

Hearing set for Wednesday on Ocean Drive development

Ahead of a hearing at the council's planning committee on Wednesday a letter has been sent in support of plans for Waterfront Plaza from Port of Leith Housing Association, Leith Chamber of Commerce and Ocean Terminal on behalf of 41 of its businesses.

The letter "strongly urges" support for the residential-led proposals located on disused land opposite Ocean Terminal, citing the urgent need for new private and affordable homes and the huge potential boost to the local economy.



According to the papers released by the council before the meeting there will be a hearing from 10.00am during which local councillors and the developers will be allowed to have their say. The council's planning officers do however recommend refusal of the application.

The report for Planning Application No 16/03684/FUL Land 120 Metres South East Of 98 Ocean Drive Edinburgh states : "In summary, there are many positive aspects of this proposal. However on balance, these do not outweigh the conclusion that the mix and balance of uses proposed are contrary to the development plan. It is therefore recommended that the application is refused."

The developers hope that along with public backing from local Councillor Gordon Munro, Lord Provost Frank Ross, Cllr Gavin Barrie and Cllr John McLellan the committee will be persuaded to approve the application for a residential development.

Craig Lynes, Land Director at CALA Homes (East), said: “The strong support is especially welcome and recognises the importance and complexity of this site.

“It is hugely important that well considered residential developments on brownfield sites can support the delivery of much needed homes across the city.

“A site such as Waterfront Plaza, making use of a disused plot of land and located in such a vibrant part of the city will hopefully get the backing of the committee on Wednesday”.

The Hearing is taking place following a committee in November which unanimously called for a Hearing to assess and consider in more detail CALA Homes’ proposals.

Ahead of the November committee, Lord Provost Frank Ross called for “common sense to prevail” and urged “these houses to be built, not only to provide much needed homes but a boost to Ocean Terminal.”

CALA says that their proposals have received widespread backing from across community, housing and business leaders and this includes the support of the Leith Trust.

The development will consist of 388 homes, including 97 affordable homes and will include around 1500 sq.m. of flexible ‘workspace’ units, similar to The Arches development on Market Street, offering a wide range of potential uses including shops, cafes, galleries, creative space and offices ideally suited to start-ups.

✘ The amended plans present a range of apartments and family homes, to include 33 semi detached and terraced townhouses, 27 colonies, 328 apartments, plus 29 ground floor workspaces fronting Ocean Drive.

The developers believe that an eclectic mix of ‘workspace’ units complimented with the proposed public realm, to include

an urban square and public green space and café building fronting Victoria Dock at Waterfront Plaza will draw more visitors to the area and keep them there for longer, in line with local ambitions to increase the retention of visitors in Leith.

A Hearing to consider and determine the application will be held at The City of Edinburgh Council Development Sub-Committee on 13 December 2017. [You can read the agenda here.](#)

The letter reads :

Dear Councillors

[CALA development – 98 Ocean Drive – 16/03684/FUL](#)

We are aware that the planning application for the CALA development at Waterfront Plaza is to go to a Hearing at the Development Management Sub-Committee on 13th December.

As key local stakeholders we would strongly urge you to support this planning application, an application widely supported by the local community, with 89 letters of support as opposed to 18 objections registered.

We acknowledge that this land has been allocated in the Local Development Plan for commercial-led mixed use, but it should be noted there is little demand for this in the current market, and indeed in the foreseeable future. This is despite the site being ever present within masterplans, the Leith Docks Development Framework and Outline Planning Permissions for mixed use development dating back to 2005, none of which have come to fruition.

Noting such a lack of demand, Ocean Point 1 has lain vacant for a number of years, and one of the floors in the heavily-subsidised block has lain vacant for 16 years. In addition, while there is no demand for significant Grade A Office space currently, regeneration through significant investment delivering development at Waterfront Plaza could act a catalyst for further development within the area. In this context there is the potential for the neighbouring Scottish Government land, which also forms part of the Local Development Plan allocation for mixed use, to deliver some commercial use at a more appropriate scale in the future.

There is, as you will be aware, a massive demand for housing here in the area and it should be noted that there were over 3,400 household applications for the 96 unit development at Western Harbour. Demand for affordable housing is very high for both mid-market rent and for social housing as demonstrated by the fact that Port of Leith Housing Association is receiving an average of 260 bids for each available social rented home this year.

It should also be noted that while residential development was proposed for Britannia Quay in the Local Development Plan, Forth Ports have decided to retain it for business and industry uses. This has clearly heightened the housing shortfall in the area.

This proposed well-considered development therefore offers the most significant and realistic opportunity in many years to see this area developed and the site brought back into use.

The delivery of development in Leith has slowed down and this scheme will bring considerable benefits, especially in this challenging economic environment. Not only will this development deliver housing, including much-needed affordable housing (94 units to be delivered by Port of Leith Housing Association), but the introduction of flexible workspace will serve to meet a local demand for smaller start-up units.

This will bring a site which has lain vacant and derelict for a number of years, only being used for temporary events and as a spill-over car park for Ocean Terminal, back into productive use.

We welcome your support for this development and please let us know should any further information be required.

Yours faithfully

Leith Chambers of Commerce
Port of Leith Housing Association
Ocean Terminal

Retailers:

Marks & Spencer
French Connection

Debenhams

Scottish Design Exchange
BUILD A BEAR

Cono Brella

Superdry

Mobile Plus

Wagamama

Handmade Burger Co

Pizza Express

Schuh

Carphone Warehouse

GAME

Card Factory

Claire's Accessories

The Little Shop of Memory

Royal House of Scotland

Mr Nicks Green Kitchen

Trespass

Bags Etc

HMV

Herbal Inn

E-VR

Starbucks

Dark Room

Mostyn McKenzie

Waltons

Zizzi Restaurant

Wed2B

Costa Coffee

Fat Face

Toy Town

Holland & Barrett

H + M Occupier

Vision Express

New Look

The Body Shop

Ragetta

Gap

Ocean Play

Imrah

Charlie Miller Hairdressing