

Help for Haymarket!!

The Cockburn Association has objected to the most recent plans for gap site at Haymarket. The proposals, by “starchitects” Fosters & Partners for The Prudential Assurance Company falls far short of the quality of building required for this prominent site.

A valid planning consent for this site exists, setting the precedent for development. We support the use of this site. However, it is crucial that the best scheme for this prominent gateway into the City is found. This is not it.

Deadlines for objections is Friday 12 July 2019. If you are also concerned about this proposals, please submit your comments asap. Information is provided below on suggested points you might raise.

Background

The Cockburn Association has had a long association with redevelopment proposals for the Morrison Street former goods yard site near Haymarket station which has been lying empty for almost 50 years.



Ten years ago, there was a tremendous furore surrounding Richard Murphy’s development proposal, on behalf of Tiger Developments, for this eyesore site. In the end, this was blocked by the Scottish Government after a public enquiry over concerns that the proposed seventeen storey tower would adversely impact upon Edinburgh’s skyline. The Cockburn, and others who opposed the proposal, had to raise money from their own pockets to engage counsel to make their case at the public enquiry.

Subsequently, Tiger’s revised proposals for the gap site, although scaled back to a more modest eight storeys, hit fresh controversy after the Cockburn branded the new plans "lumpy" and "ugly". Critics also claimed that this scheme, although lower level, would also ruin sight lines in the city, despite the taller scheme having been approved by both Historic Scotland and local councillors.



At the start of 2016, Tiger Developments and Interserve began preparatory above ground works to deliver a consented scheme for an office-led development on the derelict site with the removal of tunnel earthworks dating back to the 1840's. These works were halted, and the site put on the market in 2018 following further reworking of the plans for the consented scheme.

Now, Foster & Partners have come forward with a brand-new proposal for the same site consisting of hotels, offices, retail and leisure outlets, public houses, restaurants and car parking.

The Cockburn has lodged an objection to this latest proposal. Whilst we welcome proposed plans for a new area of urban public space, we feel that the proposed scheme is quite simply not good enough for this prominent site. In addition, the emerging City Centre Transformation Strategy might suggest a more innovative use for this former goods yard on the edge of the city centre that would secure and underpin the sustainable future of the city. Located next door to a main line railway station and tram link the former goods yard is one of Edinburgh's best-connected addresses. Perhaps something truly imaginative (for Edinburgh) such as a goods interchange hub to service city-centre businesses and residents would be a more appropriate climate-ready solution for this troubled site?

Historically, this site has been controversial. In 1968, a slab office development some 260 feet high was approved at appeal. The City Council of this time were vexed at this decision so in 1972, they revoked planning consent at some considerable cost to the public purse, but of huge benefit to the amenity of the City.



Photomontage of 1968 Haymarket Tower proposal (Cockburn archives)

How to lodge an objection or submit comments.

Details of the application are available on the [Planning Portal](#) as follows.

Planning Application 19/02623/FUL

Address: 189 Morrison Street Edinburgh EH3 8DN

Proposal description: Redevelopment of site comprising hotels, offices, retail, leisure, public houses, restaurants, car parking and associated works

It should be noted that the site has valid [planning consent](#) for development.

What we said –

“The proposals have some features of interest, particularly the creation of a new area of public space.

But we consider the design proposals to be of too poor design quality for this high-profile location. The proposals do not seem to either respect or interact with the surrounding architecture and the proposed finishes and elevations are simply too bland, too run-of-the-mill and not architecturally significant enough for this important city centre site.

In addition, it is important to recognise that the emerging City Transformation Strategy suggests that alternative uses may now be worthy of consideration for this former good yard site such as an innovative goods interchange hub to alleviate vehicular congestion in the city centre.”

Policy context –

In making your response you may wish to consider if the proposal is consistent with the following policies and then reference these policies in your own planning comment. Following the link below to read the full text of the policies. You may wish to quote some or all of these policies in your own planning comment.

[Local Development Plan](#)

Policy Des 1 Design Quality and Context

We find the scheme with its blank glass elevations and overall blockiness of design to be out of character with the local area and with no reference or respect to the local context.

Policy Des 4 Development Design – Impact on Setting

We do not believe that the proposed design will make a positive contribution either to the character of the wider townscape, local sense of place or to existing views.

Policy Des 5 Development Design – Amenity

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that amenity of neighbouring developments is not adversely affected and that future occupiers have acceptable levels of amenity in relation to noise, daylight, sunlight, privacy or immediate outlook

Policy Env 1 World Heritage Sites

It is our view that the scheme seriously and adversely affects the setting of the World heritage Site at its western edge.

Policy Env 6 Conservation Areas – Development

We do not believe that the proposed development will enhance the setting of the New Town Conservation Area,