

Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council



Head of Planning and Building Standards,
Services for Communities,
The City Of Edinburgh Council
Waverley Court, Level C5,
4 East Market Street,
Edinburgh
EH8 8BG

2 Hamilton Terrace
Edinburgh
EH15 1NB

14 January 2015

Dear Sir

PLANNING PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AT 151 LONDON ROAD EH7 6AE: REF 14/05174/PPP

The Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council has considered this application in correspondence and will adopt this response at its meeting on 22 January. We wish to support the application.

Overview

The site is at the very edge of the Community Council's area and in its current use contributes little to the life or economy of the community – despite being the area's largest employer. We believe most of those who use and work in St Margaret's House and Meadowbank House come from other parts of the city. The air of isolation of the large offices, arising from a pit, and declining smaller properties on the site gives the area a feel of disconnection. A key hope by the Community Council is that this project will actually be brought to fruition, unlike the previous application (09/01793/PPP).

That said, the project offers an unlikely prospect: 150 bed hotel, 325 student places and up to 150 houses (up to 37 affordable homes) is far from what might be expected to be viable on such a site. It is an odd location for a large hotel and students will have some distance to reach their educational establishments. However, we take the view that the developers will have done their research and are confident that this is financially viable. It would be a pity if some years after construction the site returned to its current uncertain status or worse.

The prospect of several hundred people living and working on the site and engaging in our community is most welcome and this is at the heart of our support.

Detailed Points

The various massing diagrams do not include detailed elevations but imply building close to the road at heights equal to the tenements opposite. For most of the site this is not a concern but we believe there is a risk of creating a canyon effect on London Road. With the considerable traffic on that stretch of the road, confined noise and air pollution is likely to adversely affect life in the tenements on the south side of London Road. We will look at this aspect, if and when a detailed design is proposed, and we hope the Council will ask for a street facade of good design quality to continue the reinvigoration of the area.

We recognise there may be an impact on the existing retail businesses in the area – some may gain customers – others may not.

Consultation

We welcomed the Pre-Application consultation which was well done.

Submission

We understood the deadline for submission of comments had been extended due to the Christmas and New Year breaks.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Geoff Pearson".

Geoff Pearson
Secretary