

Portobello restaurant plans set for refusal

“Unauthorised” plans to convert a former barbershop on Portobello High Street into a restaurant are set to be rejected by councillors after concerns were raised that ‘smelly cooking odours’ would disturb nearby residents.

An application seeking permission for change of use was lodged with The City of Edinburgh Council last March.

As well as changing the premises at 211A Portobello High Street from a shop (Class 1) to a restaurant (Class 3), the applicant asked for approval to fit new windows, make alterations to the front of the building and attach a flue to the side.

In October, a complaint was made alleging an unauthorised change of use and shop front alterations at the address, however the council is yet to issue a decision on this.



Residents living nearby were quick to object to the proposals, citing fears that the added chimney would pump cooking odours towards neighbours' windows.

One said it would be an "eyesore" if approved, adding: "The height of the proposed flue will inevitably cause cooking smells to permeate through residential properties."

A woman who lives above the site wrote: "This large and conspicuous flue will not only strongly detract from the appearance of our property from the street but will also obscure the view from our large first floor windows.

"Indeed, the flue is situated just a few feet from our windows and barely a few feet higher, the prevailing coastal wind will ensure that whatever is being extracted from the kitchen below is liable to be blown in through any open window rather than up and away."

Others complained there are already too many cafés and restaurants in the area, whilst concerns were also raised the change of use would negatively impact the Portobello Conservation Area.

An objector said: "It would be an inappropriate development in the conservation area. Yet another catering premises here next door to another café (Affogato) which is proposing to open soon, in addition to Bross Bagels at 177 Portobello High Street, would amount to an over-provision of catering premises in a very short stretch of Portobello High Street.

In addition to 57 objections, 59 letters of support were sent to the council.

One in favour of the development wrote it would be "great for Portobello High Street", adding: "Can't wait to see more places like this open to avoid all the empty shops in Porty."

Another said: "I think in the current climate we have to support new businesses and welcome their optimism. Sadly when you look around so many shops are closing properties lying empty and falling into disrepair."

Someone else wrote the restaurant would "definitely add to the area" and added: "This shop has lay empty for too long and it is fantastic to see people continuing to invest in the location."

Planners have urged members of the Development Management Committee, which meets on Wednesday (January 26), to refuse permission.

A report to councillors reads: "Given the proximity and relative height of the flue to the flats, there are concerns that effluvia blowback would regularly swirl down and enter those properties. There is a likelihood that effluvia cooking odours would impact upon the amenity of the surrounding residential properties."

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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