

Planning Supporting Statement

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT
FORMER JOHNSTON PRESS SITE
7-9 NEWHAVEN ROAD
EDINBURGH**

August 2011

On behalf of
Barratt East (Scotland) Ltd



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PLANNING

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared by Halliday Fraser Munro, Chartered Architects and Planning Consultants on behalf of Barratt (East Scotland) Ltd and the Scotsman Publications Ltd. It supports an application for Planning Permission for residential development on land on the former Johnston Press Building site, 7-9 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh.
- 1.2 This application has been formulated and developed taking account of the Development Plan comprising the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015, approved in 2004 and the adopted Edinburgh City Local Plan 2010. The requirements of the Bonnington Development Brief produced by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2008 have also been taken into consideration.
- 1.3 In line with new regulations the design of the development has taken into account the results of the pre-application public consultation exercise, which was undertaken, for the proposal. Details of this form a separate report, Pre-Application Consultation Report which is submitted as part of the application.
- 1.4 Details of the proposed development, site description and planning history are contained in **Section 2.0** of this Statement. Relevant development plan policy and material considerations in relation to an assessment of the suitability of the site for residential development form **Section 3.0**. **Section 4.0** provides justification as to why planning consent should be granted.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, PLANNING HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site lies approximately 1.5km north-east of Edinburgh City centre. It consists of 0.98ha of flat, brownfield land, occupied by the Johnston Press Plc. The surrounding area has historically been used for commercial purposes, however it has been subject to significant change in recent years.
- 2.2 Established residential development lies to the south-west at Redbraes Place. A recently constructed five and six storey development incorporating 92 residential units with ground floor office space is located to the south-east on the site of former retail warehouse premises. Carmichael Place separates this from the proposed development site.
- 2.3 Newhaven Road forms the north-eastern boundary. Tenemental flats on the eastern side of this road overlook the application site. Stewartfield, a small business estate, which has a number of vacant properties, lies to the north-west.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.4 There is no relevant planning history.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 2.5 Planning permission is sought for the construction of 130 flats and ancillary commercial uses. The new development will be predominantly four and five storey with a single six-storey block comprising a feature building at the corner of Newhaven Road and Carmichael Place. The proposed materials are simple, slate grey concrete tiles, facing brick, with coloured render walls.
- 2.5 The flatted blocks form a perimeter around the development area with vehicular access from Newhaven Road at the northern edge of the site via the existing access.

- 2.6 The proposals include significant public realm improvements. It is proposed to improve the existing public realm by reducing the width of the existing bland access to Carmichael Place via additional landscaping and car parking. Further enhancements are also proposed at both Newhaven Road and Carmichael Place where green spaces have been achieved through setting back of the building line.
- 2.7 Appropriate planting in these streets will be planned using landscaping to help soften the street scene whilst also creating visual interest. It is envisaged that these improvements will also improve the microclimate and provide valuable habitats for wildlife.
- 2.8 Maintenance arrangements for all planted areas will be established at an early stage and covered by a factoring agreement.
- 2.9 The central area forms an open courtyard which will be landscaped and serve as public open space. Additional planting will be provided within the car parking areas adjacent to the north west boundary with Stewartfield and along the Newhaven Road frontage.
- 2.10 Additional car parking spaces are accessed off Carmichael Place.
- 2.11 In terms of affordable housing, the developer has worked closely with Port of Leith Housing Association to provide 3 separate stairwells of affordable units distributed throughout the site.
- 2.12 There have been continuing discussions with the Council regarding the detailed design of the proposals. It has been acknowledged that Barratt East Scotland will develop the site on receipt of planning consent, currently anticipated in early 2012. With an overall downturn in the housing market this development will provide an important addition to new build housing within the City, additional council tax income and importantly will provide affordable housing. The construction of the development will also create employment.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY & ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act directs a planning authority to determine a planning application in accordance with the provisions of the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 As noted in the Introduction, relevant development plan policy is contained in the approved Lothian Structure Plan 2004 and the adopted Edinburgh City Local Plan 2010. Scottish Planning Policy and the Bonnington Development Brief are material considerations in an assessment of the proposal.

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

- 3.3 In terms of housing supply the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan 2015 anticipates 1200 windfall units to be developed over the plan period.
- 3.4 Policy HOU2: Brownfield Housing Sites states that *“The Lothian Councils support the development of suitable urban brownfield sites for housing through re-use, redevelopment or conversion. Where appropriate higher densities will be encouraged.”*
- 3.5 The policy is supplemented by Policy TRAN4 encouraging building to higher densities in the most accessible locations to encourage use of public transport, cycling and walking at the expense of the private car.
- 3.6 Policy HOU4: Meeting the Housing Allocations requires local plans *inter alia* to *“provide for a range of sites to meet all sectors of the market.”*
- 3.7 Policy HOU7: Affordable Housing requires local plans to include policies and mechanisms for its provision.
- 3.8 In terms of economic development, local plans are charged to *“allocate to other uses sites no longer suitable for industrial or business use”* Policy ECON1: Review of Economic Land Supply.

3.9 Policy TRAN3: Car Parking Standards requires local plans to include policies relating to maximum car parking standards.

Discussion:

3.10 The Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan accepts that some land previously used for industrial and commercial purposes may now be suitable for alternative more appropriate uses. As a disused former commercial site, land at Newhaven Road falls into this category and therefore accords with the principles of Policy ECON1.

3.11 It complements the new residential development to the south-east, which has also been constructed on land formerly used for commercial purposes.

3.12 The development will create economic and employment benefits. The applicants' Company policy is to create job opportunities for local people. Indeed recent research indicates that new housing developments can provide the following benefits:

- 1.5 direct jobs per new home and 4.5 indirect jobs
- £90,000 worth of construction spend and £270,000 wider economic spend per new home
- Average of £7,000 to £10,000 per new home every 6 years from increased Council Tax payments.

3.13 Therefore a development of this scale could provide:

- 195 direct jobs
- 585 indirect jobs
- £11.7m of construction spend
- £35.1m of wider economic spend.

3.14 The site is immediately effective and thoroughly capable of contributing to the Structure Plan's anticipated brownfield housing land supply. As a proposed flatted

development it will also generate a higher density housing development. It therefore accords with Policy HOU2.

- 3.15 In a thoroughly sustainable location, on major bus routes and within walking distance of the city centre it also accords with Policy TRAN4 in terms of encouraging higher density developments on accessible sites.
- 3.16 The provision of flats in a mixed residential area also meets the terms of Policy HOU4.
- 3.17 The development also includes for affordable housing and therefore accords with Policy HOU7.
- 3.18 It meets the Edinburgh Council's car parking standards, which are designed to encourage access by alternative means to the private car. It therefore accords with strategic Policy TRAN3.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The Edinburgh City Local Plan 2010

- 3.19 The application site is not allocated for any specific use within the Adopted Local Plan; it lies within the urban area. As such the following policies apply:
- 3.20 Policy Hou 1 Housing Development, which permits this use, *inter alia* "on suitable sites within the urban area, provided proposals are compatible with other policies in the Plan."
- 3.21 Policy Hou 3 Private Open Space in flatted developments requires open space provision at 10 square metres per flat. A minimum of 20% of the total site area should be greenspace.
- 3.22 Policy Hou 4 relates to Density. The Council will seek development to:
- Have regard to the characteristics of the site and surrounding area
 - Create an attractive residential environment

- Be accessible to public transport and other relevant services
 - Encourage and support the provision of local facilities necessary to high quality urban living
- 3.23 Policy Hou 7 Affordable Housing requires that developments of more than 12 units should include provision of 25% affordable housing units. For proposals of more than 20 units this should normally be on site and where practical to be integrated with the market housing.
- 3.24 Policy Emp 4 relates to Employment Sites and Premises. Development incorporating uses other than business, industry or storage will be permitted if:
- a) *“The proposal includes a significant element of new floorspace designed to provide for a range of business uses*
 - b) *The introduction of non-employment uses will not prejudice or inhibit the activities of any nearby employment use*
 - b) *The proposal will contribute to the comprehensive regeneration and improvement of the wider area.”*
- 3.25 The accompanying text to this policy notes that the Bonnington Development Brief has been prepared to co-ordinate development in the area. This is discussed in more detail below.
- 3.26 The Local Plan also contains a number of policies relating to the design of new development. These include:
- Policy Des1 Design Quality and Context
 - Policy Des 2 Co-ordinated Development
 - Policy Des 3 Development Design
 - Policy Des 4 Layout Design
 - Policy Des 5 Design of External Spaces
 - Policy Des 6 Sustainable Building Design and Construction
- 3.27 The objectives of these policies are to:
- Ensure that new development is of the highest design quality and respects, safeguards and enhances the special character of the City

- Ensure that the City develops in an integrated and sustainable manner
 - Create new and distinctive places which enhance the special character of the City and meet the needs of residents and other users
- 3.28 Policy Tra 4 relates to Private Car Parking. It requires that car parking provision complies with and does not exceed parking levels set out in supplementary guidance.
- 3.29 Policy Tra 5 Private Cycle Parking requires cycle parking provision and storage to comply with supplementary planning guidance.
- 3.30 Policy Tra 6 Design of Off-Street Car and Cycle Parking lays down detailed standards regarding provision. These include that:
- Surface car parks should not be located in front of active frontages of buildings
 - Structural planting should be included
 - Pedestrian safety should not be compromised in car parking locations
- 3.31 In terms of cycle parking, this should be located close to entrances and preferably in covered and secure locations.

Discussion:

- 3.32 As a site lying within the urban area, re-development of this land is acceptable in principle. The construction of new housing on the site accords with Policy Hou 1.
- 3.33 The detailed design of the proposal also complies with requirements specified in the Plan. Open space provision at more than 20% of the total site area is in excess of requirements. The proposal therefore meets Policy Hou 3.
- 3.34 It also accords with Policy Hou 4 in that:
- It is designed to complement adjoining new and established development in the area, which comprises tenement flats and more recent flats constituting a higher density, inner urban built form

- It is proposed to use materials which will respect the existing character yet add interest and also create an identity for the development. Robust materials which maintain their appearance and which can be easily maintained are proposed
- Built as perimeter blocks of a quality design and specification and with a large central courtyard it will create a pleasant and attractive housing scheme
- Lying on major bus routes and with easy access to the centre of the City and a major rail station it is easily accessible. Neighbouring shops and services will also reduce the need to use private transport and encourage local patronage.

3.35 The height of the buildings proposed range from 4 – 6 storey, with the 6-storey corner block responding to the height of the adjacent recently built Westpoint development. The 4/5 storey heights relate to the existing traditional tenement's of the area. As such, the proposed scale, massing and height of the development will result in a built form which relates well to its surrounding context.

The building heights have been considered in relation to the streetscape, rather than the development in isolation.

3.36 The development also meets the requirements of Policy Hou 7 in terms of affordable housing provision.

3.37 The ground floor of the proposed flats along the Newhaven Road frontage will comprise commercial units. As a mixed- use development within an area subject to regeneration the proposal therefore accords with Policy Emp 4. It is however significant that two thirds of the commercial space in the neighbouring development remains vacant. Feedback from the community consultation exercise also indicates that additional commercial space is not supported. The proposed building line is however set back from Stewartfield Industrial Estate to ensure that existing employment uses in the surrounding area are protected.

3.38 It is concluded that the proposal also meets all the terms of the Council's Local Plan design policies Des 1- Des 6. The final design has evolved through a thorough consideration of the elements of the surrounding built form and discussion with the local community. The 6th floor ceiling heights of the proposed development and that

of the 5-storey block at the adjacent Westpoint development are similar in height. This is further emphasised by the hip incorporated on the proposed roof line. In addition, the variation in ground levels across the site help to reduce the mass of the building compared to that of the Westpoint development.

3.39 The design is described in more detail in the Design and Access Statement, which accompanies the application. Specifically:

- It provides for a high quality, sustainable living and working environment
- It will not compromise the wider objectives of proposed redevelopment in the area as detailed in the Bonnington Development Brief
- In terms of the Bonnington Development Brief, 6-storeys are acceptable in new developments which are otherwise predominately 4 and 5-storeys; this is in line with what is being proposed
- As a quality redevelopment of a former industrial site it will have a positive impact on the wider townscape surrounding area
- It also meets all requirements regarding privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook
- The design allows for adaptability for future needs and provides for a mixed use
- It incorporates a fully enclosed private open space
- There are active frontages along Newhaven Road and restricted open access through the site providing for safety and security
- Car parking and service facilities have been sensitively integrated into the design, and parking areas are located in areas which are overlooked
- The layout results in a comprehensive and integrated approach in terms of juxtaposition of building layout and access
- The design of the open space is appropriate for this location
- It provides secure urban realm improvements
- The development respects the design and height of neighbouring properties

3.40 The City of Edinburgh's car parking standards are for 100% private provision with 20% for affordable units. With two of the car spaces dedicated to the city car club the proposed development meets these requirements. It also allows for disabled parking at 5% and cycle storage at two spaces per resident flat and one space for visitor parking for every ten flats. The proposal therefore accords with Policy Tra 4 and Policy Tra 5. The design of the car and cycle parking also meets the requirements of Policy Tra 6.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bonnington Development Brief

3.41 As indicated in the Introduction to this Statement, the Council produced this document in 2008. Within the Brief, the site is identified for residential and small business space with an unbroken street frontage to be provided adjoining Newhaven Road.

3.42 In terms of building form:

- The potential number of new dwellings should be determined by the Edinburgh City Local Plan and take account of Edinburgh Standards for Housing
- Housing mix should reflect requirements of the Local Plan relating also to open space requirements and design
- The height of new buildings should have a positive impact on setting, with the predominant form being 4-5 storey tenemental-scale with ground floor units accommodating flexible small business space and other non-residential uses

3.43 It is concluded that, in line with the requirements of Edinburgh City Local Plan, the proposal meets the guidelines of the Development Brief.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 3.44 SPP is a statement of Government Policy on land use planning. It calls for decisions to be taken *“against a framework of up to date effective development plans and supplementary guidance.”* (Paragraph 22)
- 3.45 Decisions on new development should: *(inter alia)*
- Reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel
 - Promote mixed communities
 - Take account of existing infrastructure capacity (Paragraph 38)
- 3.46 Decisions on the layout and design of new development should: *(inter alia)*
- Encourage the use of public transport
 - Promote efficient use of land
 - Consider the lifecycle of the development
- (Paragraph 39)

Housing

- 3.47 The planning system has a responsibility to ensure the development of *“well designed, energy efficient, good quality housing in sustainable locations and allocate a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures.”* (Paragraph 66)
- 3.48 Density should be determined in relation to the character and accessibility of the proposed development site. SPP recognises that good design can help achieve a higher density without jeopardising views or amenity. (Paragraph 83)
- 3.49 The SPP is particularly aware of the benefits of locating new development within or adjacent to existing settlements. Servicing costs can be reduced, accessibility is increased and local schools, shops and services can be sustained. (Paragraph 84)
- 3.50 With regards to affordable housing, the SPP notes the benchmark figure of 25% provision however it acknowledges that this may differ locally, as justified by the

housing need and demand assessment, local housing strategy and development plan. (Paragraph 88)

Transport

- 3.51 The SPP encourages sustainable development, which will reduce the dependency on the private car. It calls on the planning system to *“support a pattern of development which reduces the need to travel, facilitates travel by public transport and ... provides safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling.”* (Paragraph 165)

Discussion:

- 3.52 Residential development in this location is capable of contributing to the housing land requirement for the City of Edinburgh by creating a wholly sustainable development on a brownfield site within the urban area. The site’s development would make efficient use of an effective site reducing servicing and infrastructure costs.
- 3.53 It has also been concluded above, that the site is in a highly sustainable location, well served by walking, cycling and public transport routes thus reducing dependency on the private car.
- 3.54 The building heights relate to existing buildings in the area. The proposed six storey building is located adjacent to one of a comparable height in the residential development bordering the site and steps the building heights down along the main site frontage.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 In conclusion, planning permission should be granted for this proposal for residential development at 7-9 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh on the basis that:

- The site is brownfield redevelopment land lying within the urban area in the Edinburgh City Local Plan
- Development will support strategic and local plan policy to provide additional housing land in Edinburgh
- Development will also provide for choice and variety of housing sites as advocated in national, strategic and local plan policy
- It lies within an established residential area in a thoroughly sustainable location with many established facilities, services and jobs lying in close proximity
- Development provides an element of flexible business space
- It respects the design and height of neighbouring properties
- This proposal will significantly improve the amenity of neighbouring residents, replacing a busy commercial/industrial use with properties and business uses which are more in keeping with the now predominantly residential character of the area
- The proposed development will sit well within the existing streetscape
- The proposal will have a positive impact on the overall setting, with the predominant and 4-storey elements of the proposal responding to the traditional 4 and 5-storey tenemental scale buildings
- The site can be satisfactorily accessed

- The site will provide for affordable housing in line with Council policies
- Water and drainage and utility services are available

4.2 In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that the proposal should be given positive consideration and planning permission granted.

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