

**Development Management Sub-Committee
22 February 2012**

Report by the Head of Planning on forthcoming application by Craighouse Ltd and Napier University for proposed Change of use and conversion of existing buildings from university campus to residential and erection of new build residential, together with ancillary development, public realm, utilities infrastructure including access roads, car parking and landscaping at Land at Napier University Craighouse Campus, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh

Protocol note

The report by the Head of Planning is to brief and inform members in advance of a formal planning application for this site. The process is as was agreed by the Planning Committee on 7 August 2008 and in the context of changes to development management procedures under the Planning, etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

Following the presentation, members will have the opportunity to ask questions and indicate key issues they would like the developers to consider, but without expressing any view on the merits of the proposals.

Local ward councillors may attend the meeting and observe the presentation and discussion but cannot take part in the debate. They will however have an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues through the parallel Neighbourhood Partnership briefing process.

Following submission of any formal planning application, the finalised proposals would be presented to the Sub-Committee in the normal way. This additional process does not replace or curtail any part of the established procedure.

Carol Campbell
Acting Head of Legal and Administrative Services

**REPORT ON FORTHCOMING APPLICATION BY Craighouse Ltd and Napier University
FOR proposed change of use and conversion of existing buildings from university campus to residential and erection of new build residential, together with ancillary development, public realm, utilities infrastructure including access roads, car parking and landscaping
AT Land at Napier University Craighouse Campus, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh**

Development Management Sub-Committee

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1. Purpose of the Report

To inform the Development Management Sub-Committee of a forthcoming planning application in respect of a major development on land at Napier University Craighouse Campus, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh.

Pre-application reports give the Committee an opportunity to raise issues which it would like to see addressed in the planning application.

2. Summary

This report advises members of a forthcoming planning application for a change of use and conversion of existing buildings from university campus to residential and erection of new build residential at a site at the Napier campus at Craighouse on Easter Craiglockhart Hill. It is likely that the application will be submitted in the first quarter of this year.

The site is designated in the Edinburgh City Local Plan as:

- Open Space;
- Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and Candidate for a Special Landscape Area (SLA) in the emerging Local Plan; and
- Within the Craiglockhart Conservation Area.

The entire Craighouse site, apart from the open space in the south-east corner, is a Local Nature Conservation Site. The site borders a Local Nature Reserve to the west. The existing traditional buildings on the site are A listed.

In accordance with the provisions of Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, the applicants submitted a Proposal of Application Notice in August 2011.

3. The Site and the Proposal

Site Description

The site is composed of 20.6 ha of Napier's Craighouse Campus on Easter Craiglockhart Hill. It consists of the north-east section of the hill. The Merchants of Edinburgh Golf Course is to the south and woods lie to the west. To the east is Plewlands Conservation Area. Meadowspot is to the north, which includes a modern housing development and some playing fields.

The site is characterised by the A listed former NHS buildings, latterly occupied by Napier University, set in the landscaped hilltop site. Old Craig, the oldest building, to the east, dates from 1565 with later remodelling. The other buildings were designed as a mental hospital and date from the late 19th century. They are arranged on a rough L configuration. New Craig, the massive E plan main building, faces south and steps down the slope of the site. Other 'villa' buildings stretch south along the highest area of the open space. A modern building, the Learning Resource Centre, continues the pattern of discrete buildings and is located to the south. There is a small lodge house by the original entrance from Craighouse Road.

There are spectacular views from the site towards the centre of the city and conversely the site is visible from many points within Edinburgh.

The large grassed area of open space is to the south east corner of the site and slopes from Craighouse Road up to the villas and the woodland behind them to the west. Some fruit trees grow on its south border close to a low stone wall which separates the open space from a footpath and right of way, running beside mature trees.

Dense woodland grows to the west and north of the site.

Access to the site is from Craighouse Road, north of the original entrance by the lodge. To the east of Old Craig is a car park which also contains a bus stop.

There is free access to the site for the public.

There is a right of way in the footpath that runs up the south edge of the site from Craiglea Place and that eventually returns along the very northern edge of the site.

Site History

The Victorian buildings which dominate the site were designed in 1889-94 for the Royal Edinburgh Asylum by Arthur Sydney Mitchell. In 1994 the NHS sold the site to Napier University.

Relevant Planning History:

Feb 1994 – consent granted for change of use for from hospital to educational use (A 02780 92).

March 1996 – consent granted to build 3 storey learning resource centre (A 02097 95).

June 2007 – consent granted for the development of a new Arts facility building, new surface car park and minor works to existing A listed building (01/04599/FUL/LBC).

Also there are several applications for minor works associated with Napier University.

Pre-application discussions were held between the Council, Historic Scotland, Napier and interested buyers of the site, in 2010, in order to discuss development options available on the site.

Description of the Proposal

A proposal will be coming forward for planning permission for the change of use of the existing institutional listed buildings to be converted into housing. The proposed development also involves a significant amount of new build on the site. Proposals for associated, roads, parking and infrastructure will be included. At the moment the exact number of residential units proposed is uncertain, although it is likely to be between 150 and 200, 62 of which are expected to be housed in the existing listed buildings.

No demolition is proposed apart from the Learning Resource Centre.

The new build elements are being presented as a means of cross funding the conversion of the listed buildings and their maintenance into the future.

Community Consultation

The Proposal of Application Notice (11/02543/PAN) outlined various methods of community consultation events employed. These included:

- Public meetings at Old Craig on the Craighouse Campus on three occasions;
- An advert in the Scotsman on in August 2011;

- Posters at seven different public locations in the area including libraries, churches, community and leisure centres;
- A leaflet drop to all residential properties within a 1 mile radius;
- A website; and
- Community councils being informed.

Discussions with the Council are ongoing and it is expected that the applicants will reconsult the community with a revised and more developed scheme prior to making a formal application for planning permission.

The results of the community consultation will be submitted with the application as part of the Report on Community Consultation.

4. Issues

The key considerations against which the eventual application will be assessed include whether:

a) the development would be acceptable in principle having regard to the development plan;

The site is designated in the Edinburgh City Local Plan as:

- Open Space;
- An Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and Candidate for a Special Landscape Area (SLA) in the emerging Local Plan; and
- Within the Craiglockhart Conservation Area.

The entire Craighouse site, apart from the open space in the south-east corner, is a Local Nature Conservation Site. The site borders a Local Nature Reserve to the west. The existing traditional buildings on the site are A listed.

Any proposed new development on the site would be contrary to the current development plan, because of the open space and AGLV designations on the site. Despite this, new development is now being considered on this site as a means of cross funding the conversion and continued maintenance of an outstanding group of A listed buildings.

ECLP Policy OS1 (Protection of Open Space) presumes against loss of open space unless it can meet five tests. The first test is that 'There will be no significant impact on the quality or character of the local environment'. Env 11 (Landscape Quality) presumes against development which would damage or detract from the character or appearance of the AGLV, prominent ridges or other important topographical features. Information submitted with the application will need to demonstrate that there will be no undue detrimental impact on the character, appearance or quality of the environment.

As the site is in a conservation area, any application will need to demonstrate that the development makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

b) the design, layout are acceptable within the character of the area;

Because the application relates to listed buildings, an outline application would not be appropriate and a more detailed scheme will need to be submitted in the form of an application for planning permission. It is critical that the proposals are derived from a thorough assessment of the site and its constraints so as not to compromise the sites special qualities as defined and protected by the conservation area character assessment and the AGLV. This will need to be demonstrated when the application is submitted.

The applicant is already assembling information that should inform the final submission. This includes a:

- Conservation audit;
- Historic Landscape Appraisal; and
- Character and Visual Appraisal.

At this stage there have been some indicative details on the layout of the proposals for information but not for assessment. These proposals are still the subject of discussions with the Planning Authority. The applicant is required to submit a Design and Access Statement with the application.

c) access arrangements are acceptable in terms of road safety and public transport accessibility;

The applicants have indicated that the preference is to relocate the existing entrance from Craighouse Road to point to the north approximately opposite Craighouse Terrace. The new junction will need to be the subject of an assessment of possible road safety issues.

The impact of roads and parking requirements could significantly impact on the character of the hill and these needs to be considered at an early stage in the design process.

d) there are any other environmental factors that require consideration;

The applicants will be required to submit sufficient information to demonstrate that the site is capable of being developed for the proposed use. In order to support the application the following supporting documents will be submitted:

- desktop archaeological survey;
- surface water management plan/SUDS;

- sustainability statements;
- ecological survey; and
- tree survey.

5. Financial implications

The developer is in discussions with the CEC with respect to the future management and ownership of Easter Craiglockhart Hill LNR and Craighouse Campus Woodland. This includes the Craighouse Partnership's portion of the LNR and their woodland. CEC is currently evaluating the legal and financial burden associated with taking ownership of and assuming liability for the land.

6. Conclusion

This report highlights the main issues that are likely to arise in relation to the various key considerations. This list is not exhaustive and further matters may arise when the new application is received and consultees and the public have the opportunity to comment.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the key issues at this stage and advise of any other issues.

John Bury

Head of Planning & Building Standards

Appendices	1. Location Plan
Contact/tel/e-mail	Barbara Stuart Tel. 529 3927
Wards affected	Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart - Ward 9
Background	1. 11/02543/PAN
Papers	