

Development Management Sub Committee

Report Returning to Committee – Wednesday 28 October 2020

**Application for Planning Permission 17/04137/FUL
at Corstorphine Hospital, 136 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh.
Re-development of the former Corstorphine Hospital to form
76 residential apartments (including 44 new build
apartments) and associated community hub, vehicular
access, car parking and landscape works (as amended).**

Item number

Report number

Wards

B06 - Corstorphine/Murrayfield

Recommendations

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

Background information

The Committee was minded to grant planning permission on 22 February 2019, subject to the conclusion of legal agreements within six months of this date to make financial contributions towards affordable housing, education and transport infrastructure.

An additional condition was applied at the Committee's request as follows:

"Prior to the commencement of development, a revised landscaping scheme shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to explore a more sympathetic approach to the site and setting of the listed building and this shall include the provision of an improved access across the site. This matter shall be referred back to the Development Management Sub-Committee for approval."

Reason: In the interest of appropriate access across the site.

The Committee was concerned that the accessible route proposed in the original scheme was not sufficient in terms of inclusive mobility.

The application was continued by the Committee on 18 December 2019 for further information on the gradients of the proposed accessible route and further input from an appropriate organisation in regard to equality/disability issues for inclusive mobility.

The application was returned to Committee on 3 June 2020 to extend the deadline for concluding the legal agreement to enable planning permission thereafter to be released. This was granted by the Chief Planning Officer under Extended Delegated Authority.

The legal agreement has now been signed and planning permission was granted on 10 September 2020.

Main report

A further five schemes have been submitted for an accessible route across the site. Options 4 and 5 propose alternative configurations of an Equality Act (EA) compliant ramp on the central green space. Options 6 and 7 propose an EA compliant ramp from the top of the central lawn to the former hospital building with a steep, vertically-aligned ramp connecting the top ramp with the foot of the site and series of chair lifts connecting level changes on the steep ramp. Option 8 proposes improvements to the access route proposed in the original scheme (i.e. following the existing vehicle route through the site).

Option 4: This scheme proposing a ramp on the west side of the central lawn is impractical, involving a 214-metre long path with 22 resting places. Also, significant earthworks would be required to cut the path into the hill and the 1:12 gradient is steep. However, the existing steps historically used to access the lawn areas would be retained. This proposal would have a detrimental impact on the green setting of the listed building, the outlook for many of the apartments and the provision of useable green space. The opportunity to refocus the long view onto the former hospital building would be lost.

Option 5: This proposal is similar to Option 4, but with a ramp extending further into the central lawn space and proposing a 240-metre long path with 55 resting places. This option is impractical for the same reasons as Option 4.

Option 6: This scheme, involving a horizontally aligned, EA compliant ramp at the top of the site connected to the foot of the site by a steep, vertically-aligned ramp, is the shortest and therefore likely 'desire' route. There is space for two chair lifts to connect level changes and assist the journey on the steep ramp and the existing, the historic steps would be lost and the scheme would have a detrimental impact on the lawn area and views of the listed building, albeit to a lesser extent than in Options 4 and 5.

Option 7: This proposal is similar to Option 6 with an additional level on the lawn area and space for four chair lifts. This option is problematic for the same reasons as Option 6.

Option 8: This proposal is similar to the route proposed in the original scheme and is relatively short, following the route used previously by the hospital and care home staff. This revised scheme proposes additional resting places on both north-south routes, a handrail on the footway, mobility scooter drop-off locations and accessible parking on the east side of the access road. The principle accesses to the apartment blocks are used and each block has level access to areas of the central lawn. Option 8 would preserve the setting of the listed building, maximise useable green space and preserve the historic stepped access to the lawned areas.

These options have been considered by the Edinburgh Access Panel. The Panel agrees that, in the circumstances, Option 8 is considered an acceptable compromise. The Panel also supports the 'mobility scooter' option, as outlined in Hacking & Paterson's letter of 6 May 2020. This involves the provision of a golf-style buggy and motorised scooters located in the Residents' Hub building and covered car parking areas for the exclusive use of residents and their visitors. The Access Panel suggests that this option be included as a condition if planning permission is granted.

In conclusion, whilst Option 8 does not provide an accessible route through the centre of the site and has the steep gradient, it is the best scheme in terms of preserving the landscape setting of the listed building and providing a practical and satisfactory accessible route. The use of mobility scooters has been added as an informative, rather than a condition, as enforcement would not be practical under planning legislation.

It is recommended that the Committee approves Option 8 of the accessible access proposals (drawing number 61, scheme dated May 2020) and discharges the additional condition for a revised landscaping scheme.

Links

<u>Policies and guidance for this application</u>	LDPP, LHOU01, LHOU05, LEN04, LEN03, LDES01, LDES03, LDES04, LDES05, LDES06, LHOU03, LHOU04, LEN09, LEN12, LEN16, LEN21, LTRA02, LTRA03, LTRA04, LDEL01, NSG, NSLBCA, NSGD02, NSMDV,
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A copy of the original Committee report can be found in the list of documents at

<https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OVX087EWMQN00>

Or Council Papers online

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