The New Currie Community High School Development

FAQs

- **How can I ask a question about the project?**
  All queries about the project should be emailed to wave4schools@edinburgh.gov.uk

- **How can I formally make comments and share my opinion on the proposals?**
  Prior to the planning application being submitted we are inviting your views and comments on the proposals, you can do this on the consultation hub
  https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/cf/curriehighredevelopment

  The full planning application for the new school will be submitted in June 2021. Once this is online you will be able to comment on the proposals formally on the planning application through the planning portal. https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application

- **How can I get more information and pose questions to the project team?**
  We will host online community consultation sessions which you can get involved in prior to the planning application being submitted.
  These will take place on Zoom at the follow dates and times:
    - Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 11am-12pm
    - Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 6pm-7pm
    - Thursday 22 April 2021 at 7pm-8pm

  Please use this link on your chosen date and time to join the webinar:
  https://zoom.us/j/97856438347?pwd=TGdXb2NYcWxsR091WFdUeGJ4Y1hIQT09
  Passcode: 591373

- **When will the school be ready?**
  We are aiming to open the new school building in June 2024. Once the school is ready the staff and students will move into the new building and work will begin to demolish the old school building and provide the new landscaping where the old school was sitting.

- **How will construction of the new school affect students, staff and visitors using the site?**
  Safety of pupils, staff and visitors is of paramount importance and once a contractor has been appointed the Council, including school management, will work closely with them to develop site protocols including those relating to traffic movements, working hours and activities and any other issues arising. Pupils, staff and visitors will be regularly informed of any changes that might affect them and this will be extended to notifying any surrounding neighbours that may also be affected. Parents will be kept informed through newsletters and communications.

- **Who are the architects?**
  Architype
  Architype has 30 years experience of successful project delivery and is the UK's leading sustainable and Passivhaus architect. Our ethos is driven by wanting to create healthy buildings for people and the planet. Architype's approach is to combine beautiful Passivhaus design with technical excellence. Our diverse and inclusive team of 69 is moving towards full employee ownership, with collaborative studios in Edinburgh, Hereford and London. We have successfully designed 40 Passivhaus buildings over the last decade, in particular educational buildings. We employ 20 certified Passivhaus designers (which equates to 37% of our total architectural staff), are founder members of the Passivhaus Trust and chair of the Passivhaus Trust in Scotland.

- **Who are the landscape designers?**
  Wardell Armstrong

  With a 175 year heritage, Wardell Armstrong is a multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy with people and place at its heart. Our 500 staff are spread over 12 regional offices, delivering a wide range of services to support built development.

  Landscape Architecture is a core discipline and our team is recognised across the industry for design that maximises the site, connectivity and sense of place to achieve value and quality. Our Landscape team have developed a considerable track record of delivering exceptional school grounds and natural outdoor playscapes in Scotland for a varied range of Clients and Local Authorities. We are also accredited 'Learning through Landscapes' designers (formally Grounds for Learning).

  Secondary schools can often be overlooked in the benefit that well considered grounds can provide. Our extensive experience of School projects and pupil engagement has been a perfect case in point of the vision and variety that young people desire. As a result, we focus on creating spaces with are both educational, enjoyable and cater to a wide range of students.

- **What engagement has happened to date?**
  - Student engagement from Currie Community High School and P7 learners from the local primary schools in May 2019
  - Community members with Currie and Balerno High School students at an event held in June 2019.
  - The school presented their vision for the new school to the parents in partnership meeting in October 2019
  - The school held two workshops with students in 2019.
  - In November we asked parents, teachers, students and the community to help shape the brief for the school by filling out online questionnaires,
  - We attended the South West Villages Living Well drop-in event at Currie Kirk, Gibson Craig Hall in November 2019 and shared the school's vision and the questionnaire
  - In January 2020 we met with the headteachers and parent council chairs of Currie High School, Woodlands and the local primary schools
  - Since the design team have worked closely with Council Officers and the Senior Management team from Currie Community High School and Woodlands to develop the proposals to date. Throughout this process the Senior management team from Currie High School has consulted with their staff to feedback their views.
  - In January 2021 we met again with the headteachers, parent council chairs of Currie High School, Woodlands and the cluster primary schools and local councillors to share a presentation on the plans and ambitions for the new school.
  - The first of a number of student engagement sessions on the interior design took place in March 2021 involving a student consultation group from the High School and local primary schools.

- **I've heard the new building will be Passivhaus – what is that?**

  Passivhaus is the world's most rigorous energy and comfort standard, using super insulation, fresh air, natural daylight and the power of the sun to create high performing buildings that support wellbeing, all year round.

  The quality assurance system is backed by a rigorous 3rd party certification process that guarantees the building will perform efficiently and as promised at design stage. Benefits include:

  - Reduced energy consumption
  - Increased comfort
  - Higher quality buildings
  - Reduced overheating
  - Exemplar internal air quality
  - Better internal sound quality

Strategies for designing to the Passivhaus standard are:

- Super-insulation (providing a highly insulated external envelope to reduce the loss of heat through walls, roof and floor)
- Free of thermal bridges (carefully considered construction and detailing to reduce the loss of heat through 'thermal bridges' such as junctions or fixings)
- Very low air-leakage (preventing heated air leaking out of the building in an uncontrolled way)
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (providing a controlled supply of pre-heated fresh air)
- Passive solar with solar shading (making use of the warmth from the sun without causing spaces to overheat in hot weather)

Architype use Passivhaus because it is based on sound building physics and, unlike any other building standard, has proven its accuracy and performance over a 30 year monitoring period in a range of building types across Europe.

- **When will the 3G pitch be ready?**
  Construction of the pitch is planned for Summer to Autumn 2021. It is our aim to deliver the pitch early so the school's curriculum offering of PE is not affected by the construction.

- **What are the specifications of the 3G pitch and what sports can be played on it?**
  The 3G pitch will be 100m x 60m with additional 3m run-offs, it will have a 40mm high carpet. This will allow for the playing of football and non-competitive hockey.

- **How are we improving the drainage on the school site?**
  The existing site drainage on the Currie High School site is of a natural age and condition that it can no longer be guaranteed to work as efficiently as designed and as such shall be replaced in its entirety though the new school works. The planting of trees and changes to the site over time (such as the addition of the 2G pitch and extension to the building) has also caused further strain and deterioration to the original drainage infrastructure.

  New purpose-built site drainage shall be installed including cut off drains to the south of the school site to capture the runoff water entering the site from Dolphin Gardens West. In addition, new cut off drains shall be installed to the northern edge of the school plateau to capture surface water falling towards the existing tree belt. These shall be located out with any tree zones etc. and will be sized to modern standards to account for the hard surface areas and porosity properties of the site. Landscape mounds and features shall be positioned in such a way to divert any surface water runoff in extreme events back onto the site wherever possible.

  A mixture of above and below ground stormwater storage shall be provided on site which will safely attenuate surface water during periods of heavy rainfall and shall discharge this to the adjacent burn at an agreed rate in line with current City of Edinburgh Council SuDs standards.

  The proposed solution will offer a significant betterment to the current drainage network on the site.

- **How will the project affect neighbouring properties on Currievale Drive**

  Currently, the high school site sits on an elevated plateau with Currievale Drive sitting some 6m below to the north of a heavily wooded perimeter strip. Therefore, any surface water runoff leaving the site historically followed the natural contours of the site to the north, through the woods eventually falling towards what is now the residential properties. To minimise the potential for this overland surface water flows, as mentioned above, the new school drainage proposals will incorporate new filter trenches along the northern boundary of the development plateau at the top of the wooded embankment. These cut-off drains will be installed to capture any runoff from the main school site.

The proposed new school building is located centrally towards the south side of the site. As a result of this (and the lower overall height of the proposed building), properties on Currievale Drive will experience a reduction in the overshadowing currently caused by the existing school building.

- **What are the plans for active travel to and from the school site?**
  We have been working with the City of Edinburgh Council's Active Travel team and Sustrans to investigate the most effective improvements to the routes between Currie High School, its community and its cluster primary schools. We aim to seek funding and progress improvements that make the routes safer and more appealing for cycling, walking and wheeling to the school.

- **How much parking will there be at the school?**
  The new school will be provided with a replacement car park with a total of 74 parking spaces. This includes provision for both Currie Community High School staff and visitors and for users of community facilities and will include accessible parking spaces and charging provision for electric vehicles.

  In addition, a total of 112 cycle parking spaces will be provided, with a mixture of covered, secure shelters and covered visitor cycle parking.

- **How will the parking and drop off at Woodlands School be affected?**
  A separate replacement parking and drop off area will be created for Woodlands School. This area will include parking for 42 cars (including accessible spaces) and a drop off zone for minibuses to reduce the current challenges around congestion at the start and end of the school day.

- **What are the opportunities for Woodlands School in the new building?**
  Woodlands and Currie Community High School are keen to continue and build on their current relationship having shared access to the new school's facilities and grounds. Inclusion is a key focus of the new school's design which will provide an integrated approach throughout the building for Woodlands students to take advantage of. In particular there will be an integrated support zone with a garden for students with additional support needs, a swimming pool and an extra gym hall to support school, inclusion and community use.

- **How will the new school benefit the community?**
  Following the Scottish Government's guiding principles for our school buildings we are designing a building and grounds that serve more than just the school but are an investment in the whole community. Our consultation with community members told us that Currie would like a welcoming intergenerational space to meet, socialise and access digital services. In response to this we have developed a design that has a welcoming atrium which is open to the community all day Monday-Friday until 10pm, at weekends and school holiday times. Within the community atrium will be a library, a café, a meeting room and access to the sports facilities. How these will operate is in development and will be set out in future communications.

  As with all our school buildings CEC hope the community would like to make use of the available spaces in the building through our school lets. The new Currie Community High School also features a skills space which is a large open room that can be used for events and activities. There is also a wellness centre which is a smaller flexible space that could be let for meetings or smaller activities.

  The sports facilities at the new school will be managed by Edinburgh Leisure and will include a Sports Hall, a Gym Hall, a Fitness Suite, a Dance Studio, a Swimming Pool and a 3G pitch. Gym and Swim sessions during the day Monday-Friday at designated times will be available to the community.

  The school grounds will also be a shared community and school space and we hope that the community will take advantage of the exciting outdoor spaces we are proposing. In particular there is

a large space in the north east of the site proposed to be kept aside for a community group(s) to use and develop for food growing and horticulture. Any interested parties please contact wave4schools@edinburgh.gov.uk

- **If you're creating a community library at the school what will happen to the existing village library?**
  The library in the school will be a wonderful community asset, a place to meet, visit the café, access resources and activities or just drop by to work in. There are no current plans to close the library in the village but by adding this service into the new school building we are futureproofing the building to provide the type of services we see being needed in the future.

- **What educational opportunities are there in the school grounds**
  The new Currie Community High School is being designed to promote excellence in outdoor learning. With that we have introduced outdoor breakout areas from each of the learning zones for students and teachers to gain easy access to an outdoor space during their lessons. We are also providing an allotment area, a pond, and a space to explore and build the use of green technology and sustainable living. There will also be a woodland area to learn and explore in nature. Both of these spaces will have an outdoor classroom within them.

  To allow outdoor access to the students on the top floor of the school, an outdoor learning terrace has been designed that will provide a kitchen garden for the Food Technology classrooms and outdoor dining area for the hospitality course. There will also be a science, geography and maths space to set up practical experiments, grow plants etc.

- **How have you planned the space requirements in the school?**
  To futureproof the new building we have designed the school to take 1000 pupils. We follow the Scottish Futures Trust space requirements of $11m^2$ per pupil. Teaching spaces vary throughout the school and students will have the benefit of being able to move freely between classroom and breakout spaces (indoor and outdoor) during their lessons.

- **How will the temperature in each classroom be controlled by the occupants?**
  Each room will have a room thermostat

- **How are the optimum acoustics for speaking and listening being met and measured?**
  This will be achieved by ensuring that individual spaces have good room acoustic conditions for speaking and listening and the purposes for which they are intended to be used.

  This will include generating acoustic models of spaces throughout the building to establish appropriate amounts of absorptive room finishes to be included within individual spaces (e.g. areas of absorbing ceilings, baffles/rafts and wall panels and any additional soft furnishings). These items will be included to control reverberant noise and ensure spaces do not sound too 'echoey' for good speech and listening conditions.

  Furthermore, it will involve good appropriate design of school building services to ensure noise from plant, heating and air conditioning systems do not detrimentally impact good speech and listening conditions in each space.

  Finally, the building envelope and internal partitions, floors, internal glazing and doors will all be designed to minimise the transmission of noise between spaces to enhance privacy and aid good conditions for communication, listening and learning.

- **How will the building achieve the City's ambition for Carbon Zero?**
  The City of Edinburgh Council has stated that "the City of Edinburgh is to be carbon neutral by 2030" (from The City of Edinburgh Council – 'Achieving Net Zero in the City of Edinburgh' Nov 2019).

  In relation to buildings, net zero carbon can be considered in relation to operational energy in use, both regulated and unregulated loads.

  The proposed new building will be built to the Passivhaus standard. To achieve Passivhaus certification, a project must demonstrate that onerous criteria for energy, heating and/or cooling, airtightness and overheating values will be achieved. Building to the Passivhaus standard will reduce carbon emissions by around 70 - 80%. Combining a fabric first approach, such as Passivhaus, to reduce energy usage in the first instance, with carbon offsetting is considered the most economic and efficient way of achieving the Net Zero carbon target (whether construction (embodied) carbon is included or not).

- **How will the design of the new school ensure that there is good internal air quality?**
  In accordance with Passivhaus design principles, the building will be fully mechanically ventilated and designed to operate under this strategy throughout the year.

  The building design will also have the capability to be natural ventilated via openable windows and louvres during the summer.

  The ventilation strategy will be demand led, and ventilation will be operating to better the CO2 levels stated within BB101 (the document setting out the guidelines on ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality in schools issued by the Department for Education (DfE)).

  The MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) units will increase the air flow rate to avoid overheating controlled by the space temperature during the summer months.

  Sensors in each space will signal the controls system which will in turn, signal the MVHR plant.

  100% fresh supply air is filtered and heated to room temperature. Extract air is ducted back to the MVHR where the heat exchange takes place. Internal air is not recirculated.

- **What are the plans for the existing wind turbine?**

  The wind turbine will be removed from the site and is to re-purposed via the original installer, it will not be reinstated on the school site.