

120 -124 Portobello High Street Development

Design & Access Statement

This Design Statement is in support of the planning submission for the demolition of two commercial premises and proposal for 11 new apartments, 1 commercial unit and 1 retail unit at the address of 120 -124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh, EH15 1JB.

This design statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted architectural drawings prepared by Block Nine Architects and planning statement prepared by Gain Planning Service.

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1.0 Introduction

The site is situated on Portobello High Street in Portobello, some four miles east of Edinburgh's City Centre, between Leith & Musselburgh.

Portobello retains the character of a small town although officially a residential suburb of Edinburgh. With a distinct town centre and shoreline setting a long sea-front promenade fronts the Firth of Forth with cafés and amusement arcades highlighting Portobello's character as a seaside resort.

Portobello High Street forms a wide curving linear spine parallel to the sea with side streets running perpendicularly down to the Promenade.

Our client, is seeking to obtain planning approval for the demolition of two commercial premises and proposal for 11 new apartments, 1 commercial unit and 1 retail unit at the address of 120 -124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh, EH15 1JB.

This design and access document will outline our design approach in support of the planning submission & application.



120 - 124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh, EH15 1JB



Site Location Portobell Google Maps™ Aerial View

2.0 Location

2.1 Site & Context Description

Currently on the site of 120 -124 Portobello High Street are two single storey commercial units. To the East of the site there is currently a former off licence convenience shop/ news agents and to the West currently a furniture repair & carpet sales shop

Portobello's High Street is identified as a shopping centre that provides a diverse mix of commercial activities, on the ground floor. The shops are mainly independent retail units catering for local needs. Upper floors varying in height along the high street form residential accommodation.

The architectural quality of the High Street is exemplified by individual buildings such as the Town Hall, the Police Station and the Georgian terraced shops spread out along the High Street.

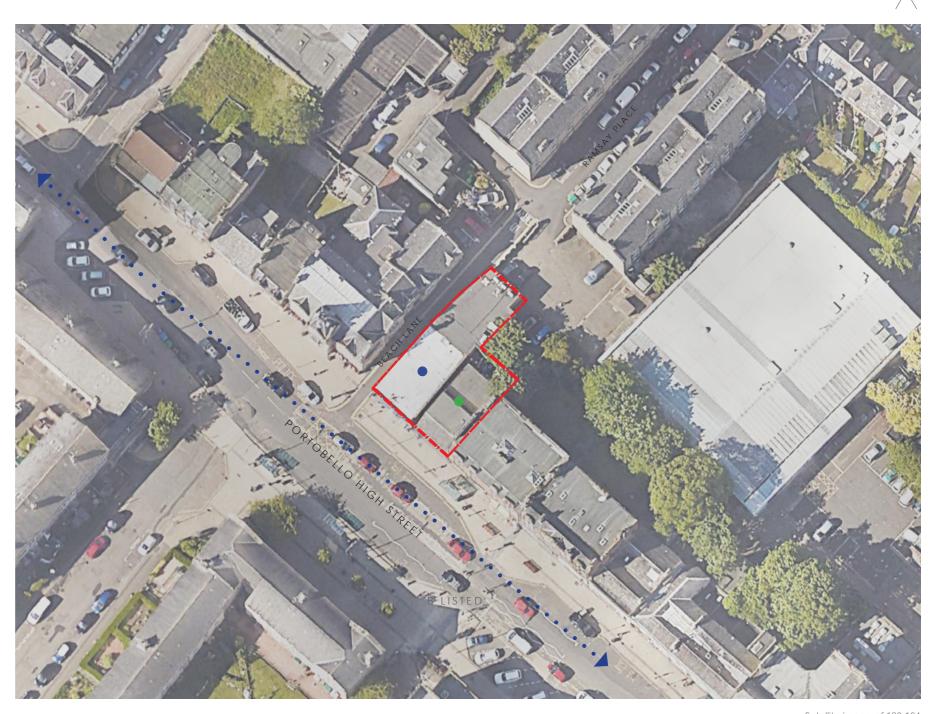
To the South of the site currently sits a car park used by a neighbouring commercial unit and down Ramsay Place to the Promenade there is an abundance of Victorian tenements.



Former off lincence

Furniture repair shop

High Street



Satellite image of 120-124 Portobello High Street

1. Portobello Beach

- 2. Brighton Park
- 3. Rosefield Park
- 4. Abercorn Park
- 5. Figgate Park

6. Portobello Golf Course

Public Spaces

2.0 Location

The site is located to a close number of public spaces primarly Portobello Beach being only a 5 minute walk but also green park spaces such as Rosefield Park & Brighton Park.



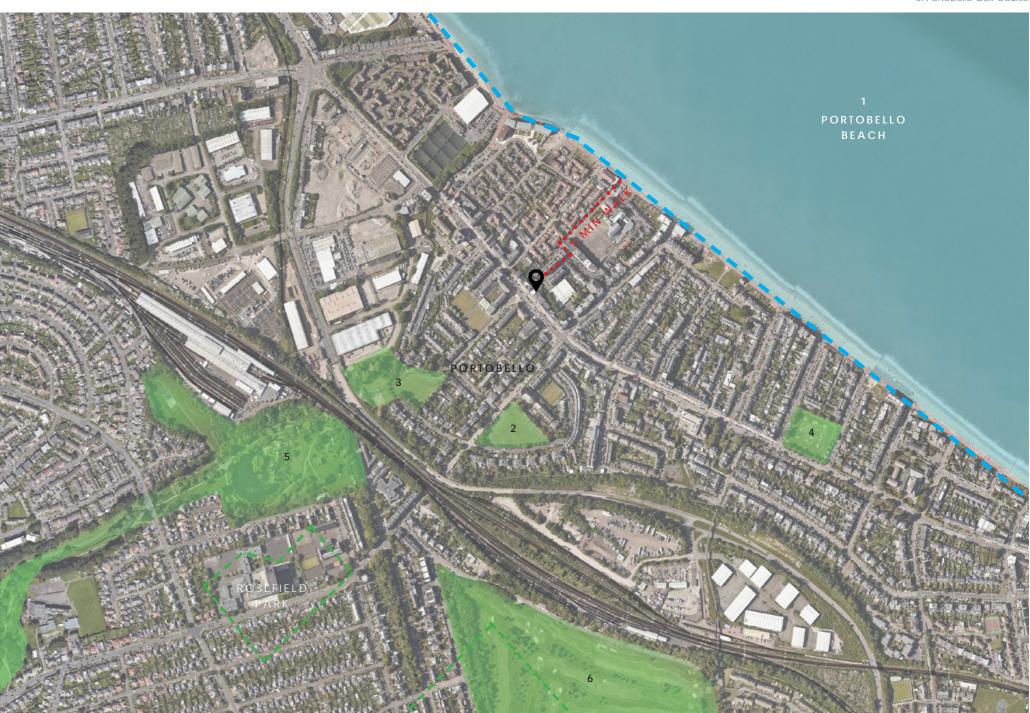
Portobello Beach



Brighton Park



03 Rosefield Park





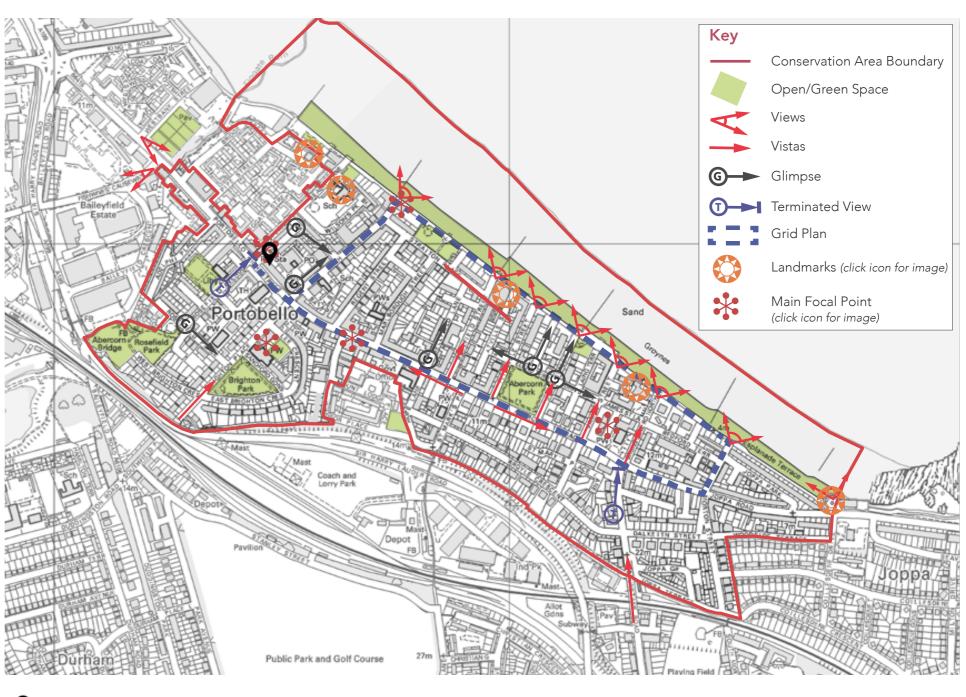


2.0 Location

2.3 Structure Map & Special Charachteristics

The original Portobello Conservation Area was designated on 13th October 1977. The original boundary was amended in July 1985 and again in February 1998. The first Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal was competed in May 2000.

The proposed site sits close to the western boundary edge of the conservation area, adjacent to the police station which is a main focal point which is at the western edge of the identified grid plan. The proposed site does not have a detrimental impact on any of the identified views, vistas, glimpses or terminated views.



Site Location

Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal Structure Map & Special Characteristics P.5

2.0 Location

2.4 Historic Environment - Listed Buildings

There area number of B & C Listed buildings in the vicinity of 120-124 Portobello High Street, as noted:

01. 118 Portobello high street, police station (LB27463)

02. 114 & 116 Portobello high street (LB27458)

03. 147 portobello high street, town hall (LB27391)

04. 96 & 98 portobello high street & 2 - 4 figgate street (LB27452)

05. 78 - 82 portobello high street (LB46336)

06. 158 - 162 portobello high street & 2 - 4 bath street (LB27468)

It is our intention to respect the character of the Portobello conservation area referring to the character appraisal document "to ensure that change and development sustains and respects the qualities and special characteristics of the area." ⁴

The challenge is to ensure that a new development respects, enhances and has a positive impact on the area and local community.

Fig 4 p 7. Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal



01. 118 Portobello High Street, Police Station



05. 78-82 Portobello High Street,



2.0 Location

2.5 History / Statement of Interest

Portobello takes its name from the Spanish port of Puerto Bello on the Isthmus of Panama. In a notable offensive of 1739, the port was captured by a British fleet under Admiral Vernon. In the 1740s, George Hamilton, one of the sailors involved in the battle, built a house four miles east of Edinburgh which he named his "Portobello Hut" after the battle of Puerto Bello.¹

Portobello developed significantly in the 18th century, not only because of its industry but due to its popularity as a bathing and spa resort. Discovery of mineral wells added to the village's attraction and in the early years of the 19th century, elegant residential terraces were developed, mainly between the High Street and the sea. Bath Street and Tower Street (Figgate Street) were laid out in 1801-1802, and Regent Street and Wellington Street (Marlborough Street) in 1815-1816.²

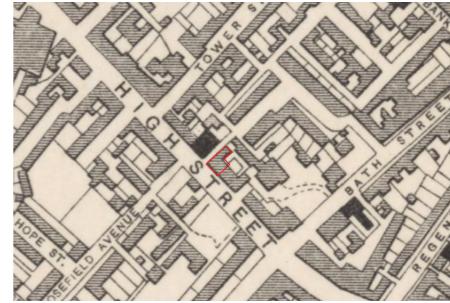
The architectural form and character of Portobello is rich and varied, with many fine Georgian and Victorian historic buildings. The building materials are traditional: stone, harling, slate, pantiles, timber windows and doors.³



Fig 2 p 24. Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Fig 3 Historic Environment Scotland http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/ LB27391





Sch.



Site Boundary 1935 Map

2020 Map

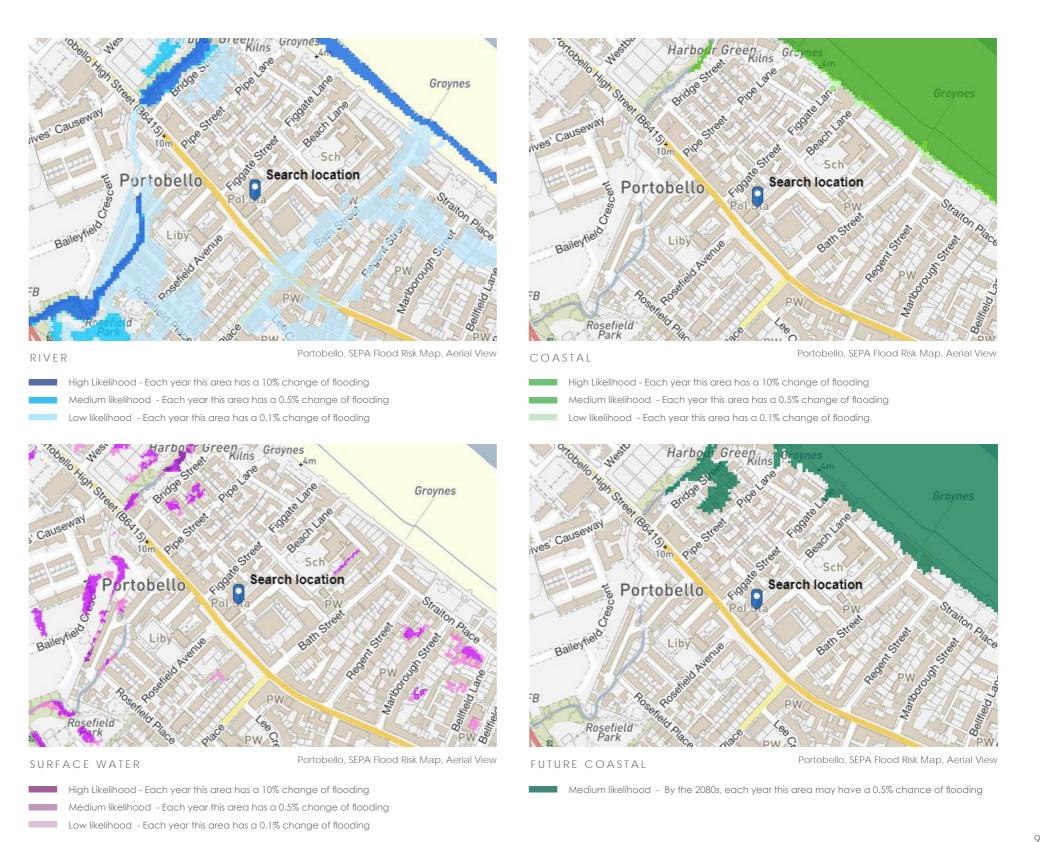
1905 Map

2.0 Location

Flood Hazard & Risk

With the site in Portobello, it located relatively close to sea, and outer river connections, a food risk analysis was carried out using the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) website to check any flood risk and increase awareness and understanding of flooding.

As seen the site does not fall under any category of flooding, via rivers, coastal or surface water



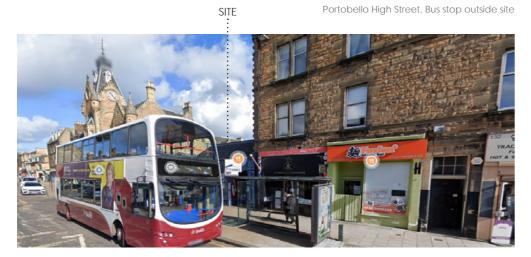
2.0 Location

2.7 Transport Links

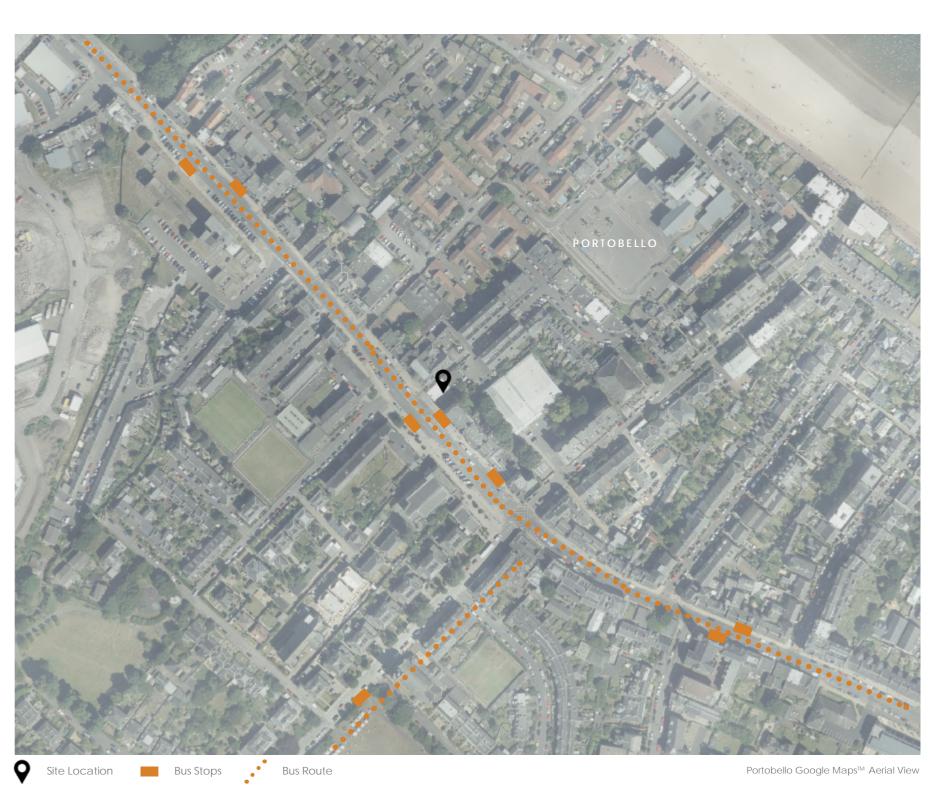
There is a strong emphasis on public transport in the area. There are a number of different bus routes that run through Portobello High Street, these include 21, 26, 42, 45, 49,124. Also Brunstane Train Station is a 20 minute walk from the proposed site.

Due to recently amended Planning Policy, and the immediate proximity to public transport links to Edinburgh's City Centre, it is proposed that parking will not be provided to encourage people to use public transport or alternatively to cycle which is an approach promoted by the council. Cycle storage provision will be provided to the ground floor and will be designed to meet the requirements set out with in the Edinburgh Design Guidance.









2.0 Location

2.8 Character Analysis

An analysis of Portobello's character and appearance is at the forefront to our design strategry focusing on the features which make Portobello special, distinctive and respected.

- O1. Portobello Police Station, in the scottish baronial style by Robert Paterson built as Portobello Town Hall in 1877 and in use as the Police Station since 1896. It is highlighted for its architectural quality in the Portobello conservation area character appriasal.
- **02.** 126 -132 Portobello High Street, Victorian Tenement, built in the early 20th Century.
- **03.** Rosefield Avenue, perpendicular to the high street, former council flats building crica 1930.









03 1 Rosefield Avenue



02 126-132 Portobello High Street



113-119 Portobello High Street

Location 2.0

- Character Analysis (cont.)
- 04. 126 -132 Portobello High Street, buit crica 1980, replaced former victorian tenements.
- Portobello Town, 147 Portobello High Street & Lamp Standards 05. designed by James A Williamson, City Architect, 1912-1914. It is highlighted for its architectural quality and character contribution to the High Street "giving focus to the townscape"⁵ in the Portobello conservation area character appriasal.
- 158 -162 Portobello High Street & 2 -4 Bath Street, Victorian 06. Tenement, built Circa 1910.
- 33 Windsor Place, Port of Leith Housing Association's 07. development was completed in November 2013 and comprises 23 flats. The site was previously a long-empty government office which was demolished to make way for this development.
- Portobello High Street/ Fishwives Causeway, in 2018 the Association completed the section 75 affordable housing project at Fishwives Causeway, Baileyfield in Partnership with Cruden Homes.

"The development of new buildings in a Conservation Area should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, rather that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own. Therefore, while development of a gap site in a traditional terrace may require a very sensitive design approach to maintain the overall integrity of the area; in other cases modern designs sympathetic and complimentary to the existing character of the area may be acceptable."6

Fig 5 p 13. Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal

p 24. Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal







33 Windsor Place



158-162 Portobello High Street & 2- 4 Bath Street



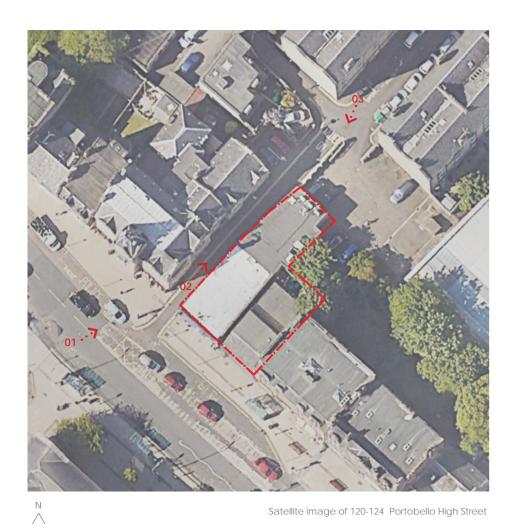
Portobello High Street/Fishwives Causeway

3.0 Site Information

3.1 Existing Site / Photographs - External

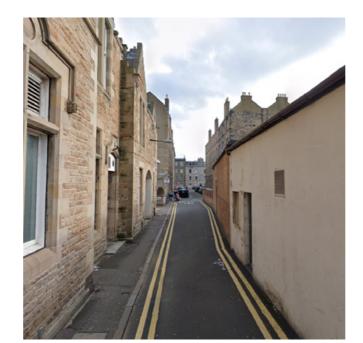
Both commercial units are single storey, facilitate and maintain the street level shopping arrangement along the Portobello High Street. However spatially and in form the site appears to break the street frontage with no further floor levels. The neighbouring properties from the High street and Ramsay Place to the rear are 3-4 storeys.

The challenge and our intention is to respect the character of Portobello High Street with a proposals that respects and enhances the local area.





View from Portobello High Street on to 120 - 124.



View looking down beach lane adjacent to site, accessed from Portobello High Street.



Beach Lane looking at the rear of site (120 Portobello High Street).

3.0 Site Information

3.2 Existing Site / Photographs - Internal







01 120 Portobello High Street, former grocery store

120 Portobello High Street, former grocery store

120 Portobello High Street, former grocery store









124 Portobello High Street, furniture repair shop

05 124 Portobello High Street, furniture repair shop 06

124 Portobello High Street, furniture 07 repair shop, basement cellar

124 Portobello High Street, furniture repair shop, basement cellar

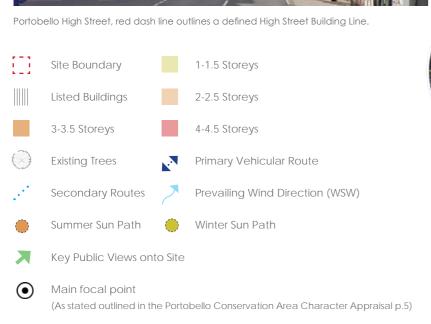
3.0 Site Information

3.3 Site Analysis

With the sites position on Portobello High Street a strong emphasise on site analysis was deemed critical in our design strategy. Around the site there is wide variety of building heights. However the adjacent buildings, South-East & tenements North-East (Ramsay Place), neighbouring building heights are set at 4-4.5 storeys tall.

The police station although only over 2 storeys the roof pitching and the ornate clock tower spire project above the street-scape.







3.0 Site Information

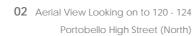
3.4 Existing Site model

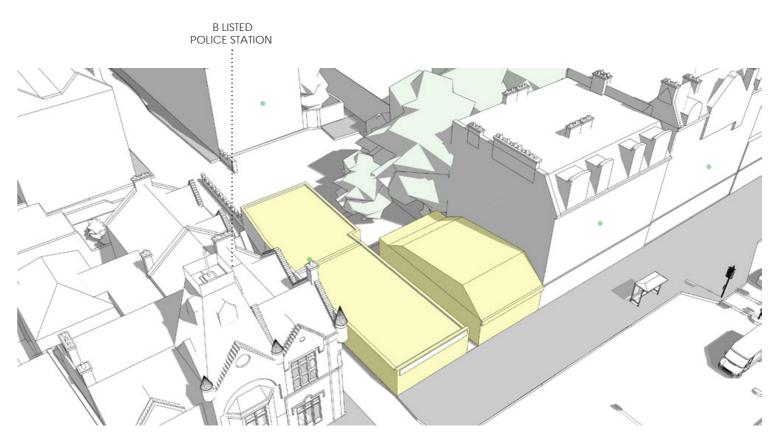
Predominantly along Portobello High Street, the ground floor units are commercial stores and shops with residential accommodation above.

The side lanes feeding off from the High Street are predominantly tenement residential accommodation.

Please refer to section 6.21 and 6.22 on pages 46 and 47 for sun study analysis of the existing buildings on the site.







O3 Portobello Street View, looking towards site



Rear of Site Beach Lane / Ramsay Place

Site boundary Commerical Unit Residential

4.0 Key Policy Context & Guidance

With the prominent position on Portobello High Street it was deemed crucial to consult with vary planning documents and guidance provided by Edinbrugh Council when developing a proposal for a site like this - being in a clearly defined conservation area.

Our aim is to improve on the current siutation with a high quality design and be viewed as an opportunity to enhance Portobello High Street.

Edinburgh Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan sets out policies and proposals to guide development.

The City Plan 2030

The City Plan 2030 sets out to ensure that we make best use of the limited space in our city and that sites are not under-developed.

Edinburgh Design Guidance

The document is part of a suite of non-statutory planning guidance which interpret the policies set out in the Local Development Plan. It is important that, where applicable, these are read in conjunction with one another.

Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal defines the key elements, essential features and special qualities that contribute to each area's architectural and historic interest, and to reinforce the Council's policy objectives of promoting, protecting and enhancing the environment.



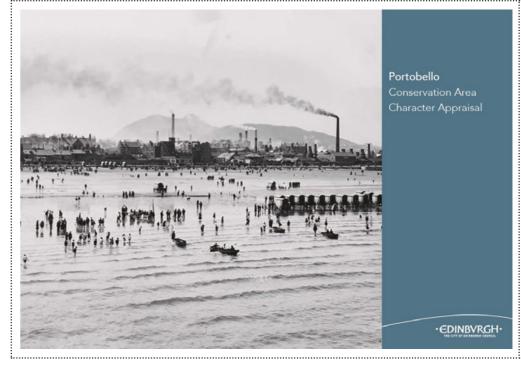
Edinburgh Local Development Plan PDF



City Plan 2030 , Proposed Plan PDF



Edinburgh Design Guidance PDF



Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal PDF

4.0 Key Policy Context & Guidance

4.1 Planning Pre-Application Advice - Part 1

21/00683/PREAPP - 120 - 124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh

As part of developing a compelling and well throughout design proposal we engaged with Edinburgh City Councils preapplication advice service to receive comments on the proposal of residential accommodation on this site.

We then resubmitted a second more developed pre-application document - taking into consideration the comments from the previous advice letter - which we received further advice on design, strategy, density and form.

Adjacent is the response text received by the case officer on the first pre-application enquiry outlining key issues to consider.

Text in blue are action points responses addressing each issue raised by the case officer.



Cover of Pre-planning document submitted to receive planning advice

Summary of key issues and overall advice

Key issues flagged by case officer:

Land Use – the principle of housing on the site is acceptable subject to compliance with other policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP). In terms of policy Hou 4 on Housing Density, 11 flats appears to be more than the adjacent tenements because the whole footprint is being developed. Reducing the footprint of development would bring it to a spatial density more akin to the character of the area.

NOTE: The proposals seek to break down the mass by dividing the elevations into smaller elements such as the stone element to the front, the brick element to the rear and the corten steel angled windows to the side elevation. By breaking the mass down the proposed building has a human scale and reflects the nature of development in the Portobello area.

Policy Hou 2 also expects a suitable housing mix. The mix of 2 and 3 bedroom units would be deemed acceptable.

NOTE: The proposals are a combination of 2,3 and 4 bedroom units providing housing of various needs.

The retail unit to the front would be acceptable within Portobello town centre and the commercial unit at the rear is also acceptable.

NOTED: This aspect of the design is considered acceptable.

Design - Policy Des 4 sets out the criteria for ensuring new buildings fit in with the surrounding area - a) height and form b) scale and proportions, including the spaces between buildings c) position of buildings and other features on the site d) materials and detailing.

NOTE: Refer to sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.23 where these points have been considered.

In terms of height, the bulk of the front of the building aligns with the adjacent tenement and this is acceptable. However, as set out below, it should be considered if the building should step down to get a better relationship with the listed police station. The height of the building at the back also creates a building of significant mass which is at odds with the depth of most tenements in the area.

NOTE: The proposed building is cut away at the corner to reveal a key view of the police station building. Please refer to section 5.2.

In terms of form, the addition of the flat roof top storey is the biggest problem. This is at odds with the character of the area and it will look out of place. The articulation of the roofscape is very important here and whilst we are not seeking a traditional pitched roof, there are ways of intruding pitches and slopes in a more contemporary and interesting way.

NOTE: A pitched mansard roof has been incorporated into the design to ensure the roof scape of the proposals ties in contextually with the surrounding roof scape. The proposed contemporary anthracite zinc roofing to the top floor will tie in tonally with the surrounding slate roofs.

Because the building extends full height to the back of the site, it creates a building that is bulky with excessive mass. As noted below, there is no amenity space for residents. Thought should be given to creating amenity space and stepping the building down at the back to reduce the mass of the buildings

NOTE: Please refer to sections 2.2 and 6.17 in relation to public space and amenity space.

We expect a stone built building. The design should be clearly contemporary but respectful of the surrounding historic context.

NOTE: The proposed front and side elevation, visible from the high street are primarily constructed of natural stone, as recommended.

Listed Building Setting - The building is adjacent to the C listed police station. Thought should be given to this relationship and how the design could complement the way the listed building steps down to Beach Lane. As it appears in the design statement, the new building dominates the gable of the listed building potentially affecting its setting. The corner needs to be addressed.

NOTE: The proposed building is cut away at the corner to reveal a key view of the police station building. Please refer to section 5.2.

4.0 Key Policy Context & Guidance

4.2 Planning Pre-Application Advice - Part 1 (Cont.)

21/00683/PREAPP – 120 - 124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh

Conservation Area - The site is in Portobello Conservation Area. The main issue is that the new building appears to pay little attention to the character appraisal which establishes the key characteristics of the conservation area and its strong Georgian/Victorian aesthetic.

NOTE: please refer to section 5.3.

The building form proposed and the architectural precedents shown on p23 of the design statement suggest a building that could be anywhere rather than in the centre of a heritage seaside suburb. The character appraisal should be the starting point and the building should reference the strong stone-built character of the area and thought should be given as to how a modern interpretation of a pitched slate roof could be incorporated into the design.

NOTED: The front elevation has been investigated further since the pre-app submissions and a stone facade has been designed which better reflects the local character. Spacing, size and proportion of the openings have been given significant thought, please refer to section 5.3 for further detail. In relation to the roof, an anthracite zinc pitched mansard roof has been proposed to address the concerns regards the roof form and material.

Roads and Access – zero car parking is acceptable and complies with parking standards. Cycle parking should be provided in line with the standards in the Edinburgh Design Guidance. The cycle store looks quite small.

NOTED: please refer to section 6.15 in relation to cycle storage.

The main issue will be the lack of pavement in Beach Lane. The building has been recessed underneath to allow for this but we need a proper pavement formed and the building will have to be pulled in to meet this requirement. The pavement should go down to the end of the site.

NOTED: a public pavement has been proposed along the full length of the building ensuring pedestrians can travel along beach lane on both sides of the road.

Amenity of occupiers – the units appear to meet the space standards in the Edinburgh Design Guidance. Policy Hou 3 and the Edinburgh Design Guidance sets out the requirements for useable greenspace in new development and the development provides none.

NOTED: Please refer to sections 2.2 and 6.17 in relation to public space and amenity space.

Serious thought should be given to reducing the number of units and introducing amenity green space at the rear. This should be at least 20% of the site area. As it stands, the building could be considered overdevelopment as it does not include useable amenity space.

NOTED: This point has been explored however a green space to the north of the site would be permanently over shadowed and visible from the adjacent car park, so we have alternatively propose to provide external balconies to the top floor units instead. The proximity of the beach and local parks have been taken into consideration as part of this point. Please refer to sections 2.2 and 6.17 in relation to public space and amenity space.

It is likely that privacy, daylighting and sunlighting standards can be met but this should be illustrated in the application.

NOTED: please refer to sections 5.3, 6.21 and 6.22.

Amenity of neighbours - the new building is largely in a gable to gable situation with the adjacent tenement to the east. However, the rear section has the potential to impact on sunlight to the neighbouring garden. There does not appear to be any daylighting or privacy issues.

NOTED: please refer to sections 6.21 and 6.22 regards sunlight and over shadowing

We will require you to show that the daylighting, sunlighting and privacy standards in the Edinburgh Design Guidance are met. Trees - There appears to be a tree adjacent to the site which may be affected by the development. If this is the case, a tree survey is required in the form specified in BS 5837:2012 for all trees with a stem diameter of 75mm or more, at 1.5m above ground on the site or within 12m of its boundary. Trees should then be categorised in accordance with their quality and suitability for retention. Further details can be found in the EDG page 113. Trees should also be assessed in terms of possible bat roosts.

NOTED: please refer to sections 6.21 and 6.22 regards sunlight and over shadowing.

Waste - A waste strategy will need to be developed in consultation with the Council's Waste Planning team.

NOTED: please refer to section 6.14.

Archaeology - In terms of buried archaeology, the site lies close to the former potteries and along the original Georgian street frontage so within an area of archaeological potential and we would therefore be recommending a conditioned programme of works.

NOTED

4.0 Key Policy Context & Guidance

4.2 Planning Pre-Application Advice - Part 2

21/00683/PREAPP - 120 - 124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh

As stated on the previous page we engaged with the council preapplication service twice.

Gain Planning Services held a meeting with Planning Team Manager Nancy Jamieson our the revised design and plans.

Adjacent is the response text received by the case officer on the second pre-application enquiry outlining key issues to consider.

Text in blue are action points responses addressing each issue raised by the case officer.



Cover of Pre-planning document submitted to receive planning advice

Summary of key issues and overall advice

Key issues flagged by case officer:

It is noted that the frontage has now been tilted back to allow more of
the listed police station to be viewable. Whilst this is a laudable aim, I feel
this could sit uncomfortably within the relatively straight building line
of Portobello High Street. I would prefer a chamfered or rounded
corner than the tilting proposed

NOTED: the angled facade has been replaced with a flat facade to tie in with the adjoining building and a corner cut out has been provided to reveal the key view to the police station

 I am satisfied that the revised roof design respects the character of the conservation area. The slated mansard roof aligns better with the neighbouring tenement.

NOTED

where the breach of policy Hou 3 causes problems for your development. We will therefore have to have significant justification as to why the rear area cannot be greenspace instead of flats. You should concentrate on the quality of any amenity space that might be created in that area as justification. You may also wish to look at the historical character of Beach Lane. Did it have a building all the way down? Also are rear gardens typical of the tenements on PHS? I do realise that you will lose a lot of the site's development potential if you have to meet the Hou 3 standards but this is not material in planning terms and ultimately if good quality amenity space can be created, we would be seeking this.

Noted: This point has been explored however a green space to the north of the site would be permanently over shadowed and overlooked by the adjacent car park, so we have alternatively propose to provide external balconies to the top floor units instead. The proximity of the beach and local parks have been taken into consideration as part of this point. Please refer to sections 2.2 and 6.17 in relation to public space and amenity space.

We discussed the massing of the building and the fact it was still going to appear as a large development down Beach Lane. However, you have attempted to break up the mass on this side elevation with the use of differing materials and window articulation. Visualisations will be important in getting a feel for how successful this has been and creating an active frontage down Beach Lane is particularly important. You may wish to consider creating a public art space on the ground floor wall where local people could create a mural to enliven that part of the frontage

NOTED. Please refer to visualisations in section 6 of this document.

 We discussed ensuring that your development does not compromise the redevelopment of the Scotmid site should that be proposed in future and this should be addressed in your planning statement

NOTED: please refer to planning statement

 I am generally happy with the design of the frontage but you may wish to consider creating more vertically proportioned windows adjacent to the existing tenement.

NOTED: More vertically proportioned windows have been provided. Please refer to section 5.3.

• It is acknowledged that materials are not yet finalised but this will be particularly important. Stone to the front and its return is welcomed as it is in the rear section. The use of aluminium for the side will no doubt prove controversial. Other recent materials that are proving popular in these more traditional areas are slaistered brick but I am not sure this would give the crisp finish you are seeking. Brick is another possibility given the nearby pottery kilns but it would have to be high quality buff to tie in with the stone. It would be useful to see built examples in the design statement if you do intend to use aluminium

NOTED: please refer to section 6.3 regards materials.

- **4.0** Key Policy Context & Guidance
- 4.2 Planning Pre-Application Advice Part 2 (Cont.)

21/00683/PREAPP – 120 - 124 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh

 As previously advised your design statement should provide the calculations for any impacts in relation to daylighting and sunlighting of neighbouring properties. We also have to ensure the rear balcony does not compromise privacy. Some of the windows facing east and north are also on the boundary so any privacy implications need to be assessed.

NOTED: please refer to sections 6.21 and 6.22 regards sunlight and overshadowing analysis.

 Provision should be made for 33 cycles. Our transport colleagues generally do not expect people to have to lift bikes and advise on Sheffield racks.

NOTED: please refer to section 6.15 regards cycle storage.

 Check with waste planning on whether your bin storage is sufficient.

NOTED: please refer to section 6.14 regards waste and recycling calculations.

 Finally, I would urge you to carry out some community consultation although it is not obligatory. Portobello applications can prove to be controversial and if you can get any feedback at an early stage and people feel listened to this may smooth the path.

NOTED

Nancy Jamieson
Planning Team Manager

Locals 2

Place Directorate | The City of Edinburgh Council | Waverley Court, Level G:3, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG | nancy.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk | www.edinburgh.gov.uk