

# Plans for Commercial Street withdrawn

by Joseph Anderson Local Democracy Reporter

Plans to pave over two water features in Leith have been dropped, after the application attracted hundreds of objections from residents.

Guernsey-based Ophelia Investments applied to The City of Edinburgh Council in December for permission to redevelop the old Café Tartine space at 72 Commercial Street, Leith, into an office and separate kitchen.

However, the proposals also included plans to pave over two external water features – drawing the ire of the community who lodged 273 objections with the council.

The local community council Leith Harbour and Newhaven urged people to object after they discovered the extent of the plans. In their formal objection they explained that the application was misleading.

They said: “The applications are very inadequate and misleading as 72 Commercial is Café Tartine (In liquidation) implying that this property to be developed, but it is Quay Commons at 92 Commercial Street that is being developed for offices and café and the water features that span 72-88. The development for 92 Commercial Street is acceptable as this is

additional to previously completed office development and does not affect water feature.

“The applications have limited and confusing diagrams, no design statement (refs: 1&2) detailing of rationale and plan for infilling of water features and other landscape areas in a conservation area with A listed properties. There are also listed chain and bollards on Dock Place and on South side of water incorporating heritage features. The entire length of Commercial Street is cobbled and has retained rail tracks features from original design for warehouses and surrounding area by John Rennie 1804-1817. The water features pay homage to the industrial characteristics of the Old East and Old West Docks (photos) that were infilled in 1974 and now house Victoria Quay and new housing development.”

*Leith conservation area now threatened by application to infill water features beside restaurants on Commercial St Quay, replacing w/ decking! Part of our heritage-homage to John Rennie, responsible for the Warehouses, Old East, West, Rennie's Isle Dock (1804-17). Please object!*

– Leith Harbour & Newhaven CC (@LeithHNCC) [February 1, 2021](#)

One objector, David Igoe, of Pirniefield Place, wrote: “It is quite clear that this application is ill thought out, rushed and incompetent.

“The water features were put in place as a reminder of the links the area has to the sea.

“They add character and the seating round about has been well used by locals during lockdown.”

Michelle Hill, of Commercial Street, wrote in her objection: “Happy for the old cafe tartine to be turned into an office, but 100% object to the removal of the water features/fountains.

“They make the area and would be missed, they have been a feature for many a year.”

Laurie Pierce, of Sandport Street, wrote: “The proposed alterations will negatively impact the appearance and ambience of this important historic location.

“Leith’s green and blue spaces are already under threat by overdevelopment and under-resourcing for care and maintenance.

“The proposed alterations would only exacerbate this decline in the area’s quality of life.”

Now, following many objections, the developers have withdrawn their application.

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