

Planning for student accommodation on Canongate approved

A planning application for a development of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) in the Canongate has been approved following an appeal by the property developers to The Scottish Government.

Summix (CGE) Developments and S Harrison have been granted permission for the partial demolition of existing buildings and the delivery of PBSA on the site that was once part of the 19th century gasworks at 179A Canongate. The planning application was initially refused by the Council in August 2022.

Comprising 76 studio rooms, the developers say the scheme will be targeted at postgraduate students. The ground floor includes an open courtyard with sitting areas and planters, internal shared amenity space, plus two study rooms, a gym and a multimedia room. Ideally located opposite the Holyrood Campus of Edinburgh University and within easy reach of other university facilities, the site is well suited to the provision of PBSA. Nearby bus routes and plenty of cycling storage on site make it a highly accessible location.

Substantial elements of the existing historic buildings are

incorporated within the proposed redevelopment along with the demolition of the more recent 20th century buildings. The retained buildings are incorporated within a design that the developers believe respects the site's historic location and the important surrounding listed buildings.

New build elements consist of a five-storey building with a triple pitched roof on the west side dropping down to a two-storey building with duo pitch roof on the east side to fit with the open nature of the nearby kirkyard. Historic perimeter walls will be retained and the original workshop incorporated within the development which will be an additional feature.

Reusing a current brownfield site, this will be a highly energy efficient building adopting a fabric first approach. Low and zero carbon emitting equipment will be incorporated, including air source heat pumps, full LED lighting, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and photovoltaic panels.

The Reporter granted planning permission, noting that: "The proposed development utilises a brownfield site making efficient use of existing land and buildings. It supports the delivery of accessible accommodation and is appropriately located in walking distance to education facilities, local amenities, and public transport. The scale, form and design respects the historic environment and mitigation measures are incorporated to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers."

David Clancy of S Harrison said: "We're thrilled our application has been approved by the Scottish Government Reporter. These proposals will redevelop an unloved site in the heart of the capital and provide much-needed PBSA in a highly sustainable location, situated so close to many university buildings.

"We are pleased to see that the Reporter noted that the

proposed PBSA does not result in an 'excessive concentration' of student accommodation in the area and will fit in with the nearby listed buildings, preserving the character and appearance of the Old Town Conservation Area.

"Our proposals are part of the wider redevelopment of this part of the city centre and will help to bring life and economic activity to the area."

Stuart Black of Summix (CGE) Developments added: "With the Reporter upholding the appeal, the delivery of high-quality student accommodation on what is a brownfield site, can be progressed.

"This will be a highly energy efficient building, incorporating low and zero carbon emitting equipment, including air source heat pumps, full LED lighting, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and photovoltaic panels.

"It will also serve to address an increasing demand for student accommodation, and through this assist in moving students out of homes more appropriate for families and into well-managed accommodation."



Old Tolbooth North



Miller's Court



Tolbooth Lane daytime