

GM MACPHERSON TRADING AS PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENTS

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION
ERECTION OF A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS UNITS & FLATS
BONNINGTON MILL BUSINESS CENTRE, 70 NEWHAVEN ROAD, EDINBURGH**



**DESIGN STATEMENT
30 August 2005**

04066

Bonnington Mill
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INTRODUCTION

The proposal involves the demolition of a redundant industrial building and the erection of a new building containing 27 small business office spaces and 20 flats in a 3 to 3½ storey building arranged around two courtyards.

A mixed use urban village is proposed, with residential and small business accommodation sharing the same environment to create a community that functions over a 24 hour period.

EXISTING SITE

The existing Bonnington Mill Business Centre, created by the Applicant, is tremendously successful and has a high occupancy rate. No fewer than 35 business “start-ups” and smaller companies occupy 25,000sqft.

The adjacent Matrix Business Centre offers a further 10,000sqft of simple affordable business space.

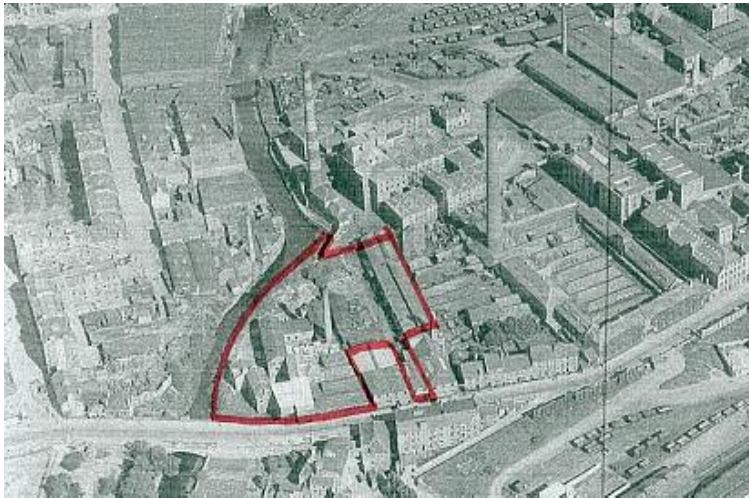
The trend in recent years towards the redevelopment of small industrial and commercial sites for residential use has resulted in the availability of accommodation for small businesses being dramatically reduced. These Business Centres constitute a valuable resource in Leith which meet the demands of the market in this part of the city.

To the south of the main Business Centre lies a former industrial shed and yard which is now redundant. With poor access for commercial vehicles, lack of turning space and parking, potential tenants of light industrial buildings are seeking purpose built locations in other parts of the city. The existing site is no longer suitable for industrial use and an opportunity exists for redevelopment to reinvigorate the area with a use pattern more suited to contemporary lifestyles.

HISTORIC USE

The site has been in use commercially for several hundred years, from humble beginnings to the intensive production of the industrial revolution. An early mill house remains on the application site, close to Bonnington Bridge (unaffected by the proposals).

Only in recent decades has the use of the site and the surrounding become less intensive as inner city sites have become less appropriate for large scale commercial use. Occupants of the current business centre are varied but are predominantly office based, either in the service sector or in the arts.



SURROUNDING USES

Surrounding uses are mixed.

To the south and east, the area is largely commercial, including small workshops and storage and distribution depots, although this will be changed with the implementation of a recent Planning Permission for flats and offices in Bonnington Road Lane. Terraced houses and tenements front Newhaven Road, concealing much of the commercial development to the rear.

To the north, West Bowling Green Street accommodates a myriad of small business units before the pattern of development returns to housing from Graham Street towards Ferry Road.

To the east across Newhaven Road, development is primarily residential.

THE PROPOSAL

The success of the existing Business Centres suggests that the most appropriate form of development would be small office or studio spaces in multiples of 800sqft. This size of unit caters for start-up businesses and allows them to expand in the initial years. Once businesses have reached a certain size there is currently a trend for their owners to purchase their own property through pension schemes, leaving the smaller units available again for new businesses.

While newer developments such as Bonnington Bond provide spaces for businesses at a more advanced stage of their evolution, the intention of this proposal is to continue to focus the Business Centre on new and young businesses.

The mews pattern is rapidly disappearing in Leith, with historically mixed-use streets such as Trafalgar Lane and Pitt Street now becoming predominantly residential. Redevelopment continues and consent has already been granted for two significant redevelopment sites in the area (Bonnington Road Land and Comet site across Newhaven Road).

The success of the existing Business Centre suggests that there is an opportunity to redefine the pattern of future development in the area by creating mixed use communities that use the intimate environment around the Water of Leith to create small mixed use communities that serve several purposes at once.

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Application Site (Redundant Industrial Shed & Yard)



Site Access on Newhaven Road

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Environment around existing Business Centre



The Water of Leith and Walkway adjacent to application site

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EMPLOYMENT PROVISION

The existing redundant buildings provide approximately 10,000sqft of industrial space. The last user of the buildings was a steel fabrication company which employed 12 people.

Redevelopment to create business space in multiples of 800sqft suggests that approximately 19,000sqft in 27 spaces could be created in 3 to 3½ storey buildings. If an average occupancy of 3 people is assumed, then the number of people employed in the new development would be in the region of 60. This illustrates the importance of encouraging small businesses by providing suitable accommodation and the contribution that small businesses can make to the economy of the city. It is understood that the Council has recognised this and is currently considering a study of small business accommodation throughout the city.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

There is an opportunity on this site to create an environment similar to the Shore or Timberbush in Leith where commercial and residential occupants benefit from the vitality created by different uses operating side by side. This type of environment, which has historically given Edinburgh much of its unique character, is undervalued and is not being replaced in the master plan areas on the waterfront.

It is conceived that the residential space could be let to occupants of the business centre on a live – work basis. While this is subject to market demand and therefore not enforceable by the owner, it is possible that the tenants of the business centre would have first refusal on the residential units.

It is further suggested that the location of the site next to the Water of Leith would benefit from the inclusion of some residential space which would improve the environment and security of this “commercial village”.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Precedent has been set at Bonnington Mill for mixed-use development on a much larger scale. It is recognised that Bonnington Mill is a very different project and that the provision of residential units facilitated the rehabilitation of the listed building. However, the project proves that there is demand for a mixed use development in a predominantly commercial area.

The Policy Department will be concerned that the inclusion of residential use erodes the existing business area. It is suggested that this proposal provides the opportunity for the business area to become a more robust, defensible concept.

AMENITY SPACE

Landscaped amenity space provided within the confines of the proposed development amounts to about 20% of the site area of the new development.

The development will contribute to an improvement of the environment alongside the Water of Leith. This is particularly relevant now that the new Water of Leith Walkway has been completed.

NOISE

The proposed commercial buildings are located to the south of the site, preventing noise from the adjacent business uses in Elizafield from disturbing the courtyards and residential units.

ACCESS AND PARKING

Access is via the existing pend through the Matrix Business Centre. During the operation of a former steel fabricator's business, articulated lorries were able to access the site through this pend. Access for a limited number of cars can therefore be accommodated comfortably.

A new road to adoptable standard is proposed to access the site, including a turning head within the west courtyard.

20 new parking spaces are provided. These will be unallocated and are provided on the basis of 1 space for each residential unit. It will be a condition of the lease or sale of the residential properties that the users of the office spaces will be able to use the parking spaces during the day on an unallocated basis.

In addition, the existing car park for the Bonnington Mill Business Centre will be available for use by the occupants of the residential units outwith office hours. This car park provides approximately 50 spaces which are currently not used outwith office hours.

The existing car park for the Matrix Business Centre remains unaffected by the proposals.

In summary, there is sufficient parking within the application site to serve the existing and new developments by providing new parking spaces and by using the existing parking more efficiently over a 24 hour period.

20 cycle spaces are provided for the residential units in a secure and lockable store. External cycle racks will be provided for the office units.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING

Secure storage is provided within the building for refuse and recycling containers to serve both the residential and office units. Collection of the refuse containers can take place either within the site or on Newhaven Road subject to the preference of Environmental Services.

FLOODING

The site lies adjacent to the Water of Leith and detailed design has been undertaken by the Council as part of the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme. The Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme proposes a flood defence wall within the application site. This has been taken account of and is shown on the Site Layout Plan.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The number of residential units is limited to 20. There is therefore no requirement to provide Affordable Housing on the site.

FAMILY HOUSING

Of the 20 residential units, 8 have 1 bedroom, 9 have 2 bedrooms and 3 have 3 or 4 bedrooms.

ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

Total Site Area	2.11 acres
Bonnington Mill Business Centre	25,000sqft
Matrix Business Centre	10,000sqft
Proposed New Business Centre	19,000sqft
<u>Total Business Space</u>	<u>54,000sqft</u>
Total Proposed Residential Space	15,455sqft
<u>Total Business & Residential Space</u>	<u>69,455sqft</u>
Proportion of Business Space	77.8%
Proportion of Residential Space	22.2%

ARCHITECTURE

Leith once had a wealth of solid and functional commercial buildings constructed in brick. Few of these buildings remain but there are surviving examples at Shrubhill and at the Shore.

These buildings were often arranged around intimate courtyards through pends. A recent example of the sensitive redevelopment of one of these courtyards can be seen at Iona Street in Leith, where 27 flats and townhouses have been created in the centre of a tenement block, accessed through a private pend.

This type of development, while not being able to comply with every Development Guideline, is embraced by the surrounding community as it provides a unique type of environment, very different to the general trend towards large flatted schemes.

The proposed building is arranged around 2 courtyards incorporating two new pends. The 2 courtyards are linked by a pend, with the east courtyard having a more intimate character arranged around a landscaped garden.

The office units sit on the footprint of the existing building against the south and east boundaries and also occupy the ground floor of the north wing of the west courtyard. The residential units are confined to the upper floors of the north wing of the building and the ground floor of the east courtyard.

The west courtyard and the perimeter elevations use a smooth red brick, while the east courtyard uses a brighter sand coloured brick. Both of the brick types reflect those used in similar developments in Leith over the past century. The photographs below of Iona Street illustrate that the careful selection of a locally manufactured brick can provide an immediate sense of permanence in a new development.



The proposal reflects the historic tradition of industrial development in Leith and uses the materials and some of the architectural features of these early commercial buildings.

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

Graeme Dixon and David Wilcox of City Development were consulted during the course of 2004. The Policy team indicated that they would not object to the proposal on the understanding that the proposal would not erode the surrounding zone identified for business use in the North East Edinburgh Local Plan, and that it would result in a greater number of jobs being created on the site.

Planning were generally supportive of the proposal subject to approval from the Policy team and the resolution of any concerns that Transportation and Environmental Services may have

CONCLUSION

There is no intention with this proposal to erode the established business area.

The proposal provides an opportunity for the council to redefine the pattern of redevelopment of former industrial sites, increasing the density, increasing the employment capacity of the area, and encouraging 24 hour use rather than creating areas of the city which lie dormant for 12 hours each day.

This proposal may assist the council in presenting a stronger argument to developers who would prefer to see a comprehensive change of use in the area to residential.

It is suggested that if successful this proposal could provide a model framework for the redevelopment of the industrial area alongside the Water of Leith for the benefit of the business and residential community alike.