

# **First look at plans for proposed makeover at Penicuik High School**

**Plans for a major refurbishment of a Midlothian secondary school have been lodged giving a first look at the proposed makeover.**

Penicuik High School will undergo a major refit with a new three storey extension and plans to create a central assembly and courtyard space for students.

The plans, which have been put on Midlothian Council's planning portal, have changed from earlier proposals which included part of a neighbouring public park in the site.

Architects Holmes Miller said the design of the work aims to reuse and 'retrofit' much of the original 1930s building infilling existing outdoor spaces with the extension on the north side of the building.



An artist's impression of new Penicuik High School pic courtesy Midlothian planning portal

They said: "The 'heart' of the school will be centred around the original assembly hall and courtyard spaces, creating a hub for indoor sport, dining and social interaction, and a unified core between old and new."

The refurbished school will be able to accommodate more than 900 pupils and double the Additional Support Need places available with up to 24 included.

There are also plans to improve access with a new accessible entrance to the north, fully accessible floor plates with

improved lift and toilet provision and clear circulation routes.

If approved, the project will be part funded by the Scottish Futures Trust LEIP (Learning Estates Investment Programme).

At a meeting of Midlothian Council's planning committee in September concerns were raised about initial plans for the refit which included part of Montgomery Park, in the boundary.

Local member Councillor Willie McEwen told the meeting: "I am conscious that Penicuik's parade in the park is situated on that part of Montgomery Park, it is a well used park. I would not like to think there would be any long term prohibition for residents of Penicuik using that valuable piece of recreation land."

At the time the council's planning adviser said the addition of the land gave the council, who are the applicants in the plans, 'scope to decant' during the redevelopment adding the proposals were still in the early stages.

The application lodged with the local authority this week no longer includes the park in the site boundary.

Joanne Hemmings, from Holmes Miller, said the firm had worked to find a sensitive way to refurbish and expand the school.

She said: "Our plans illustrate how a historic building at the heart of a community can be sensitively modernised, retrofitted and made more accessible for its pupils, staff, and the wider community to enjoy.

"Our proposals aim to optimise the site with new and improved playground, green space and outdoor learning environments. The internal upgrades will provide a comfortable and inspiring setting for pupils to learn and grow in."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter