
Report to: **Planning Committee**

Date of Meeting: **12 September 2013**

Subject: **Planning Application ref; 13/00150/FULL - Erection of
32 No Houses and 16 No Flats With Associated Access
Road, Parking and Landscaping at Former Alva
Academy Site, Queen Street, Alva, Clackmannanshire**

Report by: **Grant Baxter, Principal Planner, Development Quality**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an assessment and recommendation on a Planning Application by Tigh Grian Ltd to erect 48No. houses and flats on land forming part of the former Alva Academy, Queen Street, Alva. The application requires a Decision from the Planning Committee as it involves land owned by the Council.
- 1.2. This report constitutes the Report of Handling on the application as required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2006.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the application is APPROVED, subject to the conditions and reasons set out below:

Conditions

- 1. Before any works commence on site, a construction and traffic management plan shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. It shall include:
 - a) Details of construction traffic routes to/from the site, including signage.
 - b) All road and pedestrian safety measures on the roads surrounding the site, including carriageway work, signage, traffic control measures and supervision.
 - c) Internal site servicing and construction vehicle/site personnel parking.
 - d) Details of a scheme to control dust emissions arising from construction activity on the site.

- e) Timescales for implementation before the start of any site works.

Thereafter, all construction works shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

2. Before any works commence on site, details of all proposed works to the existing public roads and footways shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Such details shall include:

- a) Measure to re-design Queen Street to create a shared surface street.
- b) Traffic calming measures at the junctions of Queen Street and Erskine Street, the junction of Queen Street and Beauclerc Street and at the new site access off Beauclerc Street.
- c) New and widened footways on Erskine Street and Beauclerc Street.
- d) The design and location of all on-street parking spaces.
- e) Details of replacement of the footpath from Duke Street to Courthill with a new path through the site.
- e) Details of all parking and driveway positions in relation to the public roads.
- f) A phasing plan detailing the period for commencement and completion of all of the above noted works.

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with such approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

3. Before any works commence on site, details of the layout and design of the proposed internal roads and shared surfaces within the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Such details shall include:

- a) An assessment to demonstrate the safe manoeuvring of emergency and refuse vehicles to service all proposed dwellings.
- b) Details of the design and finish of all hard surfaces, including roads, footways/paths, shared surfaces, parking bays and driveways.

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with such approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

4. Before any works commence on site final details of the proposed scheme for the discharge of surface water to the water environment (including during the construction phase) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme should be in accordance with the principles of the SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Manual (C697) published by CIRIA, and should consider water quality, flood risk and adoption. Thereafter, the proposed development shall be completed in accordance with such approved details.

5. Before any works commence on site, the following additional details or information shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council:

- a) Samples of all external building materials including stone facing brick, stone cladding, render, timber cladding, roof cladding, window and door design and colour, and car port finish.
- b) Details of obscure glazing of ground floor windows on plots 44 and 45.
- c) Details of all forms of boundary enclosure, including hedging walls and fences. For the avoidance of doubt, standard timber screen fencing should not be used where boundaries front public roads/paths.
- d) Details of finished ground, road and floor levels within the site and in relation to existing ground, road and building levels adjacent to the site.
- e) Details of bin storage locations within each plot.

Thereafter, the development shall proceed in accordance with such approved details.

6. Before any works commence on site, a detailed scheme of landscaping shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Council. It shall include:

- a) The type, number and location of proposed trees and shrubs.
- b) Native hedging to the west boundaries of plots 1 and 42.
- c) Native hedging and tree planting along the frontages of Queen Street and Beauclerc Street and within the internal courtyard areas.
- d) Timescale for implementation.
- e) Arrangements for future maintenance.

Thereafter, all landscaping/planting shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

Reasons

- 1. In the interests of road and pedestrian safety and residential amenity.
- 2. In the interests of road and pedestrian safety and residential amenity.
- 3. In the interests of road and pedestrian safety and residential amenity.
- 4. In the interests of residential amenity and local environmental quality.
- 5. In the interests of residential amenity and local environmental quality.
- 6. In the interests of residential amenity and local environmental quality.

2.2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.3. The application involves the development of 48No. affordable homes on a vacant brownfield site which is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan. The details of the proposals largely accord with a Planning Brief prepared by the Council to supplement the Local Plan allocation. Amendments to the proposals have been sought to address key issues raised by consultees and objectors.
- 2.4. The application is considered to comply with the Development Plan and related brief, and there are no material considerations that would indicate that it should otherwise not be approved.
- 2.5. Plans Relating to the Decision
- 2.6. Plan Nos:
- 2002/P/1.01B
 - 2002/P/1.02A
 - 2002/P/1.03A
 - 2002/P/1.04A
 - 2002/P/1.05A
 - 2002/P/1.06A
 - 2002/P/1.07A
 - 2002/P/1.08A
 - Design Statement - Rev B

3.0 Background to the Proposals

- 3.1. The site forms one half of the former Alva Academy site, and lies on the east side of Queen Street, Alva. The other part of the former school lies on the opposite side of Queen Street. The site also has frontages to Erskine Street and Beauclerc Street, and a public footpath linking Duke Street to Courthill on its eastern edge. The site backs onto a number of residential properties, and aside the former academy land on the opposite side of Queen Street, all neighbouring land uses are residential. The former school buildings that occupied the site have been demolished.
- 3.2. The proposal involves the erection of 48No. dwellings (16No. one bedroomed cottage flats, 24No. two-bedroomed houses and 8No. three bedroomed houses). The proposed buildings are largely of two storey contemporary design, with pitched roofs and finishing materials including grey tiles, white smooth render, stone and timber cladding. The three bedroomed houses would have a third level of accommodation in the roofspace, however all buildings are of largely similar height.
- 3.3. The proposed development is for affordable housing which would be managed by a Housing Association. The application has been accompanied

by a design statement, outlining the design ethos of the scheme. Amendments have been made to the proposed development layout in response to consultation responses and representations.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Roads: No objections in principle, with comments on the original proposals. The external redesign of Queen Street and re-routing of pedestrian route to Erskine Street welcomed. Further comments on layout and distribution of parking and internal courtyard shared surfaces. The plot access to unit number 1, may require to be relocated. *Comment: Final details of road/shared surface, parking and driveway arrangements may require additional adjustment, and a planning condition can ensure these matters are addressed.*
- 4.2 SEPA: Foul drainage shall require to be served by the public sewer, subject to Scottish Water approval. The discharge of surface water drainage, both during construction and in the completed development, should accord with the principles of SUDs. Final SUDs arrangements should be subject to discussion with Scottish Water and the Council's Flood Prevention Officer *Comment: The application includes a SUDs strategy, the details of which will be subject to final approval through planning conditions. This indicates that the development is likely to reduce the amount of hard surfacing on the site, and also proposes the use of permeable surfaces, rather than any form of pond or detention basin. A planning condition will be required to approve final SUDs details.*
- 4.3 Land Services: No objections. As no open space or play facilities are proposed in the site, a developer contribution should be made towards enhancement of such facilities at Cochrane and Johnstone Parks, in order to serve the development. Any trees to be retained on the site should be surveyed, and protective measures put in place for the duration of the construction. *Comment: The few trees on the site are small and scrubby in nature, and not worthy of retention. Higher quality native trees and hedging can be delivered through the approved development. Future decisions on enhancing Alva Parklands can take account of increased demand arising from this development. This would accord with the Open Space Strategy.*
- 4.4 Scottish Water: No objections. Capacity exists in water and drainage networks, however a Development Impact Assessment will require to be undertaken, and spare capacity cannot be reserved.
- 4.5 Police Scotland (Architectural Liaison): Footpath link between Courthill and Duke Street would become enclosed on both sides as a result of the development, with limited passive surveillance and blind corners. This Should be closed or re-provided through the development site, where it will be open and fronted by houses. *Comment: As the route is considered to be of value, the layout has been amended to re-provide it through the site.*
- 4.6 Environmental Health. No comments received.
- 4.7 Housing Service: Supports the development which supports a number of key actions and priorities set out in the Council's Housing Strategy. The proposals

have been successful in attracting 'Greener Homes' funding from the Scottish Government which aims to help deliver new approaches to the delivery of energy efficient affordable housing, using modern methods of off site construction. As well bringing additional funding into Clackmannanshire to provide an extra 48 social rented homes, it will help develop knowledge and experience to reduce fuel poverty and greenhouse gas emissions in the future. The mix on site has been developed in consultation with Housing.

4.8 Alva Community Council: No comments received.

5.0 Representations

5.1 A total of 51 No. neighbouring properties were notified of the application. In response, a total of 8 No. representations were received, from the following parties:

- Mr McFarlane, 36 Beauclerc Steet, Alva
- Mr & Mrs McKellar, 67 Erskine Street, Alva
- Mr & Mrs Prior, 50 Beauclerc Street, Alva
- Mrs Fallance, 42 Beauclerc Street, Alva
- Mr & Mrs McCallum, 38 Beauclerc Street, Alva
- Mr & Mrs McGregor, 63 Erskine Street, Alva
- Lesley Johnston, 30 Beauclerc Street, Alva
- Mr & Mrs Stenhouse, 65 Erskine Street, Alva

5.2 On the following grounds:

- Concern regarding increased on street parking on existing narrow roads surrounding the site, where on street parking spaces are limited, and additional vehicles may cause congestion and restrict refuse and emergency vehicles. *Comments: Roads & Transportation have not raised any concerns that the development could restrict access along existing streets for refuse or emergency vehicles.. As noted in Section 4.0, above, the proposed development provides overall parking provision in excess of that required for low cost housing. Roads and Transportation have made comments regarding the location and distribution of parking spaces, which may require further consideration.*
- Concern that increased traffic could exacerbate problems at junction of Queen Street and Stirling Street. *Comment: Taking account of the site's previous use, the proposed development would not generate additional peak time demand at surrounding junctions. The Brief for the site indicates that the development will not require to contribute to off-site junction improvement works, and such works are not yet in the Council's Capital Programme. The Council will continue to monitor this situation.*

- Two-storey houses facing Erskine Street are very close to, and will overlook existing houses opposite, causing loss of privacy/amenity. These should be set further back. *Comment: The proposed layout has sought to address existing street frontages in the manner set out in the brief, with houses fronting these streets, rather than facing internally. Units facing Erskine Street/Queen Street would sit close to the heel of the kerb, in a manner reflecting existing development patterns. In order to off-set any loss of privacy arising from this arrangement, the applicant has sought to reduce and reposition windows, and also introduce obscure glazing to those elevations where a detrimental loss of privacy for existing residents, and those of the proposed houses could occur. The proposed houses on the north side of Erskine Street are of two-storey design, typical of the area, and would not result in a loss of daylight or significant overshadowing of existing houses, particularly as they lie on the north side of Erskine Street.*
- Loss of privacy for houses on north side of Beauclerc Street, resulting from the development, and light pollution caused by car headlights in steep driveways opposite. *Comment: Proposed houses on Beauclerc Street would lie between 22m and 25m away from existing houses opposite, and at a slightly lower ground level. This is not a relationship that would give rise to unacceptable concerns regarding loss of privacy or amenity.*
- The density of the development is too high, and above that recommended in the Local Plan, which proposes a total of 48No. units across both former Alva Academy sites. *Comment: The brief and Local Plan propose a density of 30No. units per hectare, giving a total of 48No. units across both former academy sites. The application proposes this number of units on this eastern portion of the site only, giving a density of around 57No. units per hectare. This compares with a density of around 40No. units per hectare in streets surrounding the site. In this respect, it should be noted that rather than 25% affordable housing required by the Local Plan, the proposals will deliver 100% affordable housing. In addition, the layout includes 16No. flats, as well as houses. Plot densities, garden ground and parking provision within the site largely accord with Local Plan policies. Concerns raised regarding privacy and amenity, addressed in the preceding point, largely arise from compliance with the planning brief for the site in terms of development layout, rather than as a result of over-development. The increased density of the development, based on that proposed by the Local Plan is considered to be acceptable and justified in this case.*
- Concern about lack of capacity in water and foul drainage networks. *Comment: Scottish Water have been consulted on the application, and have not raised any concerns or objections regarding these matters.*
- No provision for household waste storage in proposed houses, so bins will be stored at front. *Comment: The design statement submitted by the applicant states that waste receptacles will be provided to the rear of all properties, within private garden, accessed via external paths to allow for kerbside presentation. A condition can be used to ensure final details of these are acceptable to the Council.*
- Concern regarding possible loss of footpath link between Duke Street and Courthill. *Comment: The initial proposals sought to retain this adopted*

footpath link, however, the proposed development would result in it being enclosed by fencing on both sides, making it less safe or attractive as a route for pedestrians, compounded by a blind 90° bend. Advice was sought from Police Scotland on this proposal, who advised that the path should be closed off, or alternatively, re-routed through the new development site, where it would be open and fronted by houses, providing important passive surveillance. Given the route is valued by existing residents, closure was not a preferred option, and the applicant was advised to incorporate the path into the site in the manner suggested. This has been reflected in revised plans.

- Additional new houses will create noise pollution in the area. *Comment: The application proposes new housing to a predominantly residential area and on the site of a former secondary school. It is not considered to present a noise pollution risk, however, the developer will require to ensure control of noise during construction.*

6.0 Development Plan Position

- 6.1 The site is identified as part of Housing Proposal H52 in the Clackmannanshire Local Plan (1st Alteration) Housing Land, adopted 2011. This allocation covers both the application site, and the other part of the former Alva Academy site, on the opposite side of Queen Street.
- 6.2 A development brief was prepared by consultants on behalf of the Council for the whole school site, which outlines the key design elements to be incorporated into development proposals for the site. This is addressed in Section 7.0 of the report.
- 6.3 The principle of the development complies with the Local Plan, given the site's allocation for residential development. The proposed density of development is higher than that indicated by the Local Plan, but the particular proposals are considered to be acceptable. The consequences of the increased site density are considered below.
- 6.4 Policy EN11 sets out a number of criteria for new development, focussing on the need to enhance the character and appearance of an area. In this case, the site is a large area of vacant brownfield land in a prominent site in Alva. The proposed development design will enhance the character of the area taking account both of its previous and current use and appearance.
- 6.5 Policy EN13 requires developments of this nature to include a detailed site appraisal. In this case, the site is subject both to a planning brief, prepared for the Council, and a design statement which the applicant has submitted with the planning application. The proposals therefore comply with this policy.
- 6.6 The application is supported by Policy RES 2 which gives priority to residential development on previously developed, brownfield sites, such as this.
- 6.7 Policy RES 5 deals with affordable and particular needs housing, and seeks provision of such housing in new developments of 30 units or more, with a target of 25% of units being of this type, subject to local needs. In this case,

the application proposes 100% of the units as affordable housing, and the application therefore exceeds the policy threshold.

- 6.8 Policies RES 7 and RES 11 set out criteria for consideration of the layout and form of new residential developments, and larger housing sites respectively. The detailed criteria set out in these policies are considered to be somewhat outdated in light of new Government policy and advice on residential development layouts, however, the principles of high quality developments, that enhance their site and surroundings remain. The planning brief for the site, prepared in 2008 provides a more up to date summary of key design criteria. These considerations are set out in Section 7.0, below.
- 6.9 Policy RES 8 sets out amenity standards for new developments, in respect of plot ratios and garden ground provision. Despite the development density being higher than envisaged by the Local Plan, the proposed plots within the site largely comply with the standards set out in Policy RES 8, and where such standards are not met, this is by a small amount.
- 6.10 In respect of Policies RES 9 & 10, relating to open space provision, the application does not propose on site open space or play provision, which is a reflection of the criteria of the planning brief referred to in Section 7.0 below. Future decisions on enhancing Alva Parklands can take account of increased demand arising from this development.

7.0 Other Material Considerations

- 7.1 Material considerations to this application can be summarised as follows:
- Planning Brief prepared on behalf of Clackmannanshire Council in 2008.
 - Design Statement prepared by applicant to support the planning application.
 - Consultation responses and representations.
- 7.2 Planning Brief: This brief was commissioned by the Council in anticipation of the relocation of Alva Academy to a new site in the east of the town, and the allocation of the site for housing development in the Local Plan, 1st Alteration. The brief deals with the former academy land on both sides of Queen Street, and the key principles in relation to this eastern portion of it can be summarised as follows:
- New development should consolidate established pattern of streets and building frontages, such as houses adjacent to footpaths, closer to Stirling Street, and houses set back from the street, and separated from footpaths by hedges and walls on Beauclerc Street: The proposed layout has sought to address existing street frontages in the manner set out in the brief, with houses fronting these streets, rather than facing internally. Units facing Erskine Street would sit close to the heel of the kerb, in a manner reflecting existing development patterns, and have been designed with linking carports. Houses facing Beauclerc Street are of a more suburban layout with hedging and trees included in the layout.
 - Modern privacy and amenity standards should be respected: The layout plan shows that proposed houses facing Beauclerc Street would site over 20m

away from existing houses opposite, and on slightly lower ground. This is considered to be acceptable in terms of respecting privacy and amenity for residents. The layout reflects the terms of the brief in respect of building pattern on Erskine Street, where proposed houses would sit close to the heel of the kerb of a widened footway. Sectional drawing provided by the applicant indicate that proposed new houses on Erskine Street would sit approximately 11.5m away from existing houses opposite, which is no closer than existing situations elsewhere on sections of Erskine Street which already have houses on both sides. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has sought to reduce and reposition windows, and also introduce obscure glazing to those elevations where a detrimental loss of privacy for existing residents, and those of the proposed houses could occur.

- Innovative layout and design solutions respecting the urban fabric, and with a variety of house types and sizes, will be encouraged: The proposal involves innovation in the layout and design of the proposed dwellings, including use of new off-site modular construction methods. The building designs will enhance the character of the site and surroundings, as well as introducing a more domestic scale of buildings and uses, compared to the pre-existing larger institutional buildings of the former academy.
- Layout and character of surroundings should be respected in respect of frontages to existing streets, rather than an inward facing layout based on standard culs-de-sac: As previously noted, the proposals comply with this principle of the brief.
- Adequate provision for pedestrian movements should be prioritised: The current proposals include improved road and pedestrian safety measures in existing and proposed new streets, and would enhance road and pedestrian safety and the character and design of existing streets.
- The development should meet the Council's standards on sustainability: The innovative design and construction of the proposed houses would meet and exceed Gold Standard for Sustainability as defined by Section 7 of the current Technical Guidance of the Scottish Building Regulations.

7.3 Design Statement: As noted above, the Design Statement seeks to reflect a number of key principles of the brief as far as they relate to this part of the overall academy site. It has also sought to address issues of privacy and residential amenity where these have arisen, and set out in some detail a justification for the proposed overall site density. The Design Statement has also set out the sustainability credential of the development both in terms of the construction process and the energy performance of the completed development.

7.4 Consultation Responses and Representations: These are set out in detail in Sections 4.0 and 5.0 of this report. As noted therein, amendments and additional information have been submitted to address a number of specific concerns and issues raised by objectors or consultees, wherever necessary. Taking account of these, and an overall assessment of the proposals, the Service is now satisfied that consent can be granted.

8.0 Sustainability Implications

8.1 The proposed development would redevelop a vacant brownfield site to create 48No. affordable and sustainably designed and constructed houses and flats.

9.0 Resource Implications

9.1 Financial Details

9.2 The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

9.3 Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

10.0 Exempt Reports

10.1 Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

11.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are safer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerable people and families are supported	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

12.0 Equalities Impact

12.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations? Yes No

13.0 Legality

13.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

14.0 Appendices

14.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

15.0 Background Papers

15.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Clackmannanshire Local Plan, 2004

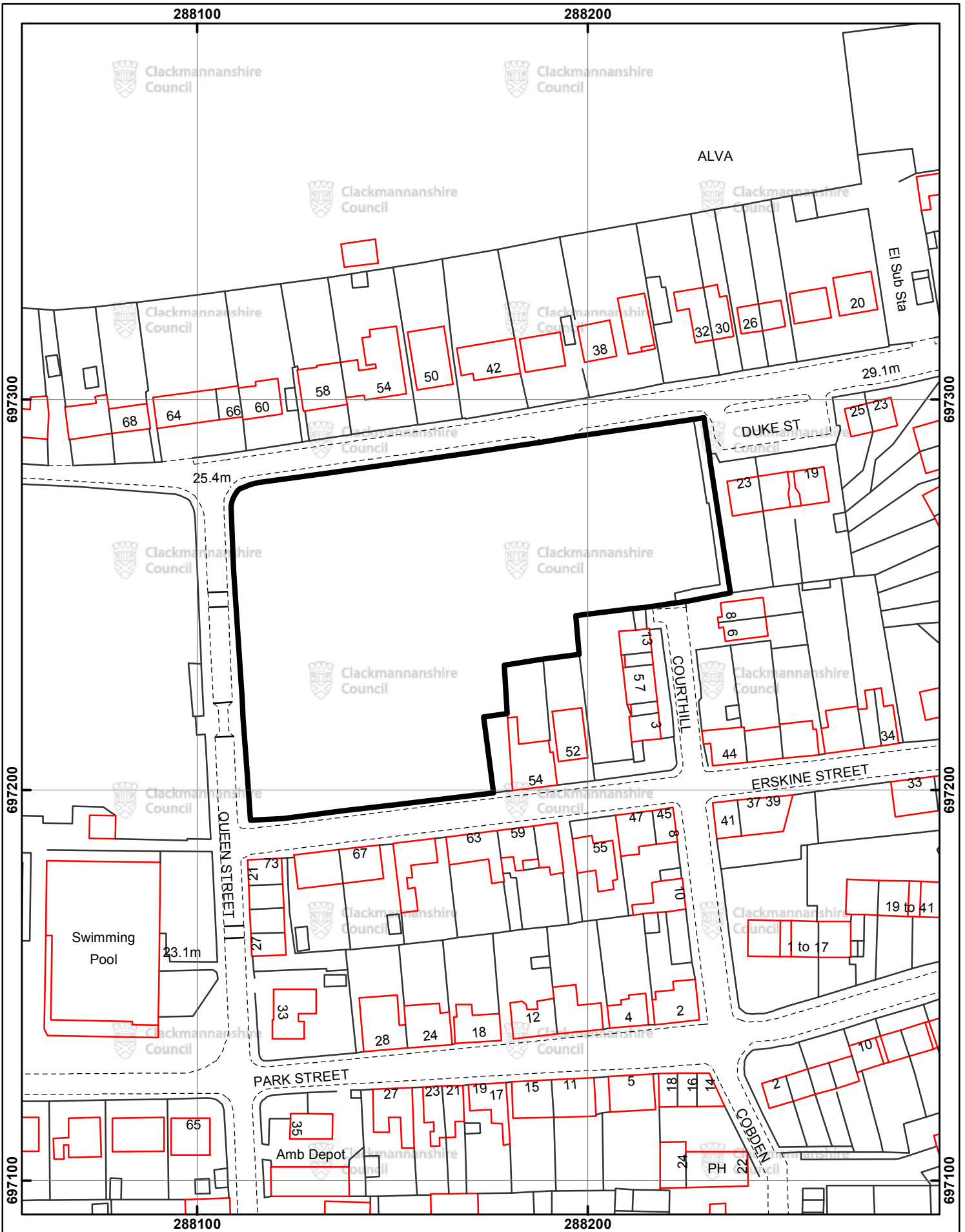
Planning Brief - Alva Academy, 2008

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Approved by

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N

Date:
05-Sep-2013

13/00150/FULL - Former Alva Academy Site, Queen Street, Alva
Erection of 32 No Houses and 16 No Flats With Associated Access
Road, Parking and Landscaping

Ward: Clackmannanshire Central **OS Grid Ref: NS 88 97 SW**

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