

**Pre-Application  
Consultation Report**

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

August 2011

On behalf of  
Barratt East (Scotland) Ltd



**HALLIDAY | FRASER | MUNRO**  
PLANNING

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Public Consultation undertaken during November 2010 in respect of the proposed residential redevelopment of a vacant site at 7-9 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh. The site was formerly used by the Johnston Press. The purpose of this report is to set out the steps taken to comply with the statutory requirements for Pre-Application Consultation, the outcomes of the consultation programme and how they have influenced the development proposal.

### *Proposed Development*

1.2 Planning Permission is sought for the construction of 130 flats and ancillary commercial development. The new development will be predominantly four and five storeys with a single six storey feature block provided at the corner of Newhaven Road and Carmichael Place. The building materials are simple, slate grey tiles, facing brick and coloured rendered walls.

### *Site Description*

1.3 The Application Site comprises approximately 0.98ha. It is bounded by Newhaven Road to the east, Carmichael Place to the south, Stewartfield to the north and Redbraes Place to the west. The surrounding area has historically been used for commercial purposes, however it has been subject to significant change in recent years, notably with the neighbouring five and six storey residential development to the south of the site at Carmichael Place. In addition to this new development, Redbraes Place is an established residential area and there are a number of tenement flats located along the opposite side of Newhaven Road.

1.4 There is some commercial activity in the area, particularly in the purpose built units at Stewartfield immediately to the north of the site.

## 2.0 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 All applications for Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle require Pre-Application Consultations between developers and communities. (Regulations 9 to 11 for National and Major developments) Where Pre-Application Consultation is required, the applicant must:

- Provide the Planning Authority with a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of the planning application
- Consult with every community council whose area is within or adjoins the land where the proposed development is situated
- Hold at least one public consultation event, which must be advertised at least 7 days prior to the event in a local newspaper

2.2 Finally, the Planning Application submission must be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation report detailing the nature of the consultation that has taken

place and confirming that the statutory minimum requirements, set out above, have been met.

### **3.0 SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY AND ADVICE**

#### ***Scottish Planning Policy***

- 3.1 SPP states that *“the Scottish Government expects engagement with the public to be meaningful and to occur from the earliest stages in the planning process to enable community views to be reflected in development proposals”*. It notes that close and earlier consultation with local communities can help to identify and overcome sensitivities or concerns associated with new developments.

#### ***PAN 3/2010: Community Engagement***

- 3.2 PAN 3/2010 provides more detailed advice to communities, developers and planning authorities on how to effectively engage with each other in the planning process. It advises that community engagement must be *“meaningful and proportionate”* and *“must happen at an early stage to influence the shape of plans and proposals”*. It continues *“in the context of this document [PAN 3/2010] engagement is, in effect, giving people a genuine opportunity to have a say on a development plan or proposal which affects them; listening to what they say and reaching a decision in an open and transparent way taking account of all views expressed.”*

### **4.0 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 In relation to this application initial pre-application discussions were held with City of Edinburgh Council during August 2010. The Application site was identified as being within the catchment area of the Leith Central community council. Subsequent discussions with the City Council and the Leith Central community council confirmed the McDonald Road Library as a suitable venue for any future public consultation event.
- 4.2 In addition, it was agreed that a representative of Halliday Fraser Munro would meet with the community council to provide a summary of the applicant’s intentions for the development site. This would also allow an opportunity to identify and discuss issues which the community council thought should be addressed by the future consultation event.

#### ***Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN)***

- 4.3 The PoAN was registered by City of Edinburgh Council on 7 October 2010. The Notice identified the date, time and location of the proposed consultation event, details of the newspaper advert advertising the event and provided a general account of the additional consultation that had been undertaken and was proposed. The consultation event was advertised in the Edinburgh Evening News on 18 October 2010. The PoAN was approved by the Council on 21 October 2010 with the recommendations that:
- leaflets and posters should be distributed in the local area prior to the public exhibition



- that the exhibition boards should be displayed in the local library over 1-2 weeks
  - and that an additional public event should be held (if necessary following the first event)
- 4.4 Copies of the PoAN were sent to Edinburgh City Councillors Chapman, Lang, Brock, Blacklock, Munro, Thomas and Munn, Leith Community Council, Leith Neighbourhood Partnership and also to McDonald Road and Leith Libraries.
- 4.5 More than 300 neighbouring properties were notified of the Public Consultation Exhibition by mail drop. Posters were also displayed at 10 local businesses in the surrounding area.

***Public Exhibition (1 November 2010)***

- 4.6 The consultation event took the form of a public exhibition which, as detailed above, was advertised in the Edinburgh Evening News and was held between 2pm and 8pm of 1 November 2010 at the McDonald Road Library. As detailed, the location was identified following initial discussions with City of Edinburgh Council and the Leith Central Community Council. The library is located approximately 900 metres to the south of the application site and is easily accessible to all residents likely to be affected.

***Format of Consultation***

- 4.7 Indicative floor plans and elevations were displayed which identified the likely layout of any future residential development, the preferred point of access to the site and details of the drainage infrastructure that would be required as part of the development.
- 4.8 Although there was no formal presentation, architects and planners from the project design team were available throughout the day to explain the indicative plans to members of the public and answer any questions that were raised.
- 4.9 Approximately 50 people attended the exhibition, however none of those attending chose to complete the questionnaire/comments sheets that were provided.
- 4.10 From discussion with attendees it was however apparent that
- There was general support for the proposals
  - There was no local demand for continued commercial use on the site
  - New commercial uses in the area could impact on residential amenity
  - There was concern regarding potential retail use on the ground floor of the new properties
  - The height of the proposed development at 6 storeys should be reconsidered
  - Any social housing should be mixed throughout the development
  - There was some concern regarding the provision of any social housing

***Community Council Meeting (25 November 2010)***

- 4.11 A representative from Halliday Fraser Munro met with the Planning Sub Committee of the Leith Community Council on 25 November 2010. The representative provided the community council with a brief history of the development site and provided an

overview of the applicant's proposals. Indicative floor plans and elevations were also provided to indicate how the application site could be developed.

4.12 The following comments and observations were raised:

***Commercial Development***

- Any commercial units should be located within the buildings fronting Carmichael Place which could enable the creation of a 'local business district'
- Concern that if commercial space on Newhaven Road remained vacant for any prolonged period of time it would create 'dead space' on the main road
- Commercial space should not be provided within the site to enable the provision/ retention of more marketable and useable space
- Servicing of commercial units
- Potential increase in on-street car parking and traffic congestion without dedicated parking/ access for such uses

***Design***

- Could family housing be provided as part of the development
- Higher buildings should be located in the north of the site to capitalise on sunlight
- Underground car parking would allow more amenity open space
- Balconies would provide private open space at upper floor levels
- Consideration of restoring/ providing a footpath link to properties on Redbraes Place
- Floor to floor heights should be set at 3.5m
- Requirement for proposed water tank
- The development should not impact on the Stewartfield development

***Open space***

- Amount of open space proposed welcomed but requirement that this should be useable
- Need to ensure that development maximises sunlight potential and minimises wind effect
- Consideration of small private gardens for ground floor flats comparable to recent development on McDonald Road
- Ownership of public open space should be retained by future residents to protect maintenance
- Provision of green buffer between proposed development and Stewartfield

***Sustainability***

- Potential consideration of District Heating System

**5.0 CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS**

5.1 The applicants and their agents considered the points and the comments raised at community council meeting and at the exhibition.

5.2 Responses are as follows:



### Commercial development

- To a large extent the need and location of units on site is prescribed within the Bonnington Design Brief and follows from discussion with Council planners. It is however understood that Policy EMP4 is under review within the Council and it will need to be confirmed whether there is any demand for commercial space and whether the requirement is justified.
- As commercial units are to be located on the Newhaven Road frontage there will be general service bays provided at either end of this frontage which will reduce impact on the amenity of future occupants of the flats
- Some dedicated commercial car parking spaces are proposed for servicing/ customers. The Council Roads Department has also suggested that the sharing of residential and commercial spaces may not be problematic as they will not necessarily be required at the same time, i.e. residents cars may be away during the working day

### Design

- The development will include a range of building heights distributed throughout the site. During the course of detailed design the buildings on the western boundary have been 'pulled back' to increase sunlight and daylight to the central courtyard and reduce any potential overshadowing
- Building heights are predominantly 4 and 5-storey with a 6-storey corner tower. The 6-storey corner block responds to the height of the adjacent recently built Westpoint development, whereas the 4 and 5-storey elements proposed relate to the heights of the existing traditional tenements. This design approach to scale, massing and height will result in a built form which will relate well to its surrounding context. The 6-storey corner tower height is similar to that of the adjacent Westpoint development. The 6-storey wall head of the proposed development and that of the Westpoint development are at similar heights.
- It must also be noted that the ground levels of the site help to reduce the mass of the building when compared to that of the Westpoint development
- Our proposals are in line with the Bonnington Development Brief in that it allows for 6-storey building heights in new developments which are otherwise predominately 4 and 5-storeys
- The provision of underground car parking would make the development unviable
- The provision of balconies would not be in keeping with the local vernacular
- The provision of a footpath link to Redbraes Place is not physically possible
- Residential floor to ceiling heights are prescribed by national building standards. Floor to floor heights have been set to ensure an economic build and a comfortable living space
- The installation of the water tank is on the advice of Scottish Water as there are water pressure problems in the area at present
- Impact on Stewartfield would be minimal. Landscaped car parking forms the northern boundary of the proposed new development

### Public Realm & Open Space

- The large central courtyard area more than meets the requirements for open space provision within the proposed new development. As such it will allow for sitting out areas and informal use.

- The development will be built to meet the required Council standards regarding sustainability.
- From experience of other developments the applicants have experienced problems with the provision of private garden ground resulting in maintenance issues and the consequent negative impact on the overall appearance of the development .
- The car parking area between the site and Stewartfield will be landscaped.
- The surrounding area will benefit from significant public realm improvements, with the redevelopment of the site from the vacant industrial usage to residential/commercial, which is more in keeping with the development of the area.
- The width of the existing bland access to Carmichael Place will be reduced and enhanced through the use of additional landscaping.
- Through setting back the building line the opportunity to form green spaces has been achieved.
- Appropriate planting in Newhaven Road and Carmichael Place will be planned using landscaping to help soften the street scene and create visual interest.
- Maintenance arrangements for all planted areas will be established at an early stage and covered by a factoring agreement.
- These proposals will significantly improve the amenity of neighbouring residents, replacing a busy commercial/industrial use with properties and business uses more in keeping with the now predominantly residential character of the area.

#### **Other issues**

- District heating systems are expensive.
- The provision of low rise family housing would not make the scheme viable and would not accord with the Design Brief for the site which requires a higher density development. The developer has also established that there is no market need for this type of unit within the area.
- Social housing will be distributed throughout the flatted blocks.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The pre-application consultation process has generated a lot of interest in the proposed application with both the Public Consultation Event and the meeting with the community council being well attended. The process has enabled a number of locally important issues and concerns to be identified and subsequently taken into account in the preparation of this planning application.

6.2 Given the above, the consultation process set out in the Proposal of Application Notice and agreed by City of Edinburgh Council has taken place and as a consequence the statutory requirements for Pre-Application Consultation for this application have been fully met.