

**Full Planning Application  
at  
81 Saughton Road North  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7JB**

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**Development Quality Sub-Committee  
of the Planning Committee**

**Proposal:** Convert ex video shop to cafeteria/internet shop  
**Applicant:** Mr Pennycuick  
**Reference No:** 04/01889/FUL

**1 Purpose of report**

To recommend that the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons;

**Reasons**

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy S3 of the North West Edinburgh Local Plan and R10 of the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan, in respect of Existing Shopping Centres, as it would result in the loss of a retail unit which would be to the detriment of the vitality of this shopping centre.

**2 Main report**

**Site description**

The property is a vacant retail unit located within the local shopping centre of Saughton Road North.

## **Site history**

October 2001 - An application for the change of use from retail to a hot food takeaway was refused, reference 01/03016/FUL. The reasons for refusal were the loss of retail use and the loss of residential amenity.

1994 - An application for a replacement shop frontage was approved, reference 94/02745/FUL.

Other relevant history for the area includes:

75 Saughton Road North - planning permission was refused in December 1997 for the change of use from a shop to a hot food take-away. The reasons given were: loss of retail use; contrary to local plan policy; and loss of residential amenity (Ref: 97/02718). The subsequent appeal was dismissed in June 1998.

100a Saughton Road North - planning permission was refused in April 2001 for the change of use of a vacant Class 4 premises to a hot food take-away. The reasons given were: loss of retail use to the detriment of the vitality of the shopping centre; and loss of residential amenity (Ref: 00/03182/FUL). The subsequent appeal was dismissed in October 2001.

## **Development**

It is proposed to change the use of the former video shop (Class 1) to a cafeteria/internet facility. Associated with this proposal is the installation of a mechanical ventilation flue to the rear elevation of the unit. This would terminate at a point 0.9m above the rear parapet wall of the two storey building.

The sales/servery, preparation area and toilets will be located to the rear of the unit.

The first floor is referred to as a flat however it is currently an office.

## **Consultations**

None undertaken.

## **Representations**

One letter of support has been received from the local Councillor, Councillor Wheeler, stating that the proposals are an imaginative use for the premises which have lain empty for some time and should be of benefit for the area.

## **Policy**

The proposal lies within an area allocated for residential purposes in the North West Edinburgh Local Plan area where existing residential character and amenities are to be protected. The site is also within a

residential area under the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan, although it has also been identified as a Local Centre.

Relevant Policies:

**North West Edinburgh Local Plan**

Policy S3 sets criteria for protecting the retail function in existing shopping centres.

Policy H5 states that within areas of predominantly residential character, the establishment or extension of a non-residential use will not be permitted if likely to lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity through increased traffic, unsightliness or noise.

**Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan**

Policy R2 sets out the circumstances in which proposals for retail development in or adjacent to existing local or other centres will be supported.

Policy R8 indicates, for all shopping centres, the circumstances in which the change of use of ground floor shop units will be permitted.

Policy R10 sets out additional criteria for assessing proposals for the change of use of ground floor shop units in the defined local centres.

Policy H12 states that development which would result in an unacceptable reduction in amenity for residents in the locality will not be permitted.

**Non Statutory Guidelines**

Non-statutory guidelines 'RESTAURANTS, CAFES AND HOT FOOD SHOPS' provide guidance on the location of such uses and set out conditions to control their impact.

**3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

**DETERMINING ISSUES**

The determining issues are: -

- Do the proposals comply with the development plan?
- If the proposals do comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?
- If the proposals do not comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

**ASSESSMENT**

To address the determining issues, the Committee need to consider:

- a) Whether the loss of a retail unit is acceptable;
- b) Whether there is an impact on residential amenity;

a) This retail unit forms part of a wider shopping parade which is identified in the North West Edinburgh Local Plan as a smaller neighbourhood centre. The Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan continues this allocation, and specifically includes this parade on its Proposals Map as a local centre. The North West Edinburgh Local Plan policy S3 seeks to protect the retail vitality and viability of these centres, through resisting losses of retail premises which would take the overall non-retail percentage to over 20%. The acceptable non-retail percentage under the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan is 40%.

There are 15 units within the Saughton Road North shopping centre, 6 of which are currently in non-retail use and this represents 40% of the total number of units. The proposed change of use would result in 7 of the 15 units being in a non-retail use, representing 47% of the units. This figure does not comply with Policy S3 of the North West Local Plan and R10 of the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan.

The applicant has advised that the unit has been vacant for 2 years and that in addition to an advert in the window of the premises an estate agent was also employed to market the property. However, the applicant is unable to give detail of the level and type of marketing carried out by the estate agent. In addition, internet cafés are normally considered to be mixed use, but neither the cafeteria element or the internet element is a Class 1 retail use.

b) Although the site lies within a Mainly Residential Area it is proposed that the unit will only operate between 07:00 and 17:00 therefore it is not considered that there would be any noise disturbance due to proposal operating when the ambient noise levels are generally higher. The level of activity or number of traffic movements is not likely to exceed the levels generated by the previous use as a video shop. The scheme is therefore deemed to comply with Policy H5 of the North West Edinburgh Local Plan and H12 of the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan

The proposed flue is higher than the roof of the building and would potentially be visible from the street. However, the visual impact of this flue would not be so great that a refusal could be sustained on this basis.

To conclude, although the unit has been vacant for an extended period, there is no evidence of thorough marketing. The retail vitality and viability of the parade would be compromised by this proposal if permitted. Three similar proposals have been refused in this local centre, two of which were successfully defended at appeal. There are no material planning considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

It is recommended that the Committee refuses this application, for the reasons stated.



**Alan Henderson**  
Head of Planning and Strategy

**Contact/tel** Kevin Murphy on 0131 529 3794

**Ward affected** 24 -South East Corstorphine

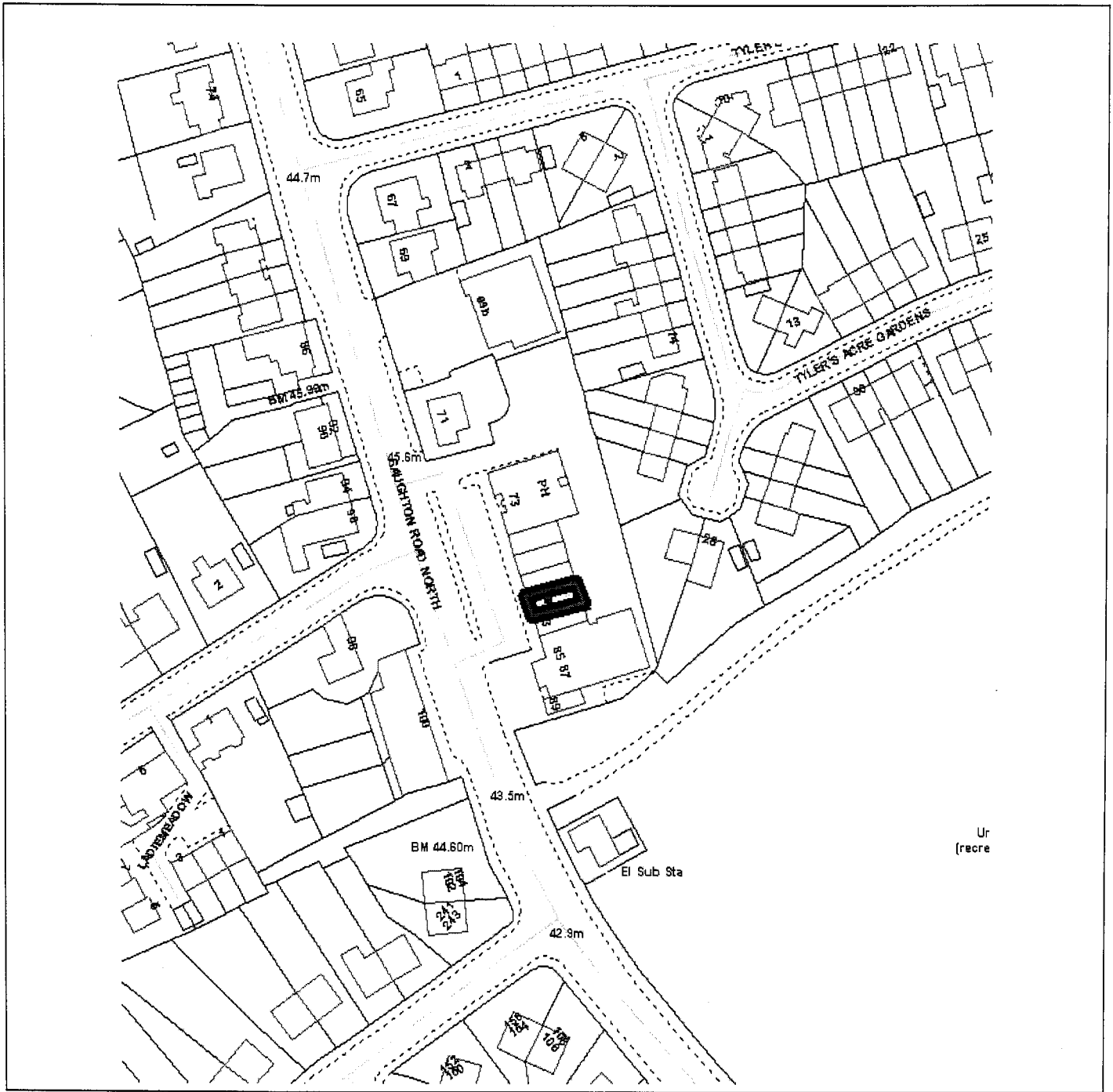
**Local Plan** North West Edinburgh Local Plan

**Statutory Development  
Plan Provision** Housing and Compatible Uses

**File**

**Date registered** 24 May 2004

**Drawing numbers/  
Scheme** 1 and 2



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# **PLANNING APPLICATION**

<b>Address</b>	<b>81 Saughton Road North, Edinburgh, EH12 7JB</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Convert ex video shop to cafeteria/internet shop</b>		
<b>Application number:</b>	<b>04/01889/FUL</b>	<b>WARD</b>	<b>24- South East Corstorphine</b>

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL  
THE CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT- PLANNING & STRATEGY**