



Portobello Community Council

4a, Elcho Terrace, Edinburgh, EH 15 2 EF, 12th. September, 2010.

BL Developments Ltd.,
89 Main Street,
Davidson's Mains,
Edinburgh, EH 4 5 AD

Dear Mr. Myerscough,

Thank you for your presentation to Portobello Community Council on Monday 30th. August. We have considered very carefully the outline you gave of the ways in which your previous scheme for the Baileyfield site has been amended.

We welcome the reduction in height over the whole scheme of one storey, and therefore of the overall density of the development. We recognise that to achieve this would mean that there would be a greater footprint of buildings partly to compensate for this and that the overall area of open space would therefore be reduced. You indicated that this might mean that there would be more units serviced by lanes, as is proposed regarding Block E. The layout of Block E, with its service lanes, was one of the aspects of the original application which caused many members of the community council a great deal of concern.

You asked the community council on Monday a direct question to which you are demanding an answer – “Would the community council be prepared to accept a supermarket of 18,000 sq. ft. as part of the revised plans or not?” You also indicated that if our answer was in the negative then BL would walk away from the site, leaving us with the prospect of the site either lying derelict for many more years or perhaps being sold on to another developer who may wish to build a supermarket on the entire site.

While the community council welcomes further dialogue with BL regarding your amended plans, it was agreed at Monday's meeting that it would be most unwise to agree in principle to support a planning application about which all the necessary details we need to make a fully informed decision are not yet available.

The majority of the community council also feels that any revised planning application which BL submits must be in agreement with the development brief for the area, the North West Portobello Development Brief. The NW Portobello Development Brief represents a clear indication of the views of local residents and this has to be acknowledged by the community council in determining its stance on your revised proposals.

We understand that various suggestions were made to you at your public event about alternatives which would also be profit making - e.g. a cinema, theatre, Hotel, sports centre - which would be positive additions to Portobello and be economically viable/profit making.

At the community council meeting a number of issues, concerns and comments were raised during discussion, as follows:

- concerns about the amount of car parking for the proposed food retail unit;
- the impact that the supermarket might have on existing retailers, such as the butcher's and fishmonger's;
- whether Portobello was the correct demographic for a Waitrose;
- questioning the need for another supermarket;
- a fear that the supermarket, if it went ahead, might end up with a different operator;
- questions about what BL developments' questionnaire had been designed to achieve;
- concerns that an impression had been given that the Waitrose would only take up one or two units of a row of small shops on the site;
- the potential creation of more footfall on the High Street being created by the new housing;
- concerns about the impartiality of any retail impact assessment produced;
- concerns about low turnout at BL's consultation event as it had been held during the Trades fortnight, despite requests to reschedule it;
- whether a smaller scale British Legion might be included in the scheme;
- the scheme's potential to provide the community with social benefit and

exciting architecture;

-many welcome the reduction in height over the scheme of one storey and therefore of the overall density of the development;

- some people, given a straight choice, would prefer high density housing and no supermarket to lower density housing and a supermarket;

- enthusiasm for more family housing but also a concern about the effect on local schools of the new housing;

- concerns about the site being used for landbanking by a supermarket;

- concern about the site remaining vacant for some time should the development not proceed;

- concerns about how firm any commitment from potential non-residential tenants was and what might take their place in the scheme if they did not materialise;

- concerns about flats lying empty as in new developments in Leith;

- questions about the proportion of affordable housing;

- lack of information on the visual impact of the development;

So, to sum up the community council's response to your presentation at this stage in the pre-application consultation:

a) There is strong agreement that the community council wishes to move forward in a positive way and engage in further dialogue with BL.

b) There is also a strong feeling that we cannot be forced into agreeing with an entirely new proposal, in an impossibly short space of time, before we are in full possession of all the necessary facts.

Yours sincerely,

John M. Stewart,

Chair, Portobello Community Council.