

Locals continue to object to Tor House plans

Community campaigners say that proposals to build two five-storey blocks of flats will “dwarf” a listed former nursing home and “obliterate much of the landscape”.

Well known Edinburgh developers, AMA Homes, have lodged plans for flats on either side of the former Tor House nursing home in Murrayfield in two blocks – along with two residential homes in the B-listed building itself, two in a renovated stable block and another one home in the lodge house.

The developers also plan to build nine two-bedroom and five three-bedroom flats in a block to the north of the house along with five two-bedroom flats and eight three-bedroom apartments in another block to the south. Most of the flats will have private terraces.

The ‘Torwood House’ plans have been recommended for approval by the city council’s planning officers – and a formal hearing will be held tomorrow when the Development Management sub-committee will determine the application and listed building consent to alter the Tor House, designed by Edinburgh architect John Chesser. The developers said the Victorian house will be “sensitively remodelled into two modern homes”.



Developers' plans for Tor House

Community campaigners remain opposed to the development and will speak at the hearing. They will tell councillors that, if approved, the proposals could cause "irreparable ruin" to the conservation area.

Jim Forbes from Murrayfield Community Council, said: "There's one over-riding concern here and that is for the preservation of our conservation area.

"There are two proposed residential buildings, five stories each, that will dwarf the existing listed buildings in the site and will obliterate much of the landscape.

"The presentation that I will be making on Wednesday will show the conclusion of that report from the planning officer is quite wrong."

The developers have told council officers that a 25 per cent allocation of affordable housing will not be provided on the Tor House site because of "high costs". Instead, if approved, the affordable housing will be supplied through a transfer of services land at Ford's Road to LARS Housing Trust.

Mr Forbes said that there was been a swell of opposition to the proposals by the local community and has called on councillors to reject the plans.

He added: "Although the community council is taking a lead with this, there's a substantial local body of opposition to

the development. Over 60 comments of objection have been submitted to this development by neighbouring homeowners.

"I'm pretty confident that our local councillors who are not on the committee are very supportive of our position and we have to try and make sure that the committee will pay attention to what we are saying. Hopefully, they will decide to reject the application.

"We are not opposed to development itself – there's appropriate development that can be done. We would be quite happy for the developers to come back with a revised proposal that doesn't have the implications on the conservation area."

The proposals include the provision of 32 car parking spaces, with 24 trees to be removed as part of the development plans. In their report to councillors, planning officers said the proposals offer "an acceptable balance between the restoration of the listed building and the new development".

They add : "The character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings will be preserved. There will be no significant impact on residential amenity and road safety will not be affected by the proposal. There are no material considerations that outweigh this conclusion."