



Portobello Community Council

Stephen Dickson
Planning and Building Standards
Services for Communities
City of Edinburgh Council

Portobello Community Council
c/o Sean Watters
30/4 Windsor Place
Edinburgh
EH15 2AE

01/02/2017

Dear Stephen,

REF: 16/06447/FUL & 16/06449/LBC

Portobello Community Council objects to the above applications concerning 14 Bath Street, Portobello. The new owners and the agent for the application attended our meeting on November 28th last year asking for feedback on their new proposals for re-development. To that end we ran a short consultation to gather the views of the community, a summary of which is attached. We received 263 responses with the following results.

- On changing the use to residential: 70% object, 9% neutral, 21% support.
- On the proposals themselves: 73% object, 7% neutral, 21% support.

Whilst there is some support for residential development, and the façade retention to keep some of the character of the building, there is also significant opposition to the development just as with the previous applications for the site. The existing building is held in high regard by people and is of considerable local importance. Whilst the building may not be in the best of conditions, and has been altered over the years, it is still highly valued for its architectural style, its history within the community, and as a functional space.

A large number of people responding to the proposals have expressed the desire to see the building continue to function in public use, and the possibilities for that must be explored in detail. When it comes to the proposed development concerns have been expressed about the scale, massing, over-development, over-shadowing, and the impact of traffic and access in what is a very congested area.

In addition, we must also point out the following factual inaccuracies within the application:

Planning Statement 4.02 - Portobello Community Council have never expressed any interest in the purchase of the property, nor approached the then owners in any way at all. This statement was included on the previous application, and its inaccuracy highlighted then too.

Planning Statement p2, item 3.0 - Portobello Community Council received a copy of a feasibility study by Out of The Blue regarding this property. Out of the Blue concluded there was nothing further they could do at this stage, given they do not own the property. The community council has no position on this. Likewise another unrelated group in the local community is currently pursuing purchase of Bellfield Church via Urban Community Right to Buy. The community council's interest in this only in raising awareness and sharing information - we are not purchasing a church.

Given the reasons previously given to refuse demolition both of these issues need to be corrected. They build up a picture of attempts to find alternative uses, which have been unsuccessful. They are inaccurate and have never occurred.

Given these clear errors we feel the veracity of all claims made as part of the submission must be scrutinised carefully, with supporting evidence provided. The Listed status of the building is a recognition of its local importance and that designation should not be set aside without robust examination.

In short we feel that: the Application has failed to demonstrate a case for the demolition of what is a highly valued local building: that the proposed re-development would be detrimental to local character and amenity: and that local opinion seems decisively in favour of rejecting both applications.

Sean Watters, on behalf of Portobello Community Council.

CC: Cllr Ian Perry, Cllr Michael Bridgman, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr David Walker