

# Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 25 September 2013

**Application for Planning Permission 13/01256/FUL  
At 555 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3LE  
Part change of use of third and fourth floors of Class 4  
offices to student accommodation (Sui Generis).**

Item number

Report number

Wards

A07 - Sighthill/Gorgie

## Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#)

LPC, CITH10, CITH8, NSG, NSGD02, NSGSTU,

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# Executive summary

## **Application for Planning Permission 13/01256/FUL At 555 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3LE Part change of use of third and fourth floors of Class 4 offices to student accommodation (Sui Generis).**

### Summary

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The proposals do not adversely affect the character of the surrounding area or residential amenity, they provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupiers and do not have an adverse impact on parking or road safety.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below (in section 3 of the main report).

### Financial impact

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There are no financial implications to the Council.

### Equalities impact

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The application has been assessed and has no impact in terms of equalities or human rights.

### Sustainability impact

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This application is not subject to the sustainability requirements of the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

### Consultation and engagement

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#### **Pre-Application Process**

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

#### **Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments**

Once representation was received from the Gorgie Dalry Community Council. It raised objections on the following material points:

- impact on amenity;
- concentration of student housing;
- impact on quality of environment created for residents.

A full assessment of the representations can be found in the main report in the Assessment section.

## **Background reading / external references**

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- To view details of the application go to
- [Planning and Building Standards online services](#)

## **Application for Planning Permission 13/01256/FUL At 555 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3LE Part change of use of third and fourth floors of Class 4 offices to student accommodation (Sui Generis).**

### **1. Background**

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#### **1.1 Site description**

The application property is a five storey brick office block on the south side of Gorgie Road at Stenhouse.

The surrounding area is mainly residential with a three storey block containing a gym and offices to the north, a commercial garage and a car showroom beyond the residential properties to the west and an industrial estate to the south.

#### **1.2 Site History**

09 June 2004. Permission granted for alterations to entrance comprising erection of new glazed lobby and canopy (Reference: 04/01223/FUL).

### **2. Main report**

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#### **2.1 Description Of The Proposal**

The application is for the change of use of the third and fourth floors of the building from Class 4 (Office) to student HMO accommodation.

The proposal is for 34 single aspect studio apartments with floor areas ranging from approximately 36 to 56 square metres. They would be accessed by a communal entrance with stairs and a lift on the front (north west) elevation at ground floor level and communal stairs on the south-west elevation.

The provision for refuse storage, bike storage and car parking is provided outwith the application site, to the south-east of the building.

No open space is to be provided. However, the applicant has provided information to show that there is a variety of open space in the surrounding area.

The red line boundary has been altered to more accurately demonstrate the application site.

## 2.2 Determining Issues

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?

## 2.3 Assessment

To address these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether:

- a) the principle of the proposed use is acceptable at this location;
- b) the proposals safeguard the character of the surrounding area.
- c) the proposed use would safeguard the amenity of neighbouring occupiers;
- d) the proposed accommodation would provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupiers;
- e) there are any implications in terms of parking or road safety;
- f) any impacts on equalities or human rights are acceptable; and
- g) comments raised have been addressed.

### a) Principle of Development

The application is for student accommodation. The proposed 32 units would increase the concentration of student accommodation in the data-zone area to approximately 6.8 percent. The application site is not located in an area with an excessive concentration of student accommodation and it is located on a bus route providing access to the city centre and Heriot-Watt University. Therefore the requirements of Edinburgh City Local Plan Policy Hou 10 have been met and the change of use to student accommodation is acceptable in principle, provided there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity.

### b) Character

The area has a mix of uses and the external alterations comprise replacing the existing windows with double glazed windows, which does not require consent.

Although the proposal will increase the amount of activity in the area, there is no impact on the character of the building or the surrounding area.

### (c) Residential Amenity

There would be no impact on daylighting, sunlighting or privacy to neighbouring properties as this is an existing building. Further to this, the surrounding area has a mix of uses and the addition of residential accommodation for students would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

There is no significant adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

#### d) Quality of Environment Created for Future Occupiers

The Edinburgh Design Guidance state that single aspect dwellings should comply with the guidance for providing daylight within the building. No information has been submitted to show that the new units would comply with the guideline. However, given that the units are located at third and fourth floor level, with windows serving each individual apartment the proposals are likely to meet the standard.

Environmental Assessment does not support the current proposal as, due to the close proximity of the busy road and industrial estate, a noise impact assessment is required to be carried out to determine what level of mitigation would be required to ensure that satisfactory internal noise levels can be achieved within the proposed student accommodation. The applicant has confirmed that this information cannot be supplied at present, due to the noise impact consultants being unable to provide an assessment in the required timescale. The applicant has proposed secondary acoustic double glazing to mitigate any noise issues and, given that there are other residential properties in close proximity to the application site, the proposed measures are sufficient to deal with noise from transport and industrial sources (Gorgie Road).

The floor areas marked on the plans meet the minimum space standards given in the council's non-statutory design guidance, which is a minimum of 36 square metres for a studio flat and a common room area is proposed on each floor. The built-in storage is limited and there is some space for the provision of refuse/recycling storage within individual units.

Provision for communal refuse facilities, parking and cycle parking is to be provided in a remote location, outwith the red line boundary of the application site. Therefore there would be no control over the provision or maintenance of these facilities.

Finally, there is no possibility to provide open space within the site and the applicant has submitted information highlighting there is a variety of public green space available in the surrounding area. However, there is not a minimum standard for open space for student accommodation.

Overall there would be an adequate standard of accommodation for future occupiers of the development.

#### e) Parking and Road Safety

Transport accept that the development will be car free, although there is an existing provision of approximately 24 parking spaces to the east of the site. There is no objection from Transport subject to a legal agreement to provide a travel plan and management agreement to ensure measures will be put in place to encourage cycling, walking and public transport to the place of learning.

The possibility of using a condition or legal agreement to limit the occupiers of the development to students only has been investigated. It is not possible to use these methods to limit the users as it would not be enforceable. In any case, the application for student accommodation is sui generis and any alteration to the type of occupier of the development would potentially constitute a breach of planning control. Therefore a condition or legal agreement is not necessary to put a travel plan for students in to place.

#### f) Equalities and Human Rights

This application was assessed in terms of equalities and human rights. No impact was identified.

#### g) Comments Raised

One letter of objection was received from the Gorgie Dalry Community Council and the main grounds of objection are as follows:-

- impact on amenity; this is addressed in paragraph c)
- concentration of student housing; this is addressed in paragraph a)
- impact on quality of environment created for residents; this is addressed in paragraph d).

#### CONCLUSION

The application is recommended for approval. As Environmental Assessment has objected, a Committee decision is required.

On balance, the proposals are acceptable. There will be little impact on the character of the area and the amenity of residents and occupiers will be acceptable. Although there are some concerns in relation to parking, the nature of the use suggests that this is a minor issue.

There are no material considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

### **3. Recommendations**

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**3.1** It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below

#### **3.2 Conditions/reasons**

**Conditions:-**

#### **Informatives**

It should be noted that:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

**Statutory Development  
Plan Provision**

The application site is located within urban area covered by the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

**Date registered**

16 April 2013

**Drawing numbers/Scheme**

1A, 2, 3, 4B, 5A, 6,

Scheme 1

**David R. Leslie**

Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards

## Links - Policies

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### **Relevant Policies:**

#### **Relevant policies of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.**

Policy Hou 10 (Student Housing) supports provision of student housing on suitable sites.

Policy Hou 8 (Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas) establishes a presumption against development which would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of nearby residents.

#### **Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines**

**Non-Statutory guidelines** Edinburgh Design Guidance supports development of the highest design quality and that integrates well with the existing city. It sets out the Council's expectations for the design of new development, including buildings and landscape, in Edinburgh.

**Non-statutory guidelines** Student Housing Guidance interprets local plan policy, supporting student housing proposals in accessible locations provided that they will not result in an excessive concentration.

# Appendix 1

## Consultations

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### Environmental Assessment

*The applicant proposes to develop student accommodation in an existing class 4 office block. The building is located on Gorgie Road with an industrial estate immediately to the south and south/west. There are existing residential properties located to the west.*

*Due to the close proximity of the busy road and industrial estate Environmental Assessment requested that the applicant investigates the noise levels further and submits a noise impact assessment. A noise impact assessment would determine what level of mitigation would be required to ensure that satisfactory internal noise levels can be achieved within the proposed student accommodation. The applicant has advised that they will not be carrying out a noise impact assessment. Therefore, Environmental Assessment cannot support this application as if this proposal is developed with no noise mitigation measures it is likely that complaints will be received. If noise complaints are received from businesses in the industrial estate this may lead to the restrictions being placed on the business units if a nuisance is proved. It is important that appropriate noise mitigation is designed to deal with noise from transport sources (Gorgie Road) as this is difficult to address retrospectively.*

*We therefore recommend that the application is refused.*

### Transport

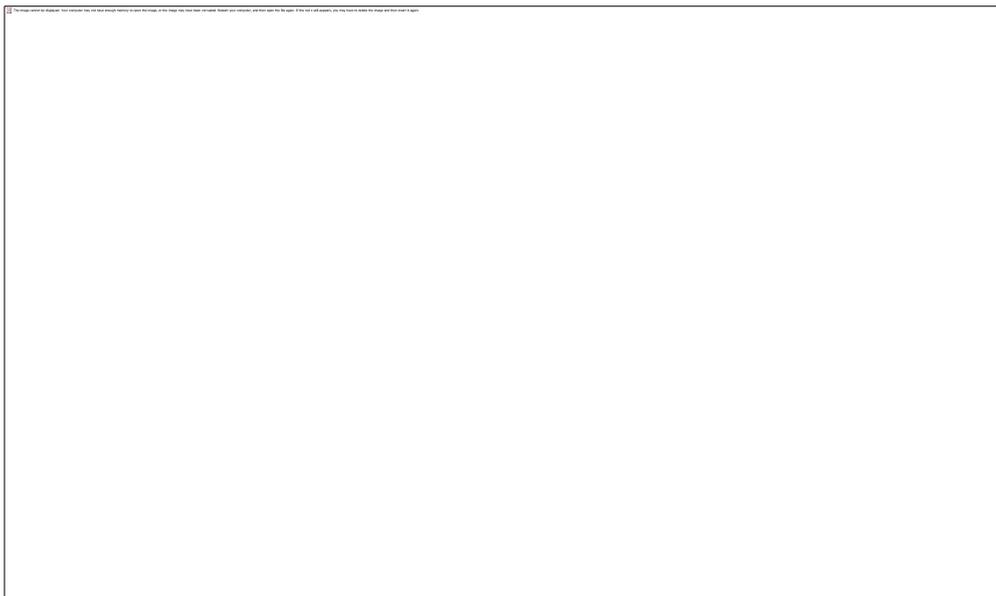
*No objections to the application subject to the following condition being applied.*

*Prior to the issuing of consent the application to enter into a suitable legal agreement to make provision for the following:*

*A Travel Plan to be submitted by the end user and the management agreement element of the plan as agreed with Head of Transport to be in place prior to opening of the residences to students. (Reason the development is accepted as car free and the travel plan will concentrate on sustainable transport modes i.e. cycling, walking and public transport. Measures will be put in place within the management agreement to encourage cycling, walking and public transport to the place of learning).*

## Location Plan

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