

February / March 2019 Planning Update

1. RBS site (Dundas St. / Fettes Row) :

Members of the NTBCC Planning Committee (& Stockbridge & Inverleith CC Planning contact) met with one of the potential bidders for the site late in 2018 to better understand their thoughts for redeveloping the site. They stated that from their analysis, a mixed use is best option but did propose the full demolition of all building currently in situ. The potential bidder also separately met with representative(s) of the local residents' association.

Closing date for preliminary bids was 11 December - we understand that over 20 bids submitted initially. We also understand that these bids were then reduced to a shortlist of 5 potential purchasers for the site with further examination / interviews of the proposed schemes by RBS (or their agents).

It has also been reported in "Daily Business" <https://dailybusinessgroup.co.uk/2019/02/exclusive-rbs-selling-new-town-plot-to-retail-investor/> that *"the bank is near to completing a £36 million deal with Orion Capital Partners for the former office and data centre site in Dundas Street."*

We note that the architect (10 Design, a practice with studios in Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Dubai and Miami) is reported to have been retained for the project.

At this stage – it's unclear as to the intentions of the successful bidder for the site but we would expect further news (including further public consultation) in the next few months.

2. 7 - 8 Baxter's Place

Following the withdrawal of the DPEA appeal against CEC's refusal for Change of Use to Class 7 (Hostels etc.), Cornerstone Properties (the applicant) then appealed the CEC Enforcement Notice served after CEC refused change of use. NTBCC as well as local residents attended the Reporter's site visit & the Reporter has now reached a decision on this latest appeal, dismissing the appeal as well as the request by the applicant for an award of expenses (against CEC) and finally, did not agree to an extension for compliance with the Enforcement Notice.

Based on this – we expect the unlawful use of these premises as Short Term Commercial Visitor's Accommodation (SSCVA) to cease in late April (unless in the unlikely event, Cornerstone opts to pursue a judicial appeal). Well done to the local residents for persevering through the multitude of applications both here & on Blenheim Place.

Further details in the March edition of *The Spurtle*.

3. (Ex) Public Convenience at Canonmills (by the Water of Leith)

This was part of the sell-off by CEC of public conveniences. As reported previously, NTBCC contacted by the architect seeking preliminary views on proposal to redevelop the (small) building a "craft pizzeria". NTBCC Planning committee members met with architect / purchaser to better understand plans for the site. They proposed retaining the street level structure but adding a light-weight 2nd contemporary (zinc-clad) storey to existing building with stairs to upper floor ; with extensive glazing fronting Brandon Street & overlooking Water of Leith to "engage" with Canonmills clock etc.

NTBCC broadly supportive of proposed change of use but with some reservations as to the style / form of the proposed building. The formal planning application has now been submitted (19/00430/FUL) with 2 comments (1 objection & a neutral position by AHSS) with final date for comments 8 March 2019. There is some confusion as to which community council area this is in (listed by CEC as NTBCC but appears to be just within Stockbridge & Inverleith). Some consultation with local residents / business owners who state that they have few concerns. Propose therefore to submit a representation acknowledging the pre-consultation with the CC but questioning the proposed architectural style.

4. IMPACT Centre, St Andrew Square

NTBCC contacted by CEC regarding resubmission of amended plans in response to comments received. NTBCC were broadly supportive of the proposal but with reservations regarding the impact on local residents directly to the north.

NTBCC met with the Planning officer to better understand the amendments to the original plans. These include revisions to the landscaping surrounding the new building, more detailed Daylighting / Sunlighting analysis and privacy concerns and further details on the servicing arrangements (access to the site by large SCO vehicles) and surface treatment of the building. CEC advise that all respondents to the original application have been granted a further 14 days to comment on the revisions and NTBCC have agreed to submit a further response.

Given that this is part of the Edinburgh City Deal, a target date for a DMC hearing has been set for 24 April. We are also aware of a proposed DMC site visit later in March. A summary of NTBCC's original submission is available on the website.

5. OMNI Centre

Large bar extension (again as covered by Spurtle) - raises both planning issues and (later) licensing issues. NTBCC did not submit a representation but 63 comments lodged (including 62 objections). Further documents lodged including a consultation response from Transport (no issues but a £130,000 Tram contribution required). Currently being assessed.

6. Edinburgh Academy

Following approval of 3 applications by DPEA (after appeal for Non-determination by CEC) – 2 further applications submitted. As these applications sit on the boundary between NTBCC & Stockbridge & Inverleith, NTBCC have discussed these with Stockbridge & Inverleith to check whether there have been concerns raised by adjacent residents; they were unaware of any concerns raised but (for reasons currently unclear), the main application has been withdrawn.

7. Johnnie Walker Experience (146 Princes St.)

NTBCC attended a pre-application event (= information session) on the proposed Johnnie Walker Experience in the (ex) House of Fraser's on Princes Street. Application now submitted – proposal is to develop the all 7 floors – with retail (merchandise etc.) on ground floor, several floors for a "Visitor Experience" and roof-top terraces.

19/00574/FUL Change of use from retail to whisky-themed visitor experience with ancillary retail, bars, offices, training and event space, including roof-top extension and other external alterations. 146 Princes Street Edinburgh

To date - limited discussion within the community although understand that proposal supported by the West End CC (in whose area it actually sits due to an inexplicable deviation in the CC boundary along Princes Street).

No comments logged currently – final date for comments 15 March.

8. Delegated Planning – Approved Changes by CEC

Proposal put before Full Council on 7 February by the DMC Convenor to amend the Scheme of Delegation used determining planning applications. Previously, more than 6 objections resulted in the application being referred to the DMC. The new approved Scheme of Delegation (with effect from 8 February), is broadly to increase the threshold to require more than 20 objections for most small (Householder) planning applications and Listed Building Consent applications. However, these powers will not apply if NTBCC has requested to be a Statutory Consultee and has outstanding concerns.

“Currently around 95% of planning applications are determined by officers, meaning that the Development Management Subcommittee can concentrate on the more complex and/or contentious cases. Increased delegation is one way of improving efficiency and performance and so improving customer satisfaction.”

More details in the Planning Edinburgh summary

<https://planningedinburgh.com/2019/02/19/updating-our-scheme-of-delegation/>

9. CEC Consultation on Pre-Application Process

New consultation by Edinburgh Council Planning Dept. on the Pre-Application process (essentially a free service currently offered to allow discussions with Planning officers on the proposal prior to submitting a formal planning application).

Having looked at the consultation, it appears to be focussed primarily on those who may be considering submitting a planning application but NTBCC will submit a response.

“The City of Edinburgh Council as the planning authority for Edinburgh is looking to reform its pre-application advice service, including the introduction of service charges. Pre-application advice is considered to be an important part of the planning service to ensure the submissions of quality applications and to reduce the time spent on processing them. However, to meet the ongoing budget challenges, the way the pre-application advice service operates needs to change.

A consultation paper on the reform of the pre-application advice service has been published and we are seeking your views on the scope to improve and enhance the pre-application service.”

The consultation (on the Consultation hub) ends on 3rd April and the results informing a report to the Planning Committee in May 2019.

One of the proposals included in this that raised significant concerns at the recent Edinburgh Civic Forum was the suggestion that as well as advice on the proposal being given, the Planning officer would also provide an initial opinion on whether permission would be granted.

Intent will be to post this on the NTBCC website.

Other News

NTBCC supported local residents in submitting a representation to a proposed rear extension in Fettes Row.

Bellevue Crescent Class 4 Change of Use – still being assessed.