

## NEW TOWN QUARTER NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2020

### Update provided by Ediston

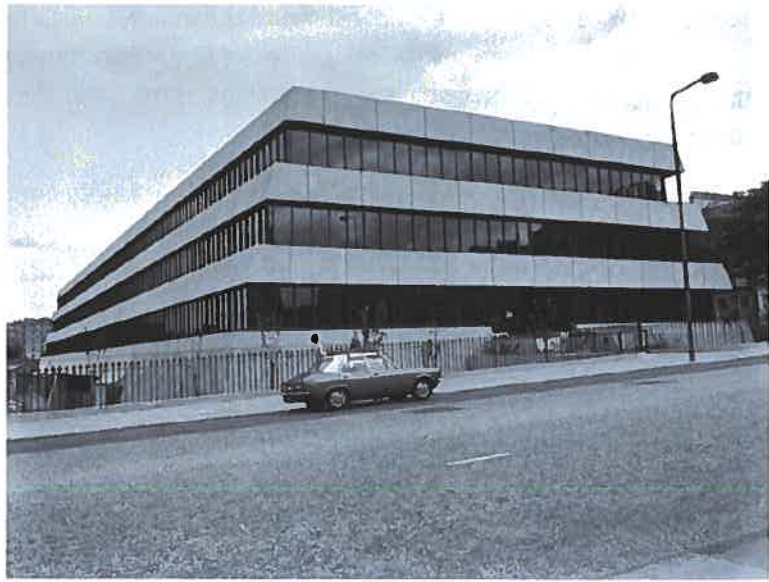
*Dear local resident,*

Now that the planning application for the New Town Quarter has been submitted, we would like to take the opportunity to provide clarity around questions raised by the local community. We will also respond to the information that has been reproduced in "The Chronicle" - a local newsletter published by Fettes Row and Royal Crescent Association.

#### Clarification on the Trees

Most important of all is the need to confirm that the net loss of trees in the development proposals is **16**. Whilst it is proposed to remove 84 trees, we would be replacing 68. It is also worth noting that 19 trees are to be removed due to health & safety reasons and 26 trees (in the area adjacent to Eyre Place and the King George V Park) already have permission in place for removal as part of an existing planning consent.

The 24 trees along Dundas Street will be removed as part of the demolition of the existing buildings. The first trees on Dundas Street were actually planted by RBS in the early 1980's as part of their development of the site (some of the saplings can just be seen in the adjacent photo, taken in 1981), and the majority of them now sit on part of a basement slab, which requires to be removed due to its structural relationship with the existing retaining wall on Dundas Street. The trees on Dundas Street would not survive the demolition process - unlike the trees on Fettes



Row and Royal Crescent where they are protected and separated from buildings by the retaining wall.

We have an opportunity, as part of a Section75 Agreement, to contribute towards strategic tree planting within King George V Park, and it is possible that the overall impact with the trees could be neutral.

The main area we have always strived to protect is the 'character' of Fettes Row and Royal Crescent, and we are confident that we will achieve this.

There is a 25-year landscape management plan proposed, which will look after and maintain all trees on site for years to come following the redevelopment. This is probably one of the most important aspects and outcomes of discussions with the Council, our landscape advisors, and the consultees. The management plan will safeguard and improve the tree resource to the area, which is currently suffering due to neglect and lack of maintenance.



## View through the park towards proposed residential buildings



'Friends of the Park' have noted five points in The Chronicle, which can be responded to using the same numbering system: -

1. We agree that the park requires maintenance and we are speaking with the Council to agree a set of improvement initiatives under a Section 75 Agreement. There is a small number of trees (five trees - of which 2 have health & safety concerns and 3 have a limited expected life) to be removed to facilitate the proposed access.
2. We have provided information within the planning application to confirm that the proposed buildings will not have a detrimental effect on the Park with respect to overshadowing. Moreover, we can confirm that the existing tree screening is being maintained and as such any views for new residents would include all the existing trees, save for five in the south west corner being removed to facilitate the new public connection.
3. 'Friends of the Park' have speculated that a new development will put pressure on the park. This is a very subjective point, as we don't believe increased usage can or should be defined as "pressure" on a resource, as benefits can also be equally applicable - especially if we are able to assist with improvements, which is the intention of our discussions with the Council. There is also an opinion about the park being half the area recommended in the Council's Open Space strategy (which is for parks to be two hectares) and this brings up some interesting points to consider. Whilst there are limitations on the park, it is 1.6 hectares in size. We are developing a brownfield site and will also be providing an additional 0.5 hectares of fully accessible public space (albeit not all green). The Open Space guidelines also state that every home should be within 400m of a 'good' quality greenspace of at least 0.5 hectares and the park obviously complies with that guideline. What is also important to consider is the quality of the open space, and we believe our proposals will significantly enhance the quality of publicly accessible open space in the area, and indeed enhance public access to it.



4. Cycling arrangements in the park should not change because of the development. We have met with the 'Friends of the Park' group on many occasions along with other interested parties. Initial proposals to create two accesses to the park have been scaled back, specifically in response to concerns raised by locals and Friends of the Park. We believe that the current proposals strike the best achievable balance between access, safety and good management of pedestrian and cycle access.
5. There will be a clear and definable boundary between the park and the proposed development, which accords with the aspirations set out by 'Friends of the Park'.

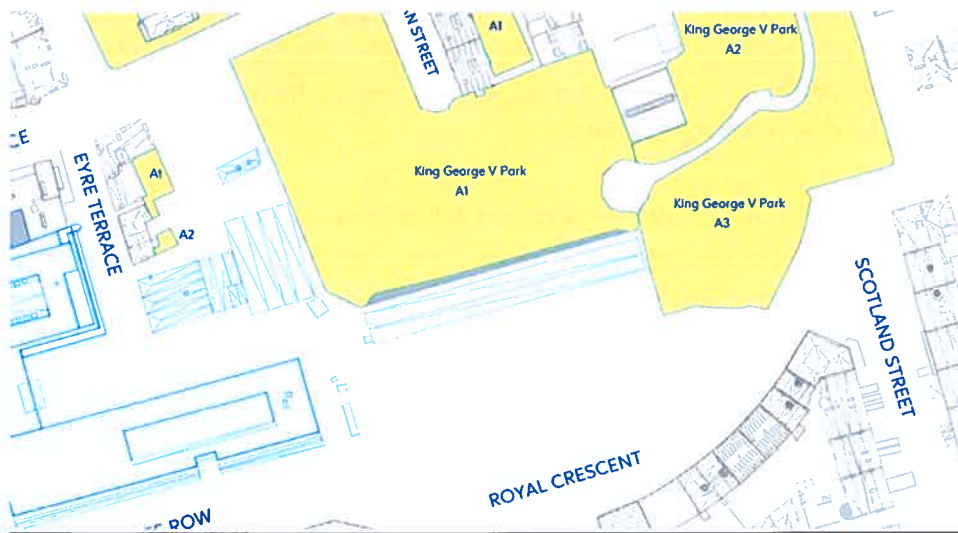
### **Public Space**

Concerns have been raised that the proposals contain a "lack of public space". It is worth repeating that the development will provide an additional 0.5 hectares of publicly accessible hard and soft landscaped open space. This has been subject to detailed discussions with the Council and is in line with policy.

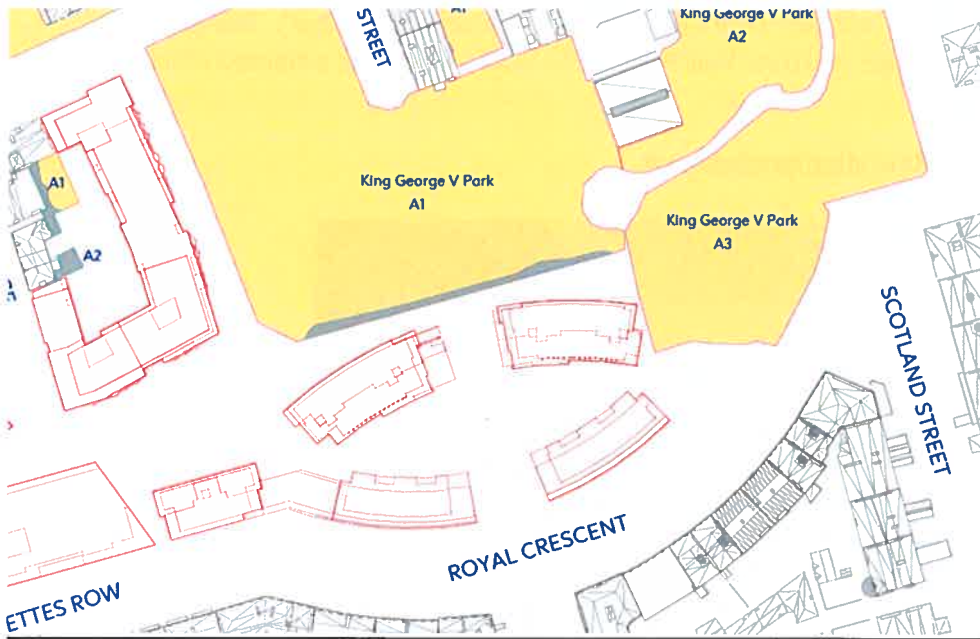
### **Clarification on overshadowing on the Park**

The images below demonstrate overshadowing in the park - as existing and following development. For illustration purposes only, the images also show how overshadowing would look without trees (we are required to show this as part of the assessment). The grey shading denotes shadow and we can confirm that we are fully compliant with Council policy.

**Image 1 (overleaf) - with existing buildings and no trees**



**Image 2 - with proposed development and no trees**



### **Sustainability**

An aspect of the proposals which is often overlooked but is vitally important, is the sustainable benefits that we would be seeking to bring with new development. The existing site is a redundant brownfield site and offers no benefit to the area or to the City of Edinburgh. The existing buildings are not suitable for re-use and would be very inefficient for energy use and carbon footprint. It is even more evident now that all future buildings not only require to be built to the highest standard, but also need to be designed to take account of people movement, hygiene and to have appropriate working space – allowing people to work easily at home.

With the demolition of the existing derelict buildings, it would be the intention to re-use as much of the demolished building material as possible within the site works.

We have a team of professional consultants working on sustainable initiatives for the site, along with making sure it has IT resilience for the future. Ample space will be provided for cycling (following Council guidelines) and provision will be made for electric car spaces within the basement car park. Initiatives such as car sharing and hiring schemes can also be promoted with the 'Build to Rent' Institutional owners we are in discussions with, in order that we can promote sustainable modes of transport which will benefit a city centre development with access to excellent transport links. The predicted level of car movements will be significantly lower than the previous occupation of the offices, and lower levels of car use should also help alleviate concerns raised by locals with regards to parking.

The developed site would also benefit from having a comprehensive estate management plan, where all buildings and common areas would be regularly and routinely cleaned and maintained. This also includes the 25-year tree management plan for the site along with any agreement we reach with the Council for making improvements to King George V Park, with the ambition to improve the long-term condition of the wider area.

### **Massing and Visual impact on the surrounding area**

The Chronicle states that “*buildings will dwarf the Georgian buildings across the road*”. This is not the case. The following two visual images illustrate how Fettes Row would look if the proposed offices were actually in place.

### **View looking east along Fettes Row after development**



### **View looking at corner of Dundas Street / Fettes Row after development**



Reassurance can also be taken from the fact that we have consulted intensively, not only with the Council, but also with Historic Environment Scotland, Cockburn Association and World Heritage with specific regards to the massing of the proposed buildings, which we believe are in keeping with the area.



The new buildings on Fettes Row and Royal Crescent are the same size or lower than the buildings opposite and in the case of Royal Crescent significantly so. We do not believe the use of the word 'dwarf' to be accurate or justifiable.

Below are some more visual representations on how the development would look if it were completed at this current time. Again, these images are very accurate and have been produced as part of the planning application submission from a location agreed with the Council and are all available on the Council's planning portal.

**View looking east along Royal Crescent after development**

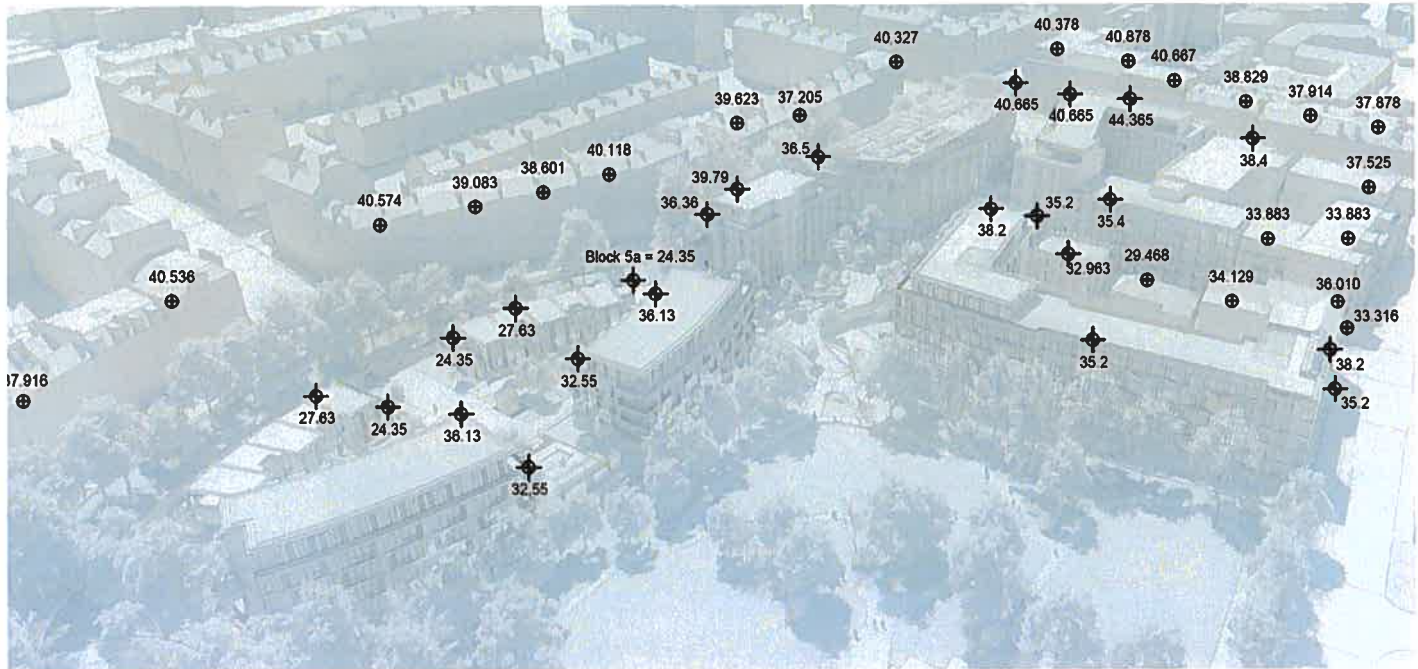


**View looking west along Royal Crescent after development**



## Image to show height levels of buildings

The image below denotes spot heights of the proposed buildings and the existing buildings adjacent, and clearly demonstrates that the development is not only in-keeping with the local area but is in nearly every case is at a lower height.



I do hope you have found this Newsletter to be helpful and informative. We want to provide you with as much clarity as possible about the proposals, so they are better understood and can help people make informed decisions with regards to the planning submission.

All the relevant information regarding the proposals are on the Planning Portal, and if you want any additional information please check out our website at [www.newtownnorth.co.uk](http://www.newtownnorth.co.uk), or by all means contact me directly and I will do everything I can to help.

Yours Sincerely

**Ross McNulty**

**Development Director at Ediston**

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