

# 2 Semple Street – development is making progress

We were invited along to see how the £24 million development at 2 Semple Street is progressing last week.



This is one of very few Grade A city centre office developments due to be completed this year, and although it is still very much a hard hat area, it will be ready for prospective tenants in a few months. In addition there is around 11,000 sq ft of retail underneath.



Whoever gets the office on the top floor will have to fight off friends and colleagues around the time of the fireworks as there is an outdoor balcony and a view directly towards the Castle Rock – a sight to behold even on a grey day.

The five-storey 38,648 sq ft energy efficient building is situated on the corner of Lothian Road and Semple Street. As we saw on our visit, even on a grey day each floor of the contemporary building will be flooded with natural light owing to the full height windows.

But if the developers are given consent at the end of this month, the building will have six floors when complete, which GSS Developments say will help to circumvent the lack of suitable office space in Edinburgh. Nearby Atria has seven storeys and Capital Square has eight.

This is one of the final gap sites in the Exchange area for office development.

If the extra floor (which will be constructed by adding a further floor to the glass box which sits atop the fifth floor) is allowed, then the building will be suitable for 400 staff rather than 350. GSS say this will address the needs of those potential tenants who just need a little more than is currently on offer.

The application will be considered by the council's Development Management Committee later this month.



Angela Lowe, senior director at joint letting agent CBRE, said: "An extra 5000 sq ft may not sound a lot but in a city where there is a lack of floor space it makes a significant difference in securing a broader range of tenants. We advised GSS that increasing the floor space will enhance the flexibility of the building and follows the example set by a number of other high-profile developments within the financial centre."

Sustainability is also key, not only by careful choice of the building materials but also by provision of cycle racks for 47 bikes, a bike repair station, clothes drying and shower facilities to encourage active travel.



With only eight car parking spaces it is clear that the tenants will not be able to offer much to employees in the way of workplace car parking, but there will be charging points for electric vehicles.

As well as cycling to work, perhaps by way of the nearby canal path, the office development sits close to main bus routes on Lothian Road, the trams in Shandwick Place and Haymarket Station is also within walking distance.

With the latest technology installed throughout, the builders explained that the property will be flexible and adaptable for its occupants both now and in the future.



This is intended to be high quality office accommodation and will be let either as one building or as a result of the staircases and lift layout, each floor can be subdivided. The agents say they are letting from the bottom up as their preference is to have either one tenant for the whole development or perhaps to leave the best till last!

According to the latest research from CBRE Scotland, Edinburgh has surpassed the 1,000,000 sq ft take-up mark for the first time since 2004, with 1,138,500 sq ft of office space transactions across the four quarters of 2017.



Angela Lowe continued : “The Edinburgh office market activity witnessed in 2017 demonstrates that occupiers are increasingly considering pre-lets in order to secure space of the required size and quality in their preferred locations. Recent take-up also indicates the continued importance of the financial services and tech sectors in generating demand for quality, city centre offices.”

GSS Developments Ltd is an established Aberdeen and Edinburgh based commercial development and investment company with property portfolio of more than £70 million of assets. They acquired the site from Aberdeen Asset Management and then demolished the existing building to make way for the newly built block.



Paul Stevenson of GSS  
Developments

The company is privately owned by the Stevenson family and is run by George, Tim and Paul Stevenson. Paul lives in Edinburgh with his family and is committed to life in the capital now with children established in school here.

The Stevenson family are also owner and developer of one of Aberdeen's largest business parks to be opened in the last decade, ABZ Business Park.

ABZ comprises 80 acres and one million square feet of commercial buildings with a GDV in the region of £120 million. To date they have speculatively developed over £35 million of infrastructure and buildings at ABZ.

McLaughlin & Harvey are the builders engaged to deliver this project and Michael Laird are the architects of 2 Semple Street.

Website: [www.2semplestreet.co.uk](http://www.2semplestreet.co.uk)