

# Development Management Sub Committee

report returning to Committee - Wednesday 28 October 2020

**Application for Planning Permission 19/05832/FUL  
at Bangholm Outdoor Centre, Craighall Gardens, Edinburgh.  
Erection of new build Sports and Outdoor Centre to replace  
existing facilities on site (to be demolished) and provide  
sports facilities to be used by both Trinity Academy (located  
on Craighall Avenue) and the wider community.**

**Item number**

**Report number**

**Wards**

B04 - Forth

## Recommendations

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It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below.

## Background information

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This application was continued at the Development Management Sub-Committee on 23 September 2020 for further information. The Committee wanted further details of the following:

- clarity on other options to provide the outdoor centre without it impacting on the Category A tree;
- clarity on the access arrangements and
- more detail on the path surface and clarity on access for Trinity pupils.

The applicants have submitted a statement in response to the discussions. This covers the site arrangement, outdoor centre and site access as well as information on accessible and minibus parking.

This document can be viewed on the Planning and Building Standards Portal.

# Main report

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## Outdoor Centre and Category A Tree

The statement advises that the proposed site layout has been configured in response to a number of factors including the existing layout, specific operational requirements and constraints, and has been subject to extensive discussions with stakeholders including the Council, current and future users.

### *Site layout*

The site at Bangholm is triangular in shape and accommodates existing rugby and hockey pitches used by Trinity Academy and local teams. In developing the design, retaining these operational pitches in their current location was considered the best option, given that these were currently in an optimum east-west orientation for playing sport, of the correct size for amateur and professional matches and that the shape of the site prohibited their relocation.

This left the existing developed area in the north-east of the site, with direct pedestrian and vehicular access from both Craighall Gardens to the east and the cycle path from the north, as the primary development site.

Limiting the development to previously developed land was also desirable as it minimises the use of previously undeveloped designated open space.

### *Operational requirements*

The proposed development is primarily to serve as Trinity Academy's sports facilities and PE department. It is advised that, the overall footprint of the centre was based on the area required for a PE department taken from the Council's 'Wave 4' Accommodation Schedule Brief. This resulted in a footprint of 2,575m<sup>2</sup> with the building formed as a square to 'maximise area to perimeter ratio making the plan as efficient and condensed as possible'.

The site also currently operates as the only hub for the Council's existing Outdoor Centre and Outdoor Team. The Outdoor Team is responsible for outdoor learning, excursions and field trips and routinely returns from activities outside of what would be the normal opening hours of the proposed Sports Centre. A separate building is needed to ensure continued provision of this service, including changing facilities and equipment space, without the need for access to the main sports centre as this would have security and staffing implications. A footprint of 165m<sup>2</sup> is required for this facility and the standalone unit has been designed to meet these requirements.

It has been further advised that the gated area between the proposed sports and outdoor centres is to create a secure outdoor workspace for the repair of equipment outside and to have a wash-down area for dirty equipment on return from excursions. When the Outdoor Team is not using this external workspace, the gates will remain open allowing free access around the building. The gates will only be closed when members of the Outdoor Team are present using the external workspace and can open if required. The default position for these gates will be open. It should be noted that the operational arrangements of the sports facility are not matters that can be controlled by the planning authority under any planning permission granted: this is a matter for the Education Authority and the sports provider.

### *Fire and refuse access*

The development requires access for fire tenders and refuse vehicles with space for a turning head as well as space for disabled and minibus parking. It has been advised that the proposed layout allows safe and practical access, meeting the minimum dimensions based on the sweep path (the practical turning space) for a fire tender.

The location of the turning head, accessible and minibus parking is also in response to the existing access arrangement from Craighall Gardens remaining unaltered and allowing suitable setback from neighbouring buildings, including those within the conservation area.

### *Tree Report*

The applicant's additional tree report states a number of methods which will be employed to maintain the category A lime tree as far as is practical. This takes cognisance of the fact that the existing site layout, including existing hardstanding, buildings and structures may have bearing on the location of tree's routes.

It is noted that the existing lime is a remnant of an existing grouping of lime trees which were removed as part of the development of the flatted blocks on Craighall Gardens. This removal of lime trees was assessed as acceptable subject to replacement planting.

A condition attached to the approval of this application will ensure that suitable replacement planting will be achieved should it be found that retention of the remaining lime tree is not viable.

In conclusion, limiting redevelopment to the already developed area of the site has a number of benefits both practical for the function and operation of the site, and desirable in terms of minimising the use of undeveloped open space. The layout design has been in response to practical and operational needs as well as site constraints which substantially prohibit reconfiguration of the site and relocation of the outdoor centre in any other format. The development offers significant community benefits which, with the further benefit of replacement planting outweigh the potential for the loss of a singular tree.

### Access Arrangements and Path Surface

In relation to the access arrangements outwith the site from neighbouring schools, and in particular Trinity Academy, the agent has provided the following response:

*The access strategy for the Bangholm Sports and Outdoor Centre is the result of extensive consultation with all the key stakeholders primarily representatives of Trinity Academy (who will be the primary users of the facility), CEC Communities and Families as well as Edinburgh Leisure (who will operate the facility outside school hours allowing access by the general public).*

*The rationale behind developing Trinity Academy's PE Department at Bangholm is part of a larger plan to redevelop Trinity Academy itself as the current facilities there are no longer fit for purpose. The current site at Trinity Academy is overdeveloped over decades of piecemeal developments and currently the pitches on site at Bangholm are used by Trinity Academy for external sports. The idea is to develop new sports facilities at Bangholm adjacent to the existing external sports facilities initially to free up space to develop new teaching facilities on site a Trinity later. Creating this campus arrangement and the link between both for pupils was extensively discussed with the stakeholders to develop a strategy that was acceptable.*

*Trinity Academy staff will promote and enforce the pupils using the cycle path link between Bangholm and Trinity Academy as the primary route for pupils to use when travelling between the sites. This will mean pupils will not have to cross Craighall Road improving safety and it will encourage safe use of cycling by fostering a culture of active travel, green awareness and exercise in the pupils. To facility this beyond simple encouragement by staff physical elements will be provided to reinforce this route such as abundant cycle storage adjacent to the north entrance from the cycle path (based on 'Cycling by Design' Guidance by Transport Scotland) as well as improving the entrance from the cycle path as well (see section below on 'Details of access from Victoria Path').*

The submitted Design and Access Statement provides details of the proposed routes agreed between all parties.

The site provides existing facilities for pupils of Trinity Academy. Through redevelopment of the site and extensive discussions described it is clear that safer and practical site access for pupils has been a consideration. This corresponds to the onsite layout, provision of cycle stands, design of windows and active frontages at ground level and improved access from the Hawthorn Path (Victoria Path) as described below.

The applicant has confirmed that gates will be open from all access points from the Hawthorn Path (Victoria Path) and Craighall Gardens during operational hours of the site. However, as the application is for the development of a sport facility, the practical arrangements for getting pupils to the site are operational matters for the Education Authority and cannot be controlled by the Planning Authority.

#### *Hawthorn Path*

An extract from the indicative landscape plan has been supplied. This shows an upgraded access link form the path. There will be two elements to this access comprising of a 1:15 sloped access and a stepped access to accommodate the level change between the site and the path. The access follows guidance outlined in the Sustrans Design Manual and will be accessible by both cycle and pedestrian users.

The sloped path will be finished in asphalt to aid accessibility. The steps will be finished in a resin bound gravel.

#### *Access from Holy Cross Primary*

It is advised that the entrance into the site from Holy Cross Primary will be upgraded from a route over the existing grass to an asphalt surface providing an accessible entrance from the existing gate. This asphalt surface will connect to a new path of self-binding gravel which will run northwards towards the Sports Centre. This new path will run along the eastern edge of the rugby pitch, with provision made for surface water. This arrangement is to provide an accessible path from the entrance at Holy Cross Primary to the sports and outdoor centres and is an upgrade of an existing path.

#### Other issues raised

##### *Minibus parking*

It has been advised that the spaces marked on the plans for minibus drop off also provide parking for two medium sized 17 seat minibuses which can house two teams e.g. one hockey one rugby. This will eliminate the need for offsite parking on match day weekends. Again, it should be noted that this is an operational matter for the Education Authority and cannot be controlled by the Planning Authority.

## Disabled parking

Whilst not a material planning consideration, the agent has advised the following in relation to the amount of disabled parking provided.

*'The provision of two Accessible Parking Spaces is a sufficient provision in terms of the current Building Regulations for a building of this size and use. All the parking spaces provided at Bangholm will be solely for visitor use as the staff will part at the existing car park adjacent to Trinity Academy (see Section C.3 of the Design & Access Statement). The All Ability Bike Club have been a key stakeholder in the development of the design and will remain a key user of the new facility. Through consultations they have been happy with the proposals and the added facilities it will provide them with once complete, notable the Community Café space which they will use as a base when on site.'*

## Links

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### **Policies and guidance for this application**

LEN06, LEN12, LEN15, LEN16, LEN18, LEN21, LDES01, LDES03, LDES04, LDES05, LHOU07, LTRA02, LTRA03, LEN22,

A copy of the original Committee report can be found in the list of documents at

<https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q28LTDEWKHM00>

Or Council Papers online

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