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00 Project Team

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01 Introduction & Location

The application site is to the east of the centre of Portobello and, until recently, accommodated a nursing care home. Changes in regulations and market aspirations have led to the redundancy of the existing building for this use, which now requires redevelopment. Change of use to residential apartments is therefore proposed as the site lies within a predominantly residential area adjacent the designated local town centre and is close to large areas of recreational amenity including the Portobello Beach, Abercorn & Brighton Parks, and is well served by public transport as it faces the B6514 main arterial route for local bus services and the town centre interchange is within 0.4 miles distance. The site overlooks the open space of Abercorn Park and has a commanding view along Pittville Street north to the sea.

The building dates from the mid nineteenth century, is not listed but is located within the Portobello Conservation Area. A total of eight residential units are proposed comprising seven flats (two of which are main door flats) plus one townhouse, all with private on site car parking.

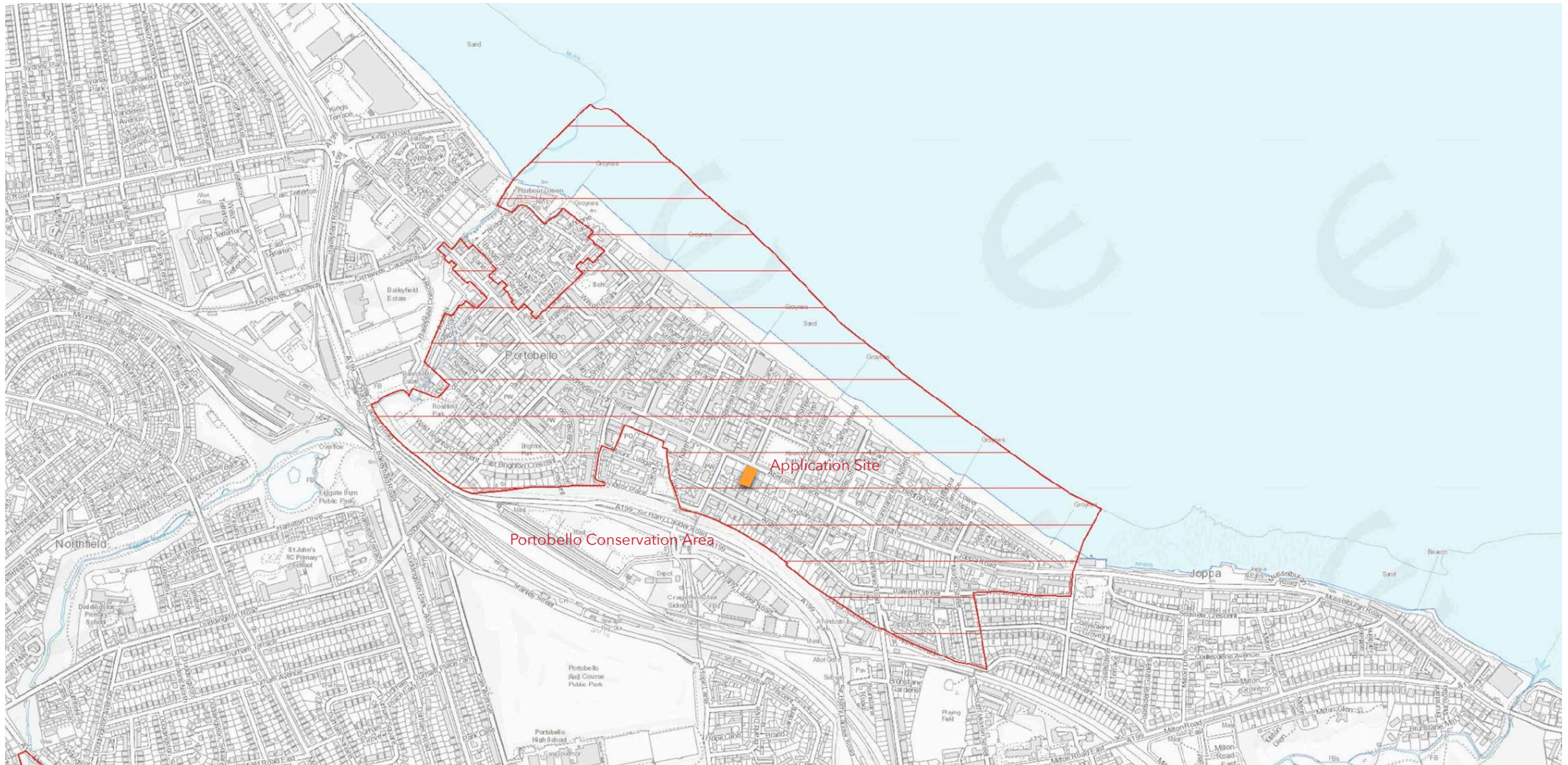


02 Site Context: Conservation Area

The Portobello Conservation Area was designated in 1977 and sets out the significant characteristics of the area which are to be protected and enhanced by new development. It notes the retained identity of a small seaside town with clearly defined town centre surrounded by a rich and varied residential hinterland including good examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture in traditional stone, hailing and slate. Originally an industrial settlement founded in the mid eighteenth century with brick, glass, ceramic and soap factories, the town became popular as a spa and seaside bathing resort and developed significantly during the nineteenth century with elegant terraces and villas.

Key features within the conservation area are along the seafront and historic town centre, as well as the early Georgian terraces and Victorian improvement areas.

Abercorn Terrace lies within the south-eastern section of the conservation area, with an open aspect to Abercorn Park and with axial views to the sea through the grid pattern layout via Pittville and John Streets to the north. The terrace accommodates a row of Victorian villas and semidetached properties which vary in form and detail but which present a unified appearance in terms of their scale, set-back from the road, stone and slate construction, and thus contribute to the setting of Abercorn Park.



03 Site Context: Historical

The proposals site lies to the east of Portobello town centre and, in the 1854 map, clearly appears on the outer edge of the developing settlement as the earliest of the row of villas that would come to form Abercorn Terrace. The grid plan of the town to the north is in embryonic form with Pitt St and John St well defined but Abercorn Park yet to be completed. Portobello Rail Station at Southfield Place (just off the map to the south west) had opened in 1846 and was instrumental in opening up the town as a spa and bathing resort and ultimately as an Edinburgh Suburb. By 1894 the row of villas along Abercorn Terrace had been completed, as had Abercorn Park and the grid pattern development to the north. More detail is shown in the 1905 map which indicates a uniform frontage to the Abercorn Terrace row, both to front and rear. This contrasts with the present condition (see section 4 below) where the rear of these properties has subsequently been developed in an irregular piecemeal manner. Plots to the rear (south) of the site along Argyle Crescent are still mostly undeveloped, but by the time of the 1914 map only a couple of gap sites remain. At this time the site faces the new electric tram lines along Abercorn Terrace and the High St is shown as the United Free Church Manse (the former UFC Church was on Hamilton Place and is now the Portobello & Joppa Parish Church on Brunstane Rd North). By 1947 the site is no longer in use as a manse and the grain of development that we see today had been completed.

Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library.

1854



1894



1914



1947



1905



04 Site Context: Physical Analysis

As part of the later Victorian improvement areas of the town, Abercorn Terrace was laid out with a uniform set back street frontage which presents a generous broad spatial character, in contrast to the dense array of streets and lanes in and surrounding the town centre. The combination of broad street proportion and the break in the urban grain created by Abercorn Park combine to provide a strong gateway feature marking the transition from town centre to town suburb.

Development to the north of the site is set out within a clear rational urban grid, of which Abercorn Terrace effectively forms the southern boundary. A less structured ribbon form of development to the south contains later phases of Victorian and early twentieth century residential districts.

Within this context, the application site forms part of the boundary between a formal, structured and hierarchical pattern of development to the north and a more informal and irregular form of development to the south.

Echoing this contrast, the formal frontages of the villas along Abercorn Terrace are in stark variance to the piecemeal free-form character of development presented to the rear, with a variety of facades, profiles, extensions and roof forms.

The deep rear gardens along and behind Abercorn Terrace provide generous amenity in terms of privacy with typically 36m between boundary facing windows in the main rear facades.



05 Design Strategy Proposed - Constructional

Proposed external modifications to the building fabric are highlighted in the site plan opposite. Internal plans as existing and proposed are included below.

01: Demolition of one and two storey extensions to create garden courtyard & allow enhanced daylighting to proposed residential units.

02: Infill & roof over existing concealed roof valley to create attic flat.

03: New rear facing dormer and terrace/amenity deck to new attic flat.

04: New traditional style roof dormers to new attic flat.

05: New single storey corner extension at ground level.

06: New capping & part extension to former stairwell to form bathroom at first floor.

07: No modifications to the building are proposed forward of the line of the unified set-back street frontage.

08: 2x new conservation type roof lights.

09: 1x existing flat roof light removed and 4x new flat roof lights added to existing flat roof.

10: 2x new Velux type roof lights.

The modifications to the building form, with the exception of the proposed two front roof dormers, are all either to the rear of the property or within the central roof valley and so are concealed from public view so as not to effect the visual character of the building or the established character of the conservation area. Historic piecemeal development to the rear of the property, as is the case on adjacent properties, is somewhat cluttered and the large central demolition seeks to improve amenity and rationalise the building form.

