

Southside Community Council reponse to 22/04766/FUL

Southside Community Council have had an interest in the Dalkeith Road for several months since we heard it was potentially going to be redeveloped. We appreciate the problems with the buildings as they currently are, and have no objection to the principle of redeveloping the site, and no notable objections were made to the suggested modification of the office building and the existing carpark.

We hoped that any re-development of the site would include some residential accommodation, and so were happy to see this is the case. We also note that it is being planned to meet the upcoming requirements of 35% affordable housing, rather than the existing requirement (though a higher proportion would be better). We hope that this **is (would be)** intended to be social rented accommodation, given the expectation of the City of Edinburgh's social housing policy that 70% of any affordable housing would be.

Concerns about the housing element:

1. Affordable element-

However, we note that the affordable housing element was advertised as "tenure blind", but this does not appear to be the case. It is all in one separate block, and the focus seems to be to maximise the number of units in the one building. There seems to have been a slight alteration on the initial proposals, but it is still heavily slanted towards smaller flats, with only one 3 bedroom unit, nearly half of which are single bedroom units, and the remainder (a little over half) being 2 bedroom. This leaves few suitable for comfortable family living (ironic given the economic impact assessment refers to this estimated section of the residential households as "Rented Family Living"). It also contrasts very unfavourably with the provision in the other market blocks, which are *mostly* 3 bed units, which seems to conflict with the Guidance for Affordable Housing (May 2021) quoted in the affordable housing statement that it should include "a mix of housing size and type, *representative of that provided by the market housing.*"

It also appears the 35% requirement has only have been met when counting to the number of housing *units*, rather than the number of residents that could make use of it. The affordable allocation comes to a total of 106 bedrooms, out of 458 for the whole site, less than 25% of the total.

2. Massing and design -

However, the biggest concern is the impact the new buildings might have on current residents. Local residents contacted us directly to express their unease with the development because of this. The blocks as envisioned are up to 7 stories tall, more than **(another) any** other buildings in the local vicinity. The projections make clear that some of the flats on Parkside Terrace will have a notably higher building opposite them, and they definitely will be closer than the existing buildings, the combination making them notably more intrusive. The blocks of flats on East Parkside are currently opposed by a low building which remains below the roof line of their block, but with the new plan will be overlooked by a building almost twice as high as their roofs. **The Daylight Availability report mentions that there will be some rooms which will have light reduced below the permitted reduction.** Even if most will not receive a reduction below the allowed level, it is likely the local areas will experience a noticeable reduction of light, particularly in the winter months when the sun will be lower in the sky and the new taller buildings to their south will get in the way.

3. Area character impact-

There are also concerns about the way the buildings will fit into the character of the local area. Firstly, the new taller buildings will dominate some of the other buildings around them (particularly at East Parkside). We have also had a comment from some local residents that they don't feel the new blocks are in keeping with the character of the others in the area.

It may be that shorter buildings may be more acceptable.

4. Do we also want to say something about **the number of flats** overall in the proposal being too many? That the local infrastructure (schools and doctors particularly) might struggle to accommodate it?

Concerns about Amenity Tree Loss:

Another concern has been the planned removal of a large number of trees, most of which the plan admitted are otherwise in a satisfactory condition and add to the amenity and landscape of the site.