

Craiglockhart Community Council
c/o Paul Mowat
54a2 Craiglockhart Loan
Edinburgh, EH14 1JG
10 October 2017

Attention: Mr James Allanson
Planning Department
Edinburgh City Council (transmission by email)
Edinburgh

**Neutral Comment to Planning Application 16/06275/FUL; 97
Student Flats 27- 35 Lanark Rd.**

We refer to the abovementioned Planning Application and all related documentation, issued by the City of Edinburgh Council for comment on 13 January 2017. We responded by our letter dated 26 January 2017 objecting to the Planning Application. Since then the Applicant has been permitted some additional time to resolve several aspects of the proposal and has taken the opportunity to make amendments to the design. These amendments have been incorporated onto the Planning Portal during September 2017, that we have revisited in making the following remarks.

Craiglockhart Community Council are a major stakeholder in this Planning Application based on the recent history of the development on Lanark Road, that included the combined and adjacent site (incorporating the Blue Goose Public House) under the previous application (15/05401/FUL). This was strongly contested based on the overwhelming rejection by the neighbouring communities, of the combined design that included 247 units (later reduced to 221) that was subsequently rejected by both the Planning Department and Development Management Sub-Committee.

The Water of Leith bisects the combined site, of which the Westside Motors plot falls on the western portion under the purview of the Longstone Community Council.

This is becoming a longstanding saga, whereby it appears that the development team and designer are being intransigent in their determination to extract the maximum value out of the land price by exploiting the lucrative student housing market with as many

accommodation units as possible. This being at the expense of the city's preference and requirement for affordable housing.

During the Craiglockhart Community Council meeting held on 25th September 2017, considerable time was devoted to a presentation and open discussion on the revisions to the Planning Application that was attended by two City Councilors for our area. Furthermore we have circulated information and sought opinion from over 220 persons with whom we have email communication.

The latest design has been reduced by a single storey on the highest eastern block only, which is therefore less domineering than the previous design. It is nevertheless still quite an overbearing feature that is generally disliked in the Community.

The traffic and parking facility was an important consideration in the previous objection and the 5 No parking spaces currently allocated for use by the 92 students plus workers / facilities management staff and deliveries is wholly insufficient. This aspect was contested by ourselves previously whereby we referred to a University of Sheffield study that was more realistic in its contention that circa 38% of students have a vehicle and park in the area surrounding. As this site is on a main thoroughfare, there is no acceptable nor alternative solution to this under-design as it stands.

However the overall response received indicates that a pragmatic approach should be adopted that is more positive or at least neutral, rather than outright rejection; albeit there is a real sense of expediency in making this statement.

The Craiglockhart Community Council are therefore prepared to conclude a **NEUTRAL** position for this Planning Application on the understanding that:

- The Designer revisits the design to attempt to effect reduction in the imposing nature of the structure
 - and that will permit
- Additional parking solutions to be found to enable more students to use the on site area, than is indicated at present.

In addition this Planning Application and our comments shall not be used as a precedent to reinstitute student housing development in the area, including inter alia, at the Blue Goose site.

The documentation is unclear as to external fabric materials, as such the use of stone cladding (not brick) and roofing material compatible with the surrounding area should be an absolute requirement of any subsequent acceptance of this application. Similarly as regards external structures and walling.

In taking this neutral position we believe that we are representing the best interests of the community in the area. Continuing delays over the future of the site could well lead to further deterioration and the underlying threat of an even more undesirable development at some time in the future.

In making this neutral comment, we realise that there is nevertheless a strong negative feeling by a number the residents within Craiglockhart and the Water of Leith Trust, as well as rejection from Longstone Community Council that the development is still unacceptable, generally for the reasons as articulately stated in the previous objection by the City of Edinburgh Planning department. Hence it is imperative for the development team to revisit the design prior to a final decision being made, to address at the very least the issues that we have stated herein.

Yours sincerely

Paul T Mowat
Craiglockhart Community Council (Planning)