Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 25 March 2025

Options for the future of secondary school provision in Queensferry and Kirkliston

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	1 – Almond

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Note the information provided in this report;
 - 1.1.2 Agree to rule out the option of building a new non-denominational secondary school in Kirkliston; and
 - 1.1.3 Agree to the development of proposals for the permanent extension of Queensferry High School.

Gareth Barwell

Interim Executive Director of Place

Contact: Robbie Crockatt, Strategic Asset Planning Manager

E-mail: robbie.crockatt@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3051



Report

Options for the future of secondary school provision in Queensferry and Kirkliston

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides the further financial information requested by the Education, Children and Families Committee about two options for the future of secondary school provision in Queensferry and Kirkliston.
- 2.2 The report demonstrates a significant cost differential between the two options and, in setting out the breakdown of key costs, also highlights the impact the two options have on delivery timescales and disruption on the Queensferry High School site.
- 2.3 The report recommends that Committee now rule out the option of building a new non-denominational secondary school in Kirkliston on the basis of the information in this report and, most importantly, due to the previously highlighted significant risks associated with the Planning status of the land around Kirkliston.

3. Background

3.1 On 3 September 2024, Education, Children and Families Committee considered a report which provided information requested by the Council following the conclusion of a statutory consultation that proposed a new secondary school be established on the site of the existing Kirkliston Leisure Centre. Having considered and noted the content of September's report, Committee agreed an additional recommendation which was:

"The Education Children and Families Committee agrees not to rule out the option of building a new non-denominational secondary school in Kirkliston and to continue discussions with landowners until the feasibility work exploring the ways in which Queensferry High School can be extended is completed and Councillors are presented with full associated costs of both options."

3.2 Consequently, further discussions with landowners or their representatives have taken place and the high-level feasibility work on the proposed extension of Queensferry High School has now been completed. This report provides details of

the estimated costs of both options, further information relating to the delivery of both options and information on the discussions held with landowners.

4. Main report

Summary of Option Costs

Capital Costs

4.1 High level estimates of the costs associated with extending Queensferry High School or building a new secondary school in Kirkliston are set out in Table 1, below. This table shows that the total estimated capital cost of extending Queensferry High School is £52.00m and the estimated capital cost of building a new high school in Kirkliston is £91.65m.

Table 1: Estimated costs of options to address secondary school capacityconcerns in Kirkliston and Queensferry

Option	Extend Queensferry High School	Build a new Kirkliston High School
	(£m)	(£m)
Estimated Construction Cost	35.40	79.90
Bus Parking	3.70	n/a
Works to existing building(s)	12.00	n/a
Temporary Accommodation	0.90	5.50
Land Purchase	n/a	2.25
Land servicing and remediation	n/a	4.00
TOTAL	52.00	91.65

4.2 The sections that follow provide more information and commentary about each of the cost lines in the table.

Estimated Construction Costs

4.3 The estimated construction costs for both options in Table 1 (above) are based on a rate of £8,100 per square metre (m²) advised by cost consultants assessing the new

build costs arising from the Queensferry High School extension feasibility study in Appendix 1. They assume a construction start date in Q4 2026.

- 4.4 This estimate is a cautious figure and, as such, is considerably higher than the actual project costs of the new Currie and Liberton High Schools which, when indexed to Q4 of 2026, are £6,625 p/m² and £6,253 p/m² respectively.
- 4.5 The cost for the extension of Queensferry High School is based on a new annexe building with a Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) of 4,400m² to accommodate a total school roll of up to 1,800 pupils. The feasibility study in Appendix 1 provides full details of the work undertaken to develop the option of extending Queensferry High School and the accommodation requirements. The floor areas are estimates pending further design development with the school management team and further investigation of the latest school roll projections which suggest that future pressure on Queensferry High School may be less than previously anticipated.
- 4.6 A new high school in Kirkliston is estimated to have a GIFA of 9,864m². These floor areas are estimates pending detailed design. This GIFA is based on a generic accommodation schedule for a school with capacity for 600 pupils, extendable to 1,200 pupils.

Bus Parking

- 4.7 No bus parking was created at Queensferry High School when the new school was designed in 2017. This is because buses were only required for pupils attending from Kirkliston. At that time, the Council had <u>approved</u> that pupils from Kirkliston would be aligned with a different school and so, eventually, no school bus service from Kirkliston to Queensferry would be required.
- 4.8 However, despite significant informal and statutory consultation processes on different options for secondary provision being progressed, pupils from Kirkliston continue to attend Queensferry High School as approval for an alternative option has never been forthcoming. The number of buses transporting pupils from Kirkliston to Queensferry High School has increased and this has resulted in concerns about road safety and increased congestion around Queensferry High School caused by parked buses.
- 4.9 The feasibility study in Appendix 1 includes commentary on several ways in which bus parking could be addressed as part of the extension project. For the purposes of this report, the estimated Bus Parking costs of £3.7m in Table 1 are based on the costliest option. The actual solution progressed would be determined through the next stages of community engagement and further design work.
- 4.10 If a new high school were built in Kirkliston it is likely that buses between Kirkliston and Queensferry High School would continue to be required in the short to medium term albeit they would gradually reduce in number. These buses would continue to provide transport for pupils already attending Queensferry High School and their siblings. As no permanent works to Queensferry High School would be proposed

under the new Kirkliston High School option, existing arrangements for buses would remain.

4.11 Regardless of the option finally progressed, reducing the impact of traffic congestion at Queensferry High School by utilising the parking capacity at the adjacent Queensferry Sports Hub is being explored. If this were made available to school staff during the day it could help reduce the pressure on the school's own carpark and reduce parking on Station Road.

Works to Existing Buildings

- 4.12 The option of extending Queensferry High School also requires that changes are made to the layout of some areas in the existing building. This is so that faculties remain whole, ensuring the continuation of an efficient working model for the school and the expansion of core facilities such as the dining space.
- 4.13 The accommodation changes required were identified following an assessment by Council officers and the school management team of individual spaces and the adaptations required to allow the school to operate efficiently according to the agreed Planning Capacity methodology. Details of the internal changes proposed are set out in the feasibility report in Appendix 1. The cost of these changes is estimated to be £12.0m.
- 4.14 As with the cost of the new building, the changes proposed to the existing building are provisional pending further design development with the school management team and further investigation of the latest school roll projections which suggest that future pressure on Queensferry High School may be less than previously anticipated.
- 4.15 The works proposed to the existing Queensferry High School building would take place after the construction of the proposed annexe building. The timescales by which these adaptations would take place have not been modelled. However, it may be possible to phase much of this work so that it takes place during holiday periods, limiting disruption to the school during term time.
- 4.16 Should the option of delivering a new high school in Kirkliston be progressed, no internal adaptations to Queensferry High School would be proposed.

Temporary Accommodation

- 4.17 The Planning Capacity of Queensferry High School is projected to be breached in 2027. Neither extending Queensferry High School nor building a new secondary school in Kirkliston is possible before this date. Accordingly, it is anticipated that there will be a requirement for some temporary accommodation until at least the point where a permanent solution is delivered.
- 4.18 Depending on the option progressed extending Queensferry High School or building a new secondary school in Kirkliston there are significant differences in the amount of temporary accommodation required, the timescales over which it would be necessary and the associated costs.

- 4.19 If the option progressed was the extension of Queensferry High School, it is estimated that this work could be fully completed (including changes to the existing building) by 2029 or 2030. Accordingly, there would be a two three year period between 2027 and 2029/30 when temporary accommodation may be required. It is forecast that accommodation demands during this period would be relatively minor and could be met through provision of approximately six general classroom spaces and associated supporting accommodation (such as toilets). It would not be necessary to deliver this temporary accommodation all at once. Delivery in phases following annual assessment and confirmation of requirements would be possible.
- 4.20 If the option progressed was to build a new secondary school in Kirkliston, it is estimated that this work could be completed by 2030. However, it is unlikely that the Council would enforce the mandatory transfer of Kirkliston pupils from Queensferry High School to the new school. Instead, the new school would grow organically from a single S1 intake. It is also likely that, in the first years of a new Kirkliston High School, there would continue to be a flow of pupils from Kirkliston to Queensferry High School due to a sibling guarantee. Accordingly, Queensferry High School due to grow after 2030, requiring substantially more temporary accommodation for a longer period of time. It could take an estimated seven nine years from 2027 for a new Kirkliston High School to reduce the roll at Queensferry High School to a point where it operated within its current Planning Capacity.
- 4.21 The longer-term requirement for temporary accommodation at Queensferry High School under the option of building a new Kirkliston High School means that the accommodation provided would need to better reflect the operating model of the school in order to avoid long-term disruption. Therefore, ideally, the temporary facilities would accommodate a full school faculty. This means that it would be preferable to deliver temporary accommodation in a single phase under this option.

Land Purchase, Servicing and Remediation

- 4.22 The option of extending Queensferry High School would incur no land, servicing or remediation costs as the site is already serviced and is in the ownership of the City of Edinburgh Council. However, as the building is managed through a DBFM (Design, Build, Finance, Maintain) contract, the extension and works to the existing building may be subject to additional costs associated with contractual changes. It is not possible to quantify these without first developing proposals in more detail.
- 4.23 The option of building a new high school in Kirkliston would require that the Council purchase land as it does not currently own an appropriate site. The <u>report</u> to Education, Children and Families Committee on 3 September 2024 set out the estimated purchase cost of land around Kirkliston based on discussions with two interested landowners or their representatives.
- 4.24 As the majority of the land around Kirkliston is currently agricultural, it would be necessary to service and remediate any purchased land. This would result in considerable additional cost. Table 1 includes an estimate based on previous

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experience. However, each site is unique and, more accurate estimates would only be possible following completion of site investigations. The discussions with landowners since Committee on 3 September 2024 have sought to mitigate this financial risk as much as possible by seeking any detailed survey information that may already exist. At the time of writing, no further information has been available but at least one landowner has remained in contact and indicated that they were in the process of collating information.

- 4.25 The land which has been the subject of discussions with landowners currently has 'greenfield' status. The risks associated with submitting a planning application for a new secondary school on a greenfield site around Kirkliston have been set out in detail in previous reports.
- 4.26 Considering the risks associated with the Planning status of the land around Kirkliston, the information provided in this report and in the <u>report</u> to Education, Children and Families Committee on 3 September 2024, it is recommended that Committee rule out the option of building a new non-denominational secondary school in Kirkliston and agree to the development of proposals for the permanent extension of Queensferry High School.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If Committee approve the report recommendations, a full design team would be appointed to take this project forward as quickly as possible to limit the requirement for temporary accommodation.
- 5.2 In taking forward proposals for a permanent extension of Queensferry High School, engagement with the school and wider community prior to the submission of a planning application would take place.
- 5.3 Should Committee request that the option taken forward is the establishment of a new secondary school in Kirkliston, informal engagement with key stakeholders would be undertaken to confirm the preferred location for a new school. This would be followed by a statutory consultation proposing a new school on the identified site. This consultation would progress at risk, subject to securing the necessary budget and the successful acquisition of land identified as the preferred location for the new school.
- 5.4 A design process for the new school would most likely run in parallel to help inform the consultation and accelerate the timescales for submission of a planning application.

6. Financial impact

6.1 This report sets out the capital costs estimated to be associated with the options of extending Queensferry High School and building a new secondary school in

Kirkliston. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a substantial difference in the likely capital expenditure required under the two options with extending Queensferry High School estimated to cost £52.00m and a new secondary school in Kirkliston estimated to cost £91.65m.

- 6.2 However, in the long-term, the costs associated with staffing and running a new secondary school make this option substantially more expensive than extending Queensferry High School. This is because, as well as additional building running costs, there would be the need for significantly more staff: an additional Head Teacher and management team, Business Manager, Administrative, Facilities, and Support team members as well as more teaching staff.
- 6.3 There is no capital allocation in the existing capital programme to deliver any of the permanent or temporary accommodation options outlined in this report. Following Committee, a business case for the agreed option will require to be progressed and approved by Finance and Resources Committee before any project can proceed.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report have been reached following several years of engagement and finally a statutory consultation proposing a new secondary school in Kirkliston which was rejected at a meeting of full Council in February 2024.
- 7.2 Having rejected the option of building a new school in Kirkliston on the Leisure Centre site, only one option to address capacity issues in Queensferry remains and that is to extend Queensferry High School. This is because no other site for a new school exists that does not present significant planning risks.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Approval of the recommendations in this report commit the Council to a course of action that would focus officer time and engagement with the Queensferry community on the development of an extension of Queensferry High school. The impact on the Council's net-zero ambitions and the climate and nature emergency will be assessed as part of the design development process via an Environmental Impact Assessment. This will form part of the business case for a new school.
- 8.2 Any new school building would be constructed to low energy Passivhaus or equivalent standards.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

9.1 The recommendations in this report seek to limit the Council's exposure to the more substantial time, planning and financial risks that would be inherent in a decision to pursue the option of a new secondary school in Kirkliston.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Outcome of the Statutory Consultation Proposing to Establish a New Non-Denominational Secondary School in Kirkliston and associated Catchment Changes
 - City of Edinburgh Council, 8 February 2024.
- 10.2 <u>Proposal to establish a Secondary School in Kirkliston</u> B Agenda, Education, Children and Families Committee, 3 September 2024.
- 10.3 <u>Queensferry High School</u> City of Edinburgh Council, 24 November 2016.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Queensferry High School Extension Feasibility Report.



Queensferry High School RIBA Stage 0 Addendum Report

The City of Edinburgh Council Sustainable Construction Delivery Sustainable Development, Place



Document Details

Consultant Directory

File: QHS-CEC-XX-XX-RP-A-75000	Architect
Project Code: TBC	Sustainable Construction Delivery, Sustainable Development, Place,
Status: S4	The City of Edinburgh Council.
Revision: P02	Contact: Ryan Moffat
Date: 18/02/25	
Document Revision History	Quantity Surveyor
P01 - 31/01/25	Currie & Brown
P02 - 18/02/25	Contact: Stuart Herring



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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Background

Sustainable Construction Delivery were commissioned by Strategic Asset Planning (SAP) in 2022 to undertake a pre-feasibility study looking at options to expand Queensferry High School. The report titled "Outline Infrastructure Appraisal for Expansion of Queensferry High School" was concluded in October 2022 and proposed several options with high level cost estimates for the following:

- Permanently or temporarily extending the existing building to accommodate the increased school roll.
- Reconfiguring the existing building to retain suitable departmental adjacencies and support accommodation provision with the increased school roll.
- Expand parking provision to allow for coaches. Currently coaches are parking on Scotstoun Avenue 300m from the school site.

1.2 Overview & Brief

In September 2024, SCD were approached by SAP to revisit the prefeasibility study with an aim to review and update the Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) and the associated cost estimates. Progress on the commission was postponed in October due to ongoing investigations into the DBFM contract by Councils Operational Estate (PPP) Contract Management team. In early December 2024 it was agreed to progress the commission with the legal enquiries dealt with on a separate basis. The brief for the update commission was as follows:

- Reduction of GIFA from 4800m2 to 4400m2 and to review the Implications of the revised floor area for the proposed annex options at both the rear and front of the school.
- Taking both the annex revised annex proposals and car parking options to CEC planning to determine what options they would be supportive if and general advice on policy framework.

1.3 Planning

Refer to section 5 for further information. Both annex options were deemed to be feasible by CEC Planning but with more risk associated with option 2. Car parking options 1 and 3 were both deemed to be feasible. Option 2 was discounted due to risks associated with loss of amenity and road safety. Plannings views should not considered to be their formal position as they were not provided as part of a pre-planning consultation application.

1.4 Master programme

The construction costs have been prepared on the basis of 24 month construction programme with site start anticipated for 4th quarter 2026 and completion in 4th quarter 2028.

1.5 Project Costs

The overall project cost has been prepared on the basis of current rates and prices, i.e. 1Q 2025 with a tender inflation allowance included to the proposed start on site date of 4Q 2026 and a construction inflation allowance to the midpoint of construction of 4Q 2027.

Due to the early stage of design (Pre-feasibility study) cost estimates for each option are high level and based on limited design information. In addition the following risk allowances have been made: Design Development @ 7.5%, Contractors Risk @ 2.5%, and Client Contingency @ 10%.

The existing building reconfiguration does not allow for any decant accommodation as it is assumed that alteration works would occur after completion of the annex building. A full list of exclusions are provided in the cost report produced by Currie & Brown available in appendix 5.4.

Existing Building Rec

Option 1 - Rear (Sour Option 2 - Front (No Carparking Option 1 Carparking Option 3

1.6 Risks

Project specific risks have been identified and summarised within the original feasibility report. Records on the location of SPEN utilities has been obtained to determine the proximity of known power infrastructure in relation to option 1.

Conclusion

It is recommended that investigations by the Operational Estate (PPP) Contract Management team into the DBFM contract are concluded prior to commissioning of a RIBA stage 1 feasibility study.

configuration:	£12,000,000 (£3600 per m2)
uth) Annex:	£35,400,000 (£8100 per m2)
orth) Annex:	£35,100,000 (£8000 per m2)
- Reconfiguration:	£3,700,000 (£900 per m2)
B - East boundary	£2,300,000 (£800 per m2)

2.0 Existing Context

2.1 Existing Utilities: Scottish Power Energy Networks

Records of assets held by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) have been obtained with excerpts from the record drawings shown opposite.

There is an existing electrical substation to the school site's western boundary that serves the high school, community centre and local housing.

A high voltage cable follows the western boundary to the south around the Queensferry Sports and Community Hub. This cable would be in close proximity to the proposed annex building indicated in Option 1. It is not anticipated that a diversion would be required.

Further investigation would be required in subsequent design stages to derisk this element particularly in relation to any proposed retention works to the western boundary.





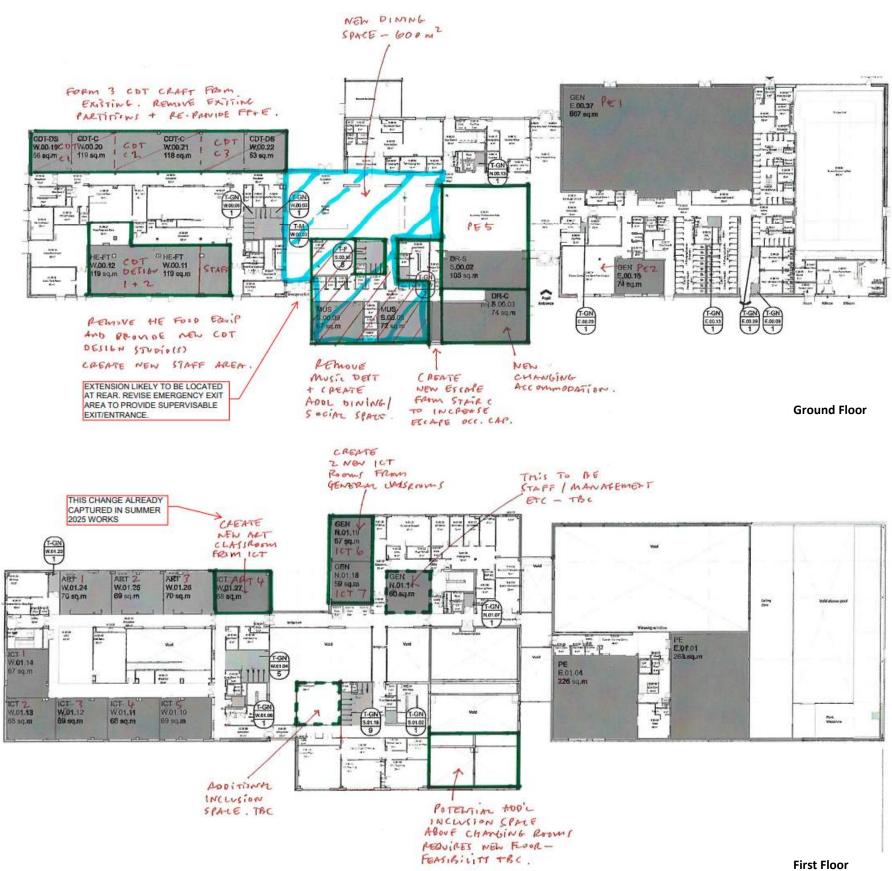
3.1 Reconfiguration of the existing building

As part of the initial development, the existing school was carefully designed to house the required educational spaces at that time as efficiently as possible to comply with (LEIP) funding metrics. The building was divided into self-contained faculties, which means adjacencies between departments are clear and lend themselves to efficient management of the school.

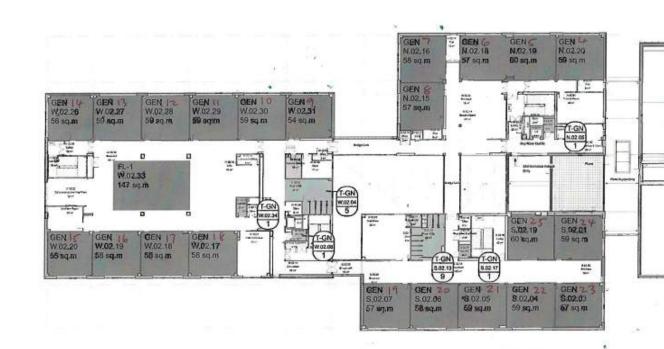
In the original feasibility study, a high level desktop exercise was undertaken looking how these adjacencies could be maintained as a result of the expansion to the school roll. This would involve significant reconfiguration of the existing building the output of which was established using generic space metrics and high level input from the school senior management team and Strategic Asset Planning (SAP)

For the purposes of this addendum report, SAP requested that the adaption proposals were revised in line with updated scoping notes and costs updated accordingly. The scoping notes provided by SAP assume that the new annex is to the north of the existing however the porposals can easily be adapted if the annex is porposed to the south of the school site. The general location of departments and communal facilities such as dining remains similar to the original proposal with most of the reconfiguration works focused on the ground and first floors. Changes in the scoping notes and sketches generally involve alterations to the location and provision of specific accommodation and omission of the extension to the ground floor offices.

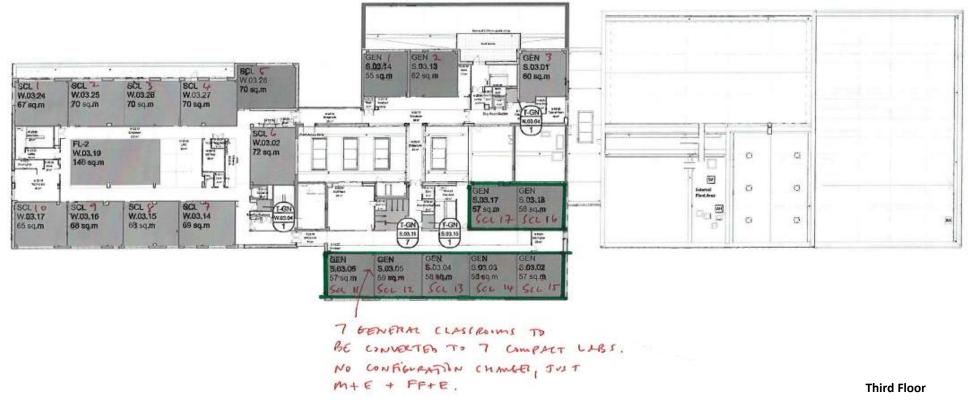
Excerpts of the sketches from the scoping notes are shown on the following pages and a copy of the original document is available le in appendix 5.1. Please note that costs are estimates by the QS and have not been tested via DBFM change controls.

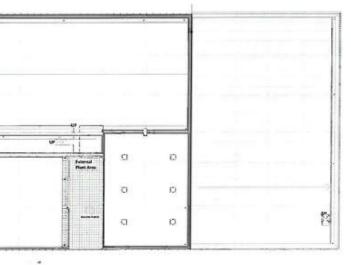


3.1 Reconfiguration of the Existing Building



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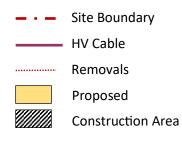


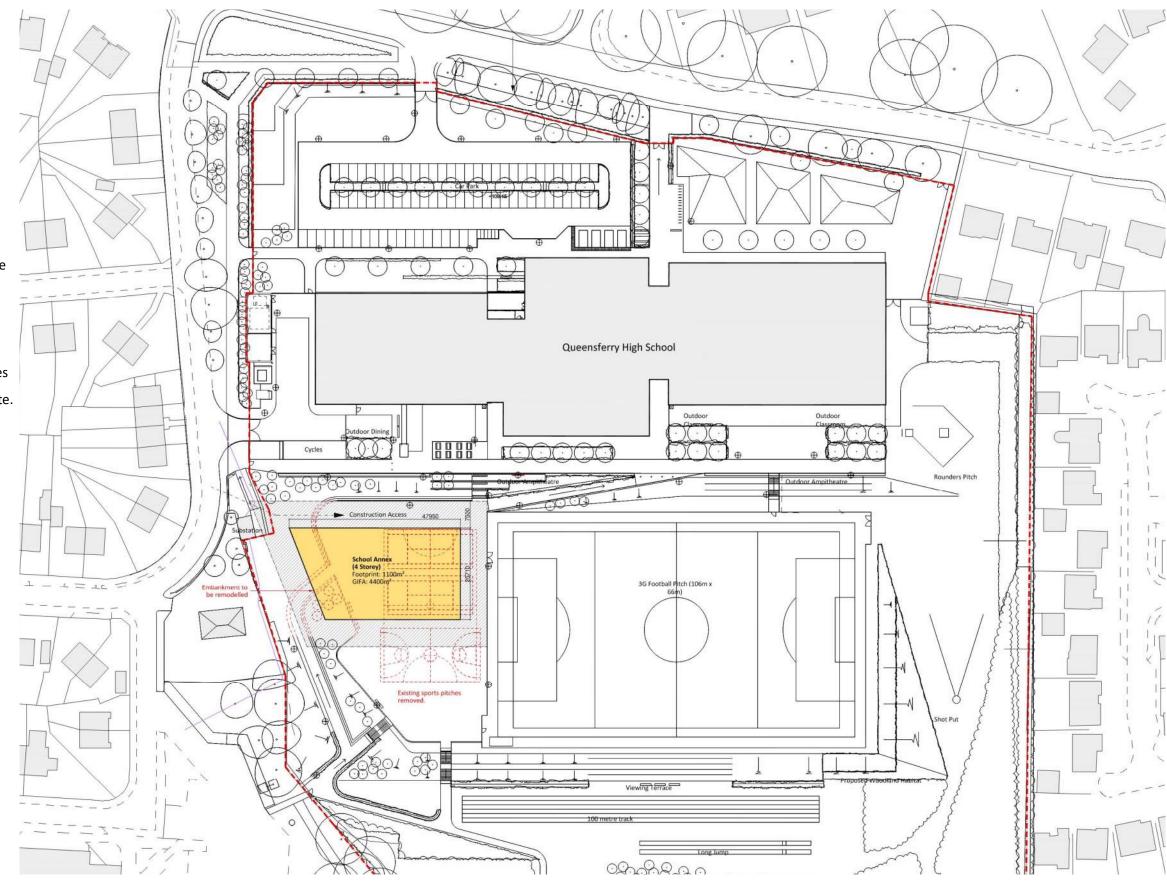




- 3.2 Option 1: Rear (South) Annex
- 4 storey annex block located at rear of existing building. Less contentious in terms of planning risk.
- Annex proposed due to difficulty of extending building.
- Construction access via Ashburnham Road.
- Annex has good orientation but risk that it will over shade the existing building.
- Remodelling of existing embankment likely to be required.
- HV cable and substation in close proximity to works. Further investigation will be required.
- Loss of playground amenity space. Sports pitches will need to be relocated elsewhere in school site.

LEGEND

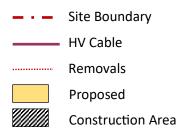


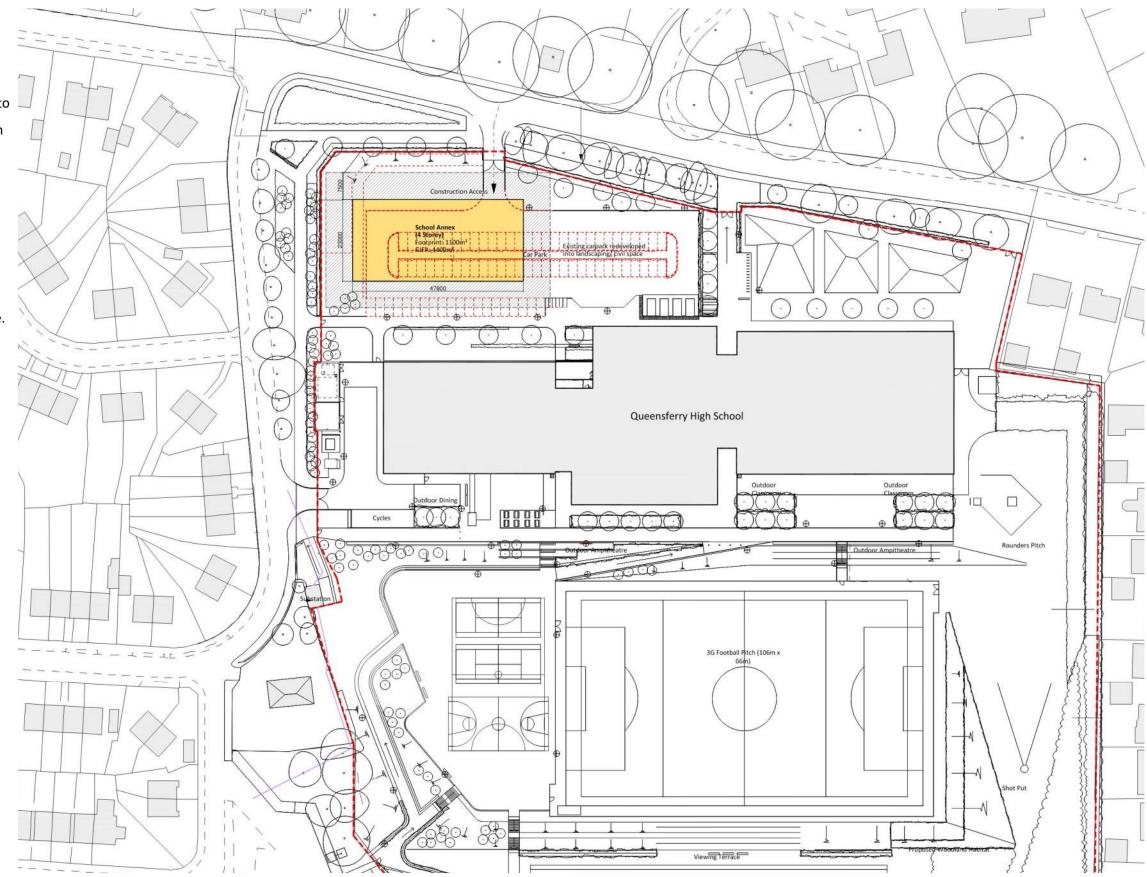


3.3 Option 2: Front (North) Annex

- 4 storey annex block located at front of existing building.
- More contentious in terms of planning risk due to proximity of conservation area and placement in front of existing building.
- Annex proposed due to difficulty of extending building.
- Construction access via Station Road.
- Existing building will overshade new annex.
- Loss of existing parking. Carparking options to north east and south east will only be applicable.



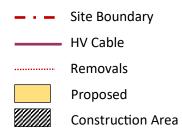




- 3.4 Carparking Option 1: Reconfiguration
- Reconfiguration of existing carpark to provide drop-off and parking for 10 coaches.
- Existing junction will require widening to accommodate coach tracking.
- Loss of carparking spaces can be offset by forming new carpark at existing landscape area to north east.

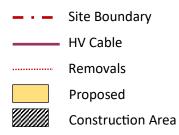


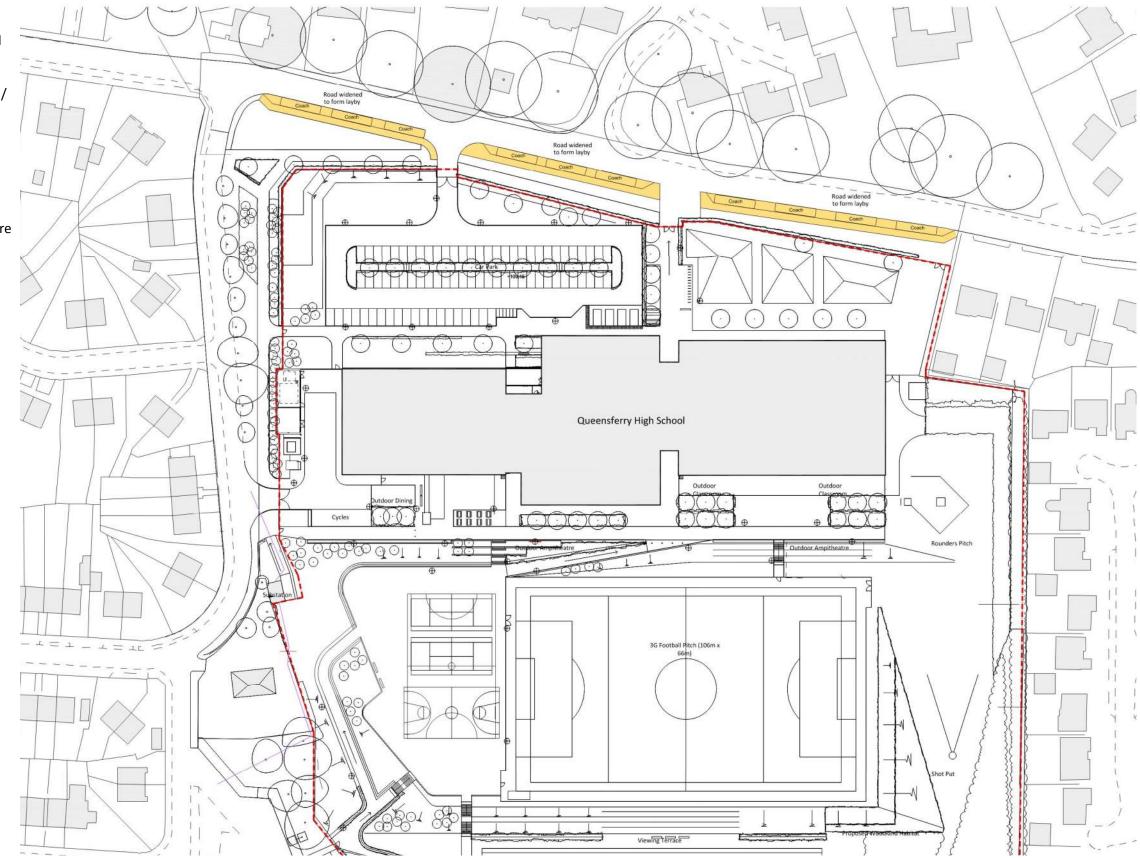
LEGEND



- 3.5 Car Parking Option 2: Station Road
- 10 number Coach parking/ drop off bays formed on Station Road.
- Forming of bays will result in loss of greenspace / trees and active travel route and pedestrian footway will need to be rebuilt.
- High planning risk due to loss of amenity and proximity to conservation area.
- Turning of coaches on Station Road would require risk assessment by transportation.
- The north east corner of the site was subject to major Scottish Water upgrades with significant assets in this location. Further investigation/ consultation would therefore be required.



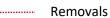


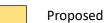


- 3.6 Car Parking Option 3: East Boundary
- New access road, turning circle and 10 coach parking bays formed along eastern boundary.
- New junction would result in loss of amenity/ trees on Station Road and creates new road safety risk.

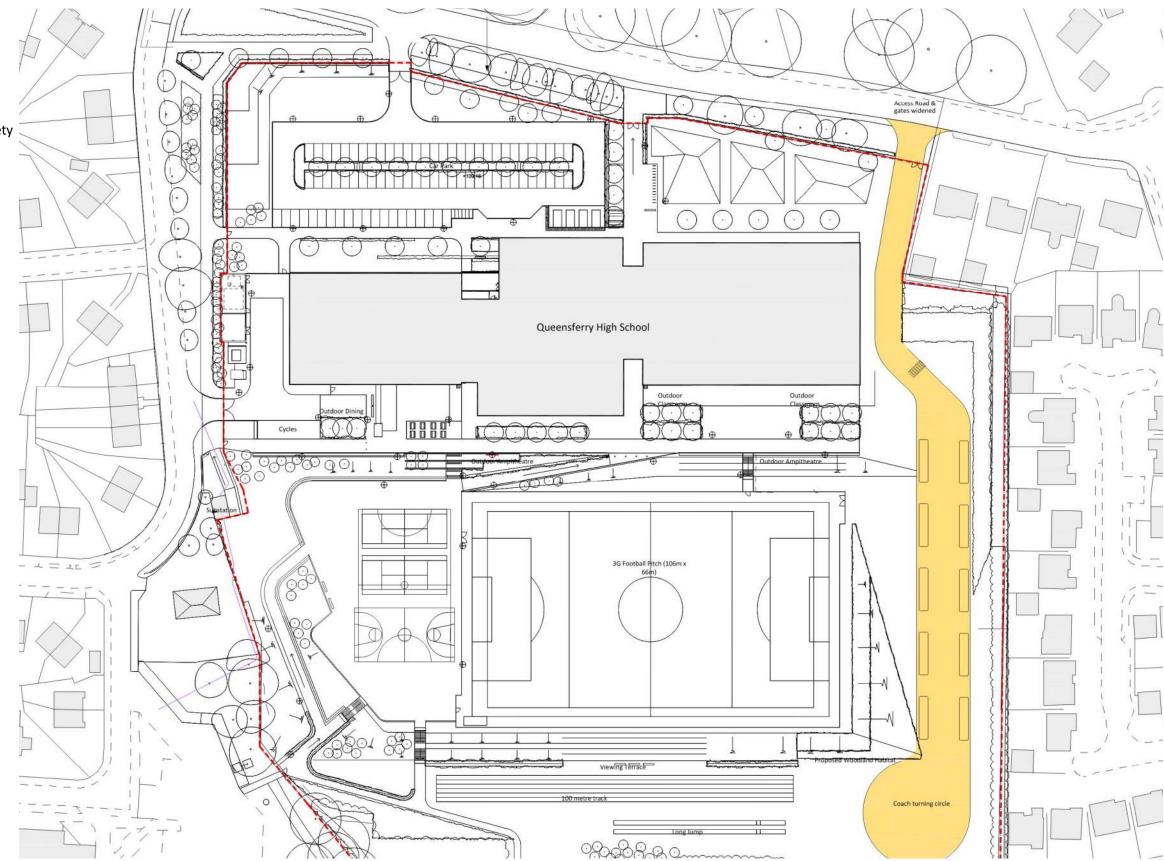








Construction Area



4.0 Consultations

4.1 Statutory Authorities: Planning

A meeting was held on 10th December 2024 with the Planning Central and West Team Manager. This meeting was not part of a Pre-application advice service but intended to be an informal discussion to ascertain the feasibility of the annex and carparking options outlined in the original study.

Option 1: Rear (South) Annex

- Loss of amenity should be discussed with Sports Scotland. There have been Issues in the past with objections raised as a statutory consultee on other developments
- Playground area to rear is designated open space in the Local Development Plan. Justification would be required such as growth of the local area and increase in school roll.
- No issue with relationship to existing building. Annex is deemed to be acceptable due to the complexities of extending the existing building due to the sports hall location and connecting circulation .
- No major objection in principle to a building in this location.

Option 2: Front (North) Annex

- Conservation area to north of Station Road with grade B listed buildings was sensitive during consultations for development of new high school. Building was set back significantly from Station Road as a result. Northern boundary was also planted with trees to screen new building from the road.
- No major objection in principle to building in this location. Greater risk of objections from surrounding neighbours. No loss of tree belt / landscaping screening to north boundary.
- Potential issues with this option in terms of impact to existing building • in terms of daylighting and overshading. Carparking would also need to be relocated to facilitate this option.

Carparking Option 1: Reconfiguration

- There would be no objection from either Planning or Transport to loss of parking provision. The Parking Standards are intended as a target and not mandatory.
- No issues with reconfiguration of existing car park to accommodate • coach drop off. Careful consideration of widening to junction and potential loss of landscaping / tree belt to north.
- Compensatory car park area to north east may be an issue in terms of loss of landscaping to north of building and potential loss of trees / landscaping belt to Station Road boundary.

Carparking Option 3: East boundary

- Loss of amenity would require consultation with Sports Scotland.
- be managed by school.
- New junction at northeast boundary would result in loss of landscaping/ tree belt to north.

Carparking Option 2: Station Road Layby

- Risk of loss of trees / landscaping to accommodate road widening and impact on conservation area. Active travel route would also need to be retained.
- Would require review by transport to assess impact on Station Road traffic due to manoeuvres by coaches.
- Option not deemed to be viable due to these risks.

Additional Observations

Least impact from planning perspective.

- Potential use of hardstanding for school amenity grounds. Not initially
- preferred by planning in principle but as within secure grounds could
- Site levels may make this option unfeasible or result in additional costs compared with other parking options.

- The building GIFA under 5000m2 therefore not considered a major
- application and requirement for Pre-application consultation.
- Parties agree that some form public consultation would be beneficial given importance of the site to the local community.

5.0 Appendices

- 5.0 Appendices
- **5.1** Reconfiguration of Existing Scope
- 5.2 Annex Options 1 & 2
- 5.3 Car Parking Options 1, 2 & 3
- 5.4 Cost Report