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NEW TOWN QUARTER

Community Update Bulletin
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Latest Updates From The New Town Quarter Project Team

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Proposals Nearing Completion

Ediston and Orion Capital Managers are working together to deliver one of the most complex city-centre developments in the UK. New Town Quarter is a £250 million development that has involved extensive local community consultation during the last 18-months. Planning proposals have involved complex negotiations over major infrastructure matters as well as providing sensitive consideration to environmental concerns given the proximity of the much-loved King George V Park.

Plans include creating 350 new homes as well as office accommodation that will support 700 jobs and add £35 million per annum to the city's GDP. The construction work alone will generate nearly £27 million of economic development value and support 600 jobs. The final proposals are expected to go before the City of Edinburgh Council Planning Committee in the near future. Ross McNulty, Development Director of Ediston, said: "We've gone the extra mile to take the local community with us. We're determined that this major development becomes a positive driver of significant economic activity for Edinburgh city centre."



Clarification on Trees and Building Heights

We are aware that some of the information currently presented on a Fettes Row and Royal Crescent Association backed-website is inaccurate and we welcome this opportunity to provide clarification.

It is not correct to state that our three planning applications are a threat to many trees being removed, as part of the development. The largest single number of trees being removed is in Eyre Place which is covered by a previous Planning Consent already agreed by the Council.

Some other trees are being removed due to the development, but the information on the website is inaccurate. In Dundas Street, trees are being removed for two important reasons. Firstly, they will not survive the demolition of the existing buildings, and secondly to restore Dundas Street's original building line.

In King George V Park there will be a small number of trees removed to create a new entrance to link the new route from Dundas Street to the park. The Council has confirmed these trees have a limited lifespan and would need to be removed in due course but we are also providing replacements for these trees within the same area of the park. Our team has also sought to protect the trees at Fettes Row and Royal Crescent as much as possible to protect the outlook in this location, and the continuous screen of tree cover will be retained.

We have also made a commitment to a 25-year Tree Management Plan throughout our site, as well as helping the Council deliver improved tree management within King George V Park. The number of trees to be removed in the park is entirely a Council matter. However, along with other investment in the park, we hope to carry out works that will improve both tree cover and the park itself. It should be noted that any additional tree planting and park improvements are not being done to facilitate our development.

In total, 68 new trees are being planted - plus however many are needed for King George V Park. We have stated before that a number of the trees need to be removed on health and safety grounds, and some are internal within the site and have no impact on the local community. We expect the development to either have a neutral impact on tree removal - or potentially a positive one.

The other matter we would like to address is that great efforts have been made to minimise the impact of the development for residents in Fettes Row and Royal Crescent. This includes keeping the buildings at the same height or lower than the adjacent buildings. With regards to the impact on the park, we have conducted detailed and independent overshadowing studies that show the buildings closest to the park are not only fully compliant with Council guidelines but actually improve

some aspects of existing overshadowing.

We appreciate that with any development there is change and we are acutely aware of the difficulties encountered with previous proposals and we respect residents' right to comment on the proposals. All we are seeking is a fair hearing and a decision taken on the basis of Council and Scottish Government planning policies.

We have extensively consulted with the local community and interest groups and we would like all residents to consider the facts regarding the proposals and view them in the context of the Council and Scottish Government planning policies. The information set out in the Fettes Row and Royal Crescent Association-backed website does not accurately reflect our proposals.

Tree Cover on Fettes Row and Royal Crescent

One of the main priorities for the development team was protecting the tree cover in Fettes Row and Royal Crescent. New Town Quarter is well screened by trees to the south of the development and these are much appreciated by residents. The development team has worked hard to ensure that the tree screen is protected and maintained. Existing trees are largely being retained to ensure that views enjoyed by local residents can be enjoyed for a long time to come.

New and replacement trees are being provided on the street and in King George V Park. Wherever possible the development team has sought to ensure that existing trees are protected. Ross McNulty said: "Preserving the character of Fettes Row and Royal Crescent has always been one of the key objectives for the development team and we're confident that will be achieved with our proposals."

Current View



Proposed View



King George V Park

King George V Park is a much-loved local park. Since the early stages of the public consultation, elements of the proposals for pathways and cycling have been scaled back following feedback. We have also had further consultation with the Council to highlight the need to manage pedestrians and cyclists at the interface with the park. The development team is also working closely with the Council to finalise additional investment in the park to help take account of the new development, as well as helping safeguard its future quality and longevity. The proposals for park investment will be finalised through a Section 75 agreement, which is currently being negotiated with the Council. Once signed, this will be a legally binding agreement.

Ross McNulty added: "We would like to thank the Friends of the Park group for engaging with us throughout the consultation process. The discussions have been thorough and complicated at times but hopefully, everyone will see the results - including replacement trees, improved pathways and investment in the park for the long-term benefit of the local community."

Eyre Place Update

There is a separate planning application to change the site area initially proposed as a hotel to housing. The timing of this application will run behind the main application.

Being aware that Eyre Place residents had concerns about overlooking from the proposed new homes, the development team has been looking at ways to address the concerns, and we believe a solution has been agreed.

Even though the current proposals would have been entirely within planning guidelines, the proposed solution has been shared with interested residents. Ross McNulty said: "We were left in no doubt how concerned residents were regarding this aspect of the proposals and we wanted to help if we could. The housing proposals, as with the hotel, will result in improved daylighting for Eyre Place, which should also help reassure residents that we are sensitive to their interests."



Business Benefits For the City Centre

If the New Town Quarter development progresses, it will be the first major project in Edinburgh to move forward since the start of the pandemic. As such, it has a critical role to play in boosting the regeneration of the city centre as it recovers from the crippling effects of economic lockdown.

The local area around Dundas Street brings together an interesting mix of mainly independent traders - including cafes, restaurants, bars, hairdressers and guest houses – and a recent survey of 32 local businesses which surround the New Town Quarter area showed overwhelming support for the development plans.

Many of them were hit hard when RBS vacated their premises in 2017 and are now suffering further following the ongoing trading restrictions imposed by the pandemic. The New Town Quarter will bring much-needed investment to the city centre – and most importantly, bring people back to the local area to create a vibrant and exciting new destination. Here are some of the comments posted by local businesses who support our planning application:

“The RBS site was always a highly visible focal point for visitors and activity and all the businesses in this area benefited from it. Now, more than ever, as we recover from lockdown, we all need the site to once again be an attractive destination for both living and visiting, to both help recovery in the immediate future and over the longer-term.” Guest House, Eyre Place

“I have gradually built up my business following the RBS relocation, but have also now been hit hard by the coronavirus lockdown. We are all desperate to stay trading in the area but need a commitment that something significant is going to be happening to transform an ugly empty building and gap site right opposite us into a thriving and busy neighbourhood that will bring people back to the area.” Barber, Dundas Street



Feedback & Contact

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