, uprooted or root pruned without the written consent of the Council. Any trees or shrubs removed without such consent or dying, or being severely damaged or diseased, shall be replaced with trees and shrubs of such size and species as may be directed by the Council and to the standard as approved by the Council.

- 4 Prior to the commencement of work on site, details of the proposed boundary enclosures and fencing to be erected within the application site shall be submitted to the Council for written approval. Thereafter, the fencing and boundary enclosures approved by this condition shall be erected prior to the primary school hereby approved from becoming operational.
- 5 Within 12 months of the commencement of use on the site, a comprehensive Travel Plan, that sets out proposals for reducing dependency on the private car shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The Travel Plan shall identify measures to be implemented, the system of management, monitoring, review and reporting, and the duration of the plan.

## **Reasons**

- 1 In the interests of preventing issues of noise disturbance from arising.
- 2 To safeguard the provision of public art in accordance with the requirements of Policy 56 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 3 In the interests of safeguarding environmental quality and visual amenity.
- 4 In the interests of visual amenity.
- 5 In the interests of reducing dependency on the private car as the sole method of transport to improve road traffic safety.