

Development Strategy for Telford College Main Campus: Draft for Consultation

Planning Committee
5 February 2004

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report presents to the Committee progress on the joint working by Miller Homes, their architects, Edinburgh's Telford College and officers from Planning and Strategy on the three sites comprising Telford College Campus.

2 Summary

- 2.1 In November 2003 a joint working group was established comprising representatives from Miller Homes, two firms of architects working on their behalf, Edinburgh's Telford College and officers from Planning and Strategy to develop Urban Design Statements that will be applied in the development of the three Telford College Campus sites (see map showing Telford College Campus Sites). Work on the Main Campus plans is most advanced and Committee is requested to approve a development strategy for consultation.

3 Main report

- 3.1 The report on Statements of Urban Design Principles: An Initial Programme for Sites across the City, approved by Committee on 7 August laid out an initial programme of sites that would benefit from Statements of Urban Design Principles being prepared for them to guide development. This report identified Telford College Campus as a site that required a Design Statement to recognise that Telford College would be vacating their sites in the summer of 2005 and moving to a new consolidated campus as part of the waterfront regeneration.

- 3.2 At the launch of the Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design in October 2003, representatives of Miller Homes indicated that they had been chosen as the preferred bidder for the Telford College sites. Consequently they offered the opportunity of working jointly with Planning and Strategy in producing a design statement for these sites. This would provide an agreed basis on guiding an application that they anticipate making in spring/summer of 2004.
- 3.3 As a result of this approach a joint working party was established in November 2003.
- 3.4 The objective of the working party was seen to be a two stage operation with the first stage being the production of an analysis of the context of the sites and an initial formulation of a development strategy. This would lay down an overall approach to be adopted in developing the sites and would be submitted for approval to Committee as a draft for consultation. Once the consultation is completed, the initial work would be progressed to produce an Urban Design Statement that would cover the elements contained in the Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design and lay down a framework to be followed in the development of the sites.
- 3.5 This analysis of site context and formulation of a development strategy has been produced for the Main Campus site (see Appendix 1) through a process of joint working with a series of working meetings being held both on site and office based. The local councillors for the wards affected, namely Councillors Fitzpatrick for Pilton and Whyte for Craighleith, along with Councillor Davies have each had presentations made to them in December on the analysis prepared at that time. Work on the Northern and Western sites is continuing and will be the subject of future reports.
- 3.6 Telford Campus comprises three separate sites. The position on each site is as follows:
- 1 The Main Campus
- 3.7 This site lies some 1.5 miles to the north west of the city centre and covers some 10.4 acres. The site is bounded to the north by offices located on Ferry Road. The western boundary is formed by Crewe Road South, Fettes residential development to the east and Fettes college playing fields to the south.

3.8 The Main Campus is affected by policies contained in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan approved in 1997. This site is allocated for housing and compatible uses and Key policies in relation to this site are -

Policy H1 – Housing Development, which states

- The provision of new residential accommodation will be encouraged, in conjunction with other land uses, if necessary, to maintain the mixed use character of the locality in which it is to be sited. In predominantly residential areas, new development on a significant scale should be for a residential purpose, or one which contributes to local community life.

Policy H1 is amplified by Policy H7: Housing Diversity

- New development should, in the type of housing proposed, contribute to a reasonable mix in the general locality and large scale housing developments should themselves make provision for a reasonable mix of house types including a measure of larger dwellings suited to the needs of larger households.

Policy ED5 Business development – inner housing areas states:

- Within areas defined Housing and Compatible Uses on the Proposals Map;
 - a) Major office, industrial or other commercial development will not normally be accepted;
 - b) Proposals for the expansion or modernisation of existing businesses will be accepted provided they accord with other policies of the Plan and if necessary show consideration for residential amenity;
 - c) Small scale business development, including the change of use of vacant shop premises, may be acceptable provided the use proposed is compatible with its surroundings and subject also to compliance with other policies;
 - d) Redevelopment on major sites which are, or were, in some form of industrial or other employment use may be required to include some replacement business or industrial floorspace, especially in locations where there will be demonstrable employment benefits for local communities.

3.9 In this policy context, and taking into account the surrounding land uses, a residential emphasis with a mix of uses is appropriate.

3.10 The ward within which the Main Campus is located, namely Ward 8 Craighleith, is also covered by the Development Quality Guideline relating to Affordable Housing which seeks a provision of 15% on any development of housing over 40 dwellings.

3.11 The site has been analysed, on behalf of Millers, by Michael Laird Architects through joint working with Planning and Strategy officials and their report is attached as Appendix 1. The report produced by Michael Laird Architects is divided into two sections:

- An Analysis of Context - dealing with
 - Site characteristics
 - Local characteristics
 - Topography
 - Environmental Quality
 - Visual analysis
 - Accessibility
 - Planning context
 - Urban character

- Development Strategy – giving a series of indicative options under the headings of
 - Creation of space
 - Topography
 - Mass
 - Public Realm
 - Sense of place
 - Skyline
 - Sustainability

3.12 The main points to note are that the first section comprises an analysis of the contextual factors affecting the site. This leads into the second section which begins to point towards a strategy for development and presents a numbers of sketch studies showing possible approaches to the development of this site.

3.13 The strategy clearly recognises the Council's Urban Design Standards, the need for a mix of uses, an affordable housing component in residential development, and also the Council's parking standards. The relevant parties are also aware that any development on the Telford sites in general will involve a substantial contribution to the North Edinburgh Tram. Sites will also need to provide access to local walkways and cycleways.

3.14 It is proposed that the Committee should approve this development strategy as a draft for consultation. Once the consultation exercise has been concluded an Urban Design statement will be drawn up and presented to Committee for approval. This will provide Miller Homes with a clear guide on the development of the site.

2 The Northern Campus

3.15 This site extending to approximately 14.8 acres, is accessed off Crewe Road North and Pilton Avenue, lying behind the council housing on Pilton Avenue on its northern boundary with the former rail line, now a cycleway, to the south. It comprises the former Ainslie Park High School which is an imposing Art Deco style building listed category B. There is an extensive recreation area lying to the east of the former school, butting up to Ainslie Park Leisure Centre. This recreation ground is currently fenced off and unused with no access from the Leisure Centre.

3.16 The Northern Campus is affected by the following policies. The site is identified under Policy H1 – General Housing Policy in the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan, which states that

- Within the urban area as defined in this Local Plan, development for housing by way of new development, redevelopment, conversion and change of use will be acceptable, unless other policies in this Plan indicate otherwise and provided a satisfactory level of residential amenity can be provided.

The recreation ground associated with the Campus is covered in policy terms by NPPG 11 paragraph 13 which states that –

- SportScotland shall be a statutory consultee in situations where:
 - development is likely to prejudice the use of land as a playing field;
 - development is likely to lead to loss of land as a playing field;
 - development on land last used as a playing field which has not subsequently been built on.

3.17 With specific reference to playing fields and sports pitches, NPPG 11 goes on to state in paragraph 47 that

- There should be a presumption against redevelopment of playing fields or sports pitches, public or private. Development Plan Policies should indicate criteria by which redevelopment could be exceptionally allowed, such as to replace facilities with all weather surfaces, or in more central locations, or to allow an important development of the site. Such exceptions should be based on strategic considerations and should follow examination of all possible alternatives. This is particularly necessary before an open space of significant local amenity is removed. In these circumstances the replacement area should be within or adjacent to the same community, not in distant suburbs or urban fringe. Playing fields and sports pitches should not be redeveloped except where:

- the retention or enhancement of the facilities can best be achieved by redevelopment of part of the site which would not affect its sporting potential and its amenity value; or
- There would be no loss of amenity and alternative provision of equal community benefit and accessibility would be made available; and
- There is a clear long term excess of pitches, playing fields and public open space in the wider area, taking into account long term strategy, recreational and amenity value and any shortfall in adjoining local plan areas.

3.18 Within the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan, Policy GE9 – Open Space Protection states that

- Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of
 - a) Public Parks
 - b) Public and private playing fields and sports pitches
 - c) Other areas of open space of recreational, amenity or social value (including allotments).

3.19 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.

3.20 The Northern Campus lies within Pilton ward and the Development Quality Guidelines relating to the provision of Affordable Housing identify this ward as having a 0% provision requirement for new housing developments.

3.21 From the beginning of the working group process, Millers and their Architects were made aware of the fact that the principle of the conversion of the former school to residential use presented no inherent policy problems. However, there would be a presumption against the development of the former recreational ground for residential use which would only be acceptable if replacement facilities were to be provided within, or adjacent to the same community.

3.22 The working group acknowledged that the proximity of Ainslie Park Leisure Centre, immediately adjacent to the former recreation ground, makes the retention and use of this ground as formal sports pitches attractive and desirable. At the same time, the retention of the recreation ground would provide excellent amenity open space for the residential conversion of the existing buildings and the wider community within Pilton. In an effort to secure the retention of the recreation ground and provide fully serviced pitches, Miller Homes are in negotiation with other parties in an attempt to re-provision sports facilities on the recreation ground. This would have the affect of strengthening the services offered by the Leisure Centre whilst providing an amenity to the

wider Pilton community as well as the proposed residential conversion of the former school.

- 3.23 In view of the fact that an agreement has not yet been reached, Miller Homes have decided not to submit a report on the analysis of context and development strategy at this stage, although work is continuing on formulating a report.

3 The Western Campus

- 3.24 This small site extending to approximately 0.5 acres, occupied by a three-storey former office building, lies on the east side of Telford Road being located at the head of the cul-de-sac formed by Craigleith Hill Crescent. The Western General Hospital lies immediately to the east of the site.
- 3.25 This site is affected by the same housing policies as the Main Campus and in line with the Affordable Housing Policy, Miller Homes have discussed, with the Housing Department and Planning and Strategy, the possibility of utilising this site for key worker accommodation allied to the Hospital. In principle this proposal is acceptable. However, at this stage it is uncertain how many dwelling units will be provided on the Main Campus and the Western Campus combined. Once it has been determined how many units are being provided on both sites, then the 15% provision of affordable housing can be apportioned between both sites, if required.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The original intention was to present draft Development Strategies to Committee on all three of the Telford College sites, which could then be subjected to public consultation, before finalising Urban Design Statements. However, for the reasons outlined in the report, two of the sites have had to be delayed and will be presented to Committee at a later stage.
- 5.2 It is worth noting that the joint working between Miller Homes, Edinburgh's Telford College, their agents and Planning and Strategy has been conducted in a spirit of co-operation and worked well in exploring and identifying common ground at an early stage, removing the more usual situation of protracted negotiation.
- 5.3 Issues have arisen, particularly with regard to the Northern Campus, which is the reason that this site and the Western Campus have not been submitted at

this stage. However, it is hoped that these issues can be resolved and the same process applied to these two sites.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

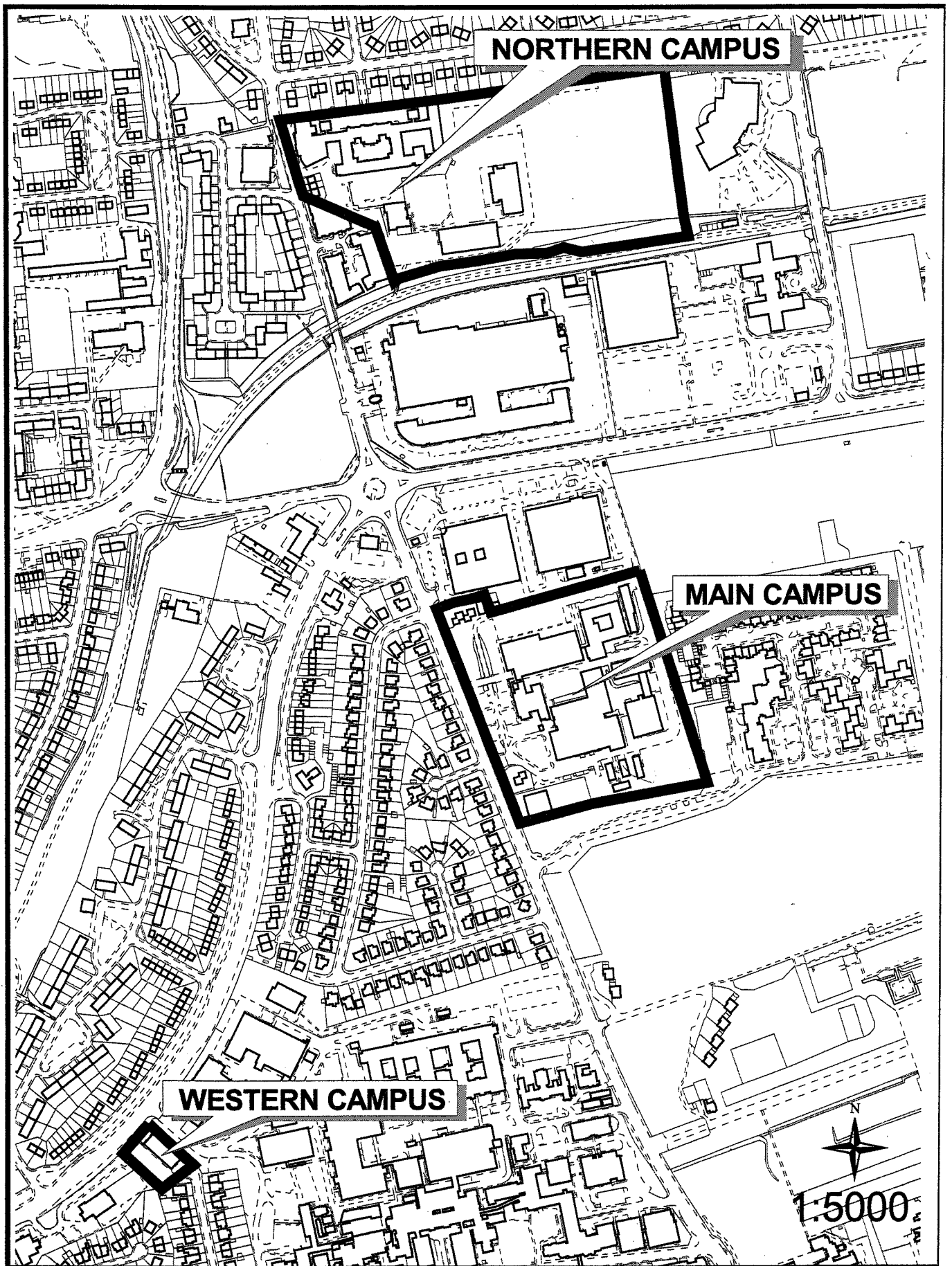
- a. Approves the development strategy prepared for the Main Campus as a draft for public consultation;
- b. Notes the position with regard to the Northern and Western Campuses, as described in this report.



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Director of City Development

29. 1. 04.

Appendices	Appendix 1: Report by Michael Laird Architects
Contact/tel	Mike Armstrong (0131) 469 3664 Bruce Nicolson (0131) 529 3516 Alun White (0131) 529 3918
Wards affected	Ward 8 Craigleith Ward 9 Pilton
Background Papers	None



NORTHERN CAMPUS

MAIN CAMPUS

WESTERN CAMPUS

1:5000

TELFORD COLLEGE CAMPUS SITES

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