

## TOLLCROSS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

8 December 2018

Head of Planning  
Department of City Development  
City Development – Planning & Strategy  
Waverley Court  
4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG

### **Moorings for boat hotel accommodation (5 boats) at Union Canal, west of Viewforth Bridge at Canal Bank Walk, Edinburgh.**

**18/08091/FUL**

Case Officer: Duncan Robertson 0131 529 3560 d.n.robertson@edinburgh.gov.uk

Dear Mr Duncan,

Tollcross community Council would like to object to the above application on the grounds of overprovision of hotel accommodation, uses on the canal and contravention of the aims of the Fountainbridge Development Brief to create a new community in the area.

#### **1. Overprovision of hotel and short term accommodation.**

The Tollcross/Fountainbridge/Merchiston area has traditionally been a residential area with one of the highest population densities in the city and with a community of long-term residents. Recently we have seen the building of hotels (with more in the planning stages), many student residences, a school and the Air BnB type of accommodation is exploding with new key boxes outside stairs expanding on a daily basis. There are now, sometimes, half the flats in a stair used for this short term accommodation. We were pleased that after our deputation to the council, another planned large hotel near to this application site was abandoned. There are or will be four large hotels and two aparthotels within a three minute walk from this site and many more within a ten minute walk.

#### **2. Uses on the canal**

In recent times, more and more residential moorings have been used and these residents contribute to the community spirit of the area. This is indeed to be encouraged. Having canvassed the opinions of such residents, they are opposed to such a large number of moorings being for short term use and find the short term letting of one nearby boat, already problematic. Scottish Canal's Full Options

Appraisal envisages more moorings along the canal which would give greater activity for the canal which is to be encouraged. Their suggestion that there should be 12 hotel boats between the school and the basin (including the 5 in this application) would lead to an excess and overconcentration of hotel boats. Scottish Canals is, of course, keen to maximise income but that should not be at the expense of a good mix of uses for the moorings, with a preponderance of residential uses.

### **3. The Demography of the area and the Fountainbridge Development Brief**

The Fountainbridge Development Brief (FDB) covers the area of the proposed development (area 5).

The FDB states that *a key objective will be to re-establish a community in Fountainbridge by creating an environment where people can enjoy living, working and relaxing.*

It further goes on to state that: *In seeking to re-establish a sense of community in Fountainbridge, residential use will be a key component of the overall redevelopment proposals. In order to achieve an appropriate development mix and create an urban environment predominantly residential in character, between 50% and 60% of development land should be for residential use.*

Whilst the canal does not represent development land, it is reasonable to assume that the same principles apply.

As outlined in 1. Above, there has already been a large amount of development, much of which has been catering for short term use and transient populations. Up to now, built or planned developments have largely been non-residential, with a predominance of student housing, hotels and apart-hotels. The Air BnB model is also swallowing large swathes of traditional housing. This process is leading to a diminution of the settled community. Taken together, these have been completely at variance with the aim of creating an urban environment, predominantly residential in character.

We are not the only Edinburgh community to have made these points and it is becoming clear that we are reaching a crisis point for Edinburgh residents where, for tourists, the boasts of Edinburgh being a lived-in city may turn out to be historical rather than current.

We hope that you can take our concerns into account when deciding on this application.

Yours sincerely,

(Paul Beswick for Tollcross Community Council)