

Craighouse plans submitted to council this week



The Craighouse Partnership has submitted its planning application for the 51 acre campus site to The City of Edinburgh Council this week.

The developers claim that the plans for the site will deliver high quality new build residential accommodation whilst securing a sustainable future for the seven category A listed buildings and grounds after Edinburgh Napier University leaves the campus in May 2013.



The plans request permission for a total of 153 homes on site, which is apparently reduced from 200 in previous consultations. 64 of these new homes will be created from conversion of existing buildings and 89 from new build properties. There will be a wide range of homes available ranging from those aimed at families to single person households. The developers say that the proposals seek to minimise loss of green space with only 3.5% of the site being built upon, the majority of which is on car parks, tarmac or previously consented land.



As part of the scheme, it is proposed to hand over the majority of green space into public ownership to guarantee public access in perpetuity. A major planting scheme will increase the number of trees on site by more than 250, significantly benefiting both the amenity and ecology of the campus.



The original building on site, Old Craig, is being restored to single home in its own private walled garden. Modern alterations will be removed and many of the original rooms will be reinstated. A replacement render colour, based on historical investigation, will be used in place of the 1990s pink.

The Craighouse Partnership which comprises Sundial Properties, Mountgrange Real Estate Opportunity Fund (of which Mountgrange Investment Management is the manager), and Edinburgh Napier University, explain that their designs use high quality materials inspired by the historic buildings. Sandstone and lime render will be used together with slate, zinc and lead for roofs. The aim, say the developers, is to blend the best of modern design with traditional Scottish details and finishes where appropriate.



The development plans have been prepared by Edinburgh-based architects Oberlanders and leading conservation architects Simpson & Brown. Both companies are said to have many years experience working on similar projects in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.

The Craighouse Partnership claims it has made a strong commitment to maintaining public access to the grounds for members of the public who use it as a recreational area. The council is now consulting with local people on a proposal that a significant portion of the site, including much of Easter Craiglockhart Hill and the existing local nature reserve, be transferred to community ownership. The Craighouse Partnership instigated and says it fully supports this process as part of its overall strategy to secure a sustainable future for the site.



William Gray Muir, Managing Director of Sundial Properties,

said:- “The Craighouse Partnership has engaged in an extensive period of consultation with the public since we first announced that the site would be developed for homes after the last students leave in May 2013.

“We have had two rounds of formal consultation events in September 2011 and March this year where the public has seen our plans and given us their detailed comments. In addition to this we have put in place a thorough programme of community engagement with the establishment of an independently chaired Liaison Forum and numerous meetings with community councils and other interested groups.

“The most consistent concerns which were expressed to us were over our original proposal to build on the orchard area and over how legally robust the guarantees of continued public access over private ground could be. Our final proposals very positively address these issues, by removing all new building from the orchard area and seeking to gift the majority of the green space into public ownership to protect public access in perpetuity.

We have also been able to address many other more specific concerns. We have listened to what the public told us about the proposed landform, about the number of new-build homes, about moving the main Craighouse Road access and about the proposed re-opening of the vehicle entrance from Craiglea Place. We’ve also taken great care to ensure that the visual impact of the development from outside the site is minimal.

“The changes brought about as a result of our engagement with the public are reflected in the planning application now submitted to City of Edinburgh Council for their consideration.

“We have listened to local people and made substantial changes as a result. We will continue to work with the community to secure the sustainable long term future for Craighouse that we

all want.”



Principal & Vice Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University
Professor Dame Joan K. Stringer said:-

“As the time approaches when the last students from Edinburgh Napier University leave the Craighouse Campus it is imperative that a sustainable future for this important and special site is in place.

“I know that change at Craighouse has been a difficult issue for many and there have been strong views expressed about the future of this great location in the south of our city.

“As responsible custodians this University is committed to ensuring that the best possible plans for Craighouse are in place for when we leave and our stewardship comes to an end.”

You may see the plans for yourself [on the council planning portal](#). The planning process has now begun and the application may be commented on or indeed objected to on the council site within the next few weeks.

You may also read all of the comments from the Friends of Craighouse about the proposed plans [on their website](#) and their [Facebook](#) page. Friends of Craighouse object to the plans to develop the former university campus and want to “preserve the green space and safeguard public access on this beautiful site.”