

LETTER ISSUED BY EMAIL

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Edinburgh
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Our Ref: rje/ae/EDUN0008

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30 October 2023

Dear Graham,

Temporary planning permission for Haul Road, School of Biology, The University of Edinburgh, Darwin Building, Max Born Crescent, Edinburgh, EH9 3BF.

Glasgow
0141 204 3838

Aberdeen
01224 588866

Leeds
0113 243 6777

London
020 7436 1212

Manchester
0161 249 9778

Further to our previous discussions and recent correspondence I enclose a planning application submitted via the eplanning portal on behalf of The University of Edinburgh for temporary planning permission (which in effect is an extension to the duration of temporary planning permission reference 19/04307/FUL) for the construction access road, School of Biology, The University of Edinburgh, Darwin Building, Max Born Crescent, Edinburgh, EH9 3BF.

I confirm the application fee in the sum of £500.00 under the terms of The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 for the construction of a service roads and other means of access on land used for the purposes of a single undertaking, where the development is required for a purpose incidental to the existing use of the land has also been paid.

The application includes the requisite supporting documentation and information including:

- Completed application form, certification and declaration
- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Existing Planning Permission 19/04307/FUL
- Report of Handling of previous application 19/04307/FUL

This covering letter provides a contextual narrative against which the current proposal should be considered along with a brief planning history and explanation of the context for the current application to effectively extend the duration of the temporary access.

CONTEXTUAL NARRATIVE

In very simple terms, the temporary construction access road was originally consented on the basis of the programme for a complex series of permissions for the redevelopment of the School of Biological Sciences at King's Buildings Campus. The project involved a kit of parts and a decant strategy to enable the main contract for the main Darwin and Hive buildings to proceed.

The Building a New Biology project commenced in 2015 at the south-east corner of the campus. The early phases of the project included the refurbishment of the Swann Building, construction of the new Waddington extension, Grodome, MEP Building, demolition of the Darwin Library and outbuildings, and construction of a new research greenhouse and Growth Facility. All of these as well as the internal strip-out of the Darwin Tower have been completed.

The final phase of the project, which included the extension and refurbishment of the existing Darwin Tower, construction of the new 'Hive' teaching & learning building and associated landscaping, was however put on hold in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and impact of wider macro-economic issues.

There have been more recent works to safeguard the Darwin Tower and site subject to ongoing inspections by Goodson Associates, structural engineers, and maintained by the University's Term Contractor, to stabilise and prevent further deterioration of the structure and fabric.

A Development Assessment was undertaken by ATKINS in July 2021 to review the potential for re-use or replacement of the remaining tower structure following completion of the intrusive asbestos removal works. The report concluded that there was clear practical and operational benefit in replacing the existing Darwin Tower with a new building to provide greater flexibility, wellbeing, and longevity as well as cost and programme assurance. These were also coupled with clear operational energy efficiencies with a new build. This was further supported by the structural assessment of the Darwin Tower undertaken by Goodson Associates.

The previous permission for the main contract works therefore remains implemented but uncompleted. The construction access road therefore relates to a part completed project with an extended timescale for completion.

NEW PROJECT SCOPE AND DELIVERY

In August 2022 a new design team was therefore appointed for the final phase of the project on the basis of the alternative strategy for a new replacement building. The project is currently at Stage 2 Outline Design, and includes:

- a new 6 storey building of some 5,500 sq m GIA on the site of the former Darwin Library and Darwin Tower.

- a building that is net zero ready, in line with the University's commitment to become zero carbon by 2040, and offer enhanced levels of Health & Wellbeing facilities for the campus.
- enhancement of linkages and refurbishment of space in the adjoining buildings to optimise existing facilities and create a new hub.

At the scale of gross internal floorspace currently proposed, the proposal will be classed as a Major Development under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and will be subject to normal pre application requirements and public consultation. It will also include formal Pre Application dialogue protocol with City of Edinburgh Council Officers and this is due to commence in December 2023 followed by Public Consultations and target submission of a Planning Application in Q1/Q2 2024.

The exact timescale for progressing the design and submission of an application is being finalised but works on the main tower are ongoing and the existing site construction compound and works associated with removal of asbestos from the existing tower are still present on site.

The need for maintaining a temporary construction access is therefore immediate in connection with these works and also for the delivery of the delayed main contract.



PLANNING HISTORY & POLICY

The adoption of NPF4 does not materially affect the assessment of the proposal subject to the application, there are no other material changes in circumstances, no other issues relating to trees, ecology or residential amenity. This is simply a continuance of the temporary use to service the development.

Whilst NPF4 emphasises commitment to enhancing biodiversity, trees, heritage and sustainable transportation, these are all issues that are covered by extant development plan policy and have been fully assessed.

Policy 23 of NPF4 covers Health and Safety issues and the ongoing site works and removal of asbestos from the current tower building is serviced by the existing road.

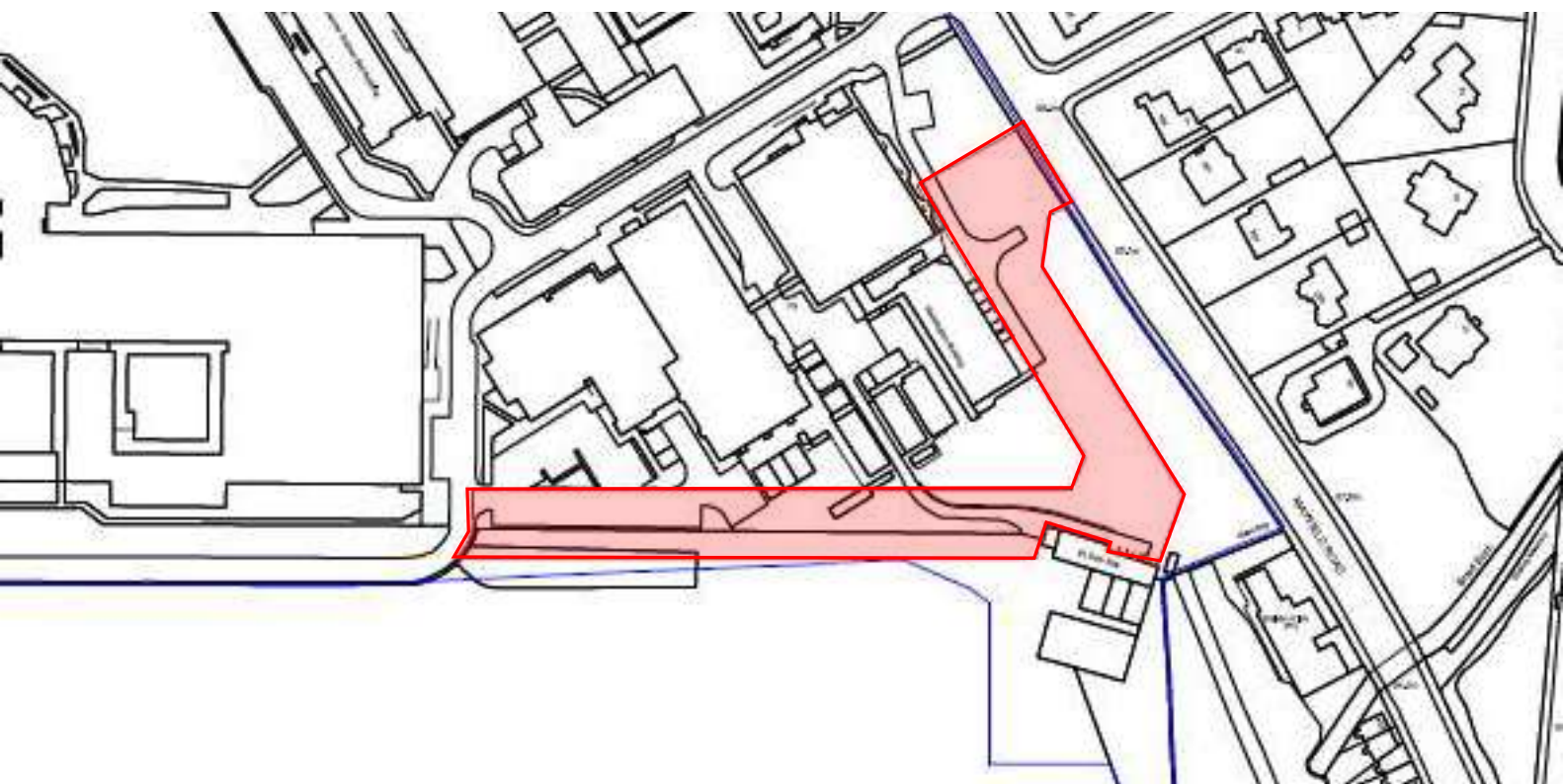
The site remains exactly the same and lies at the south-east corner of the University of Edinburgh's King's Buildings campus. The remainder of the university campus lies to the west and north west. Mayfield Road forms the eastern extent of the site and the point of connection to the road network.

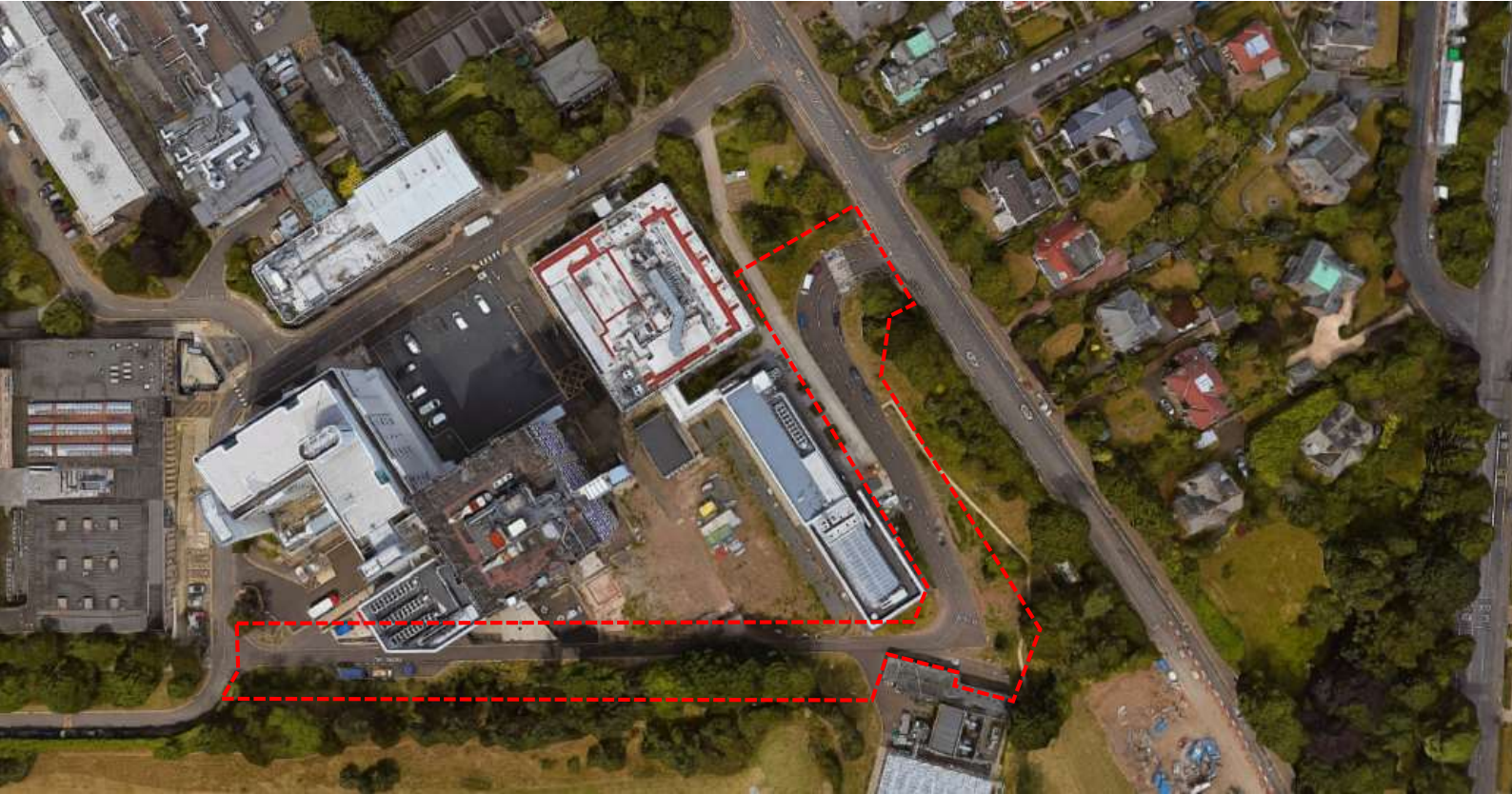
The site is not within a Conservation Area, however, the residential properties that lie to the east of Mayfield Road lie within the Craigmillar Park Conservation Area.

The previous planning history and references for the haul road are as follows:

15/01617/FUL Planning permission was granted for a construction road dated 19th October 2015.

19/04307/FUL Planning permission was granted for renewal of planning permission reference 15/01617/FUL dated 7th November 2019.





This proposal seeks permission for a temporary period for continued use of a construction access road. This is in effect a renewal or extension of the existing permission for the temporary construction road. The previously approved drawings have not changed.

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan was adopted in November 2016 and the application site remains within the urban area within the campus of University of Edinburgh. The Council's Edinburgh Design Guidance was updated in January 2020 but there is no material difference in respect of considering the proposal.

The emerging Edinburgh City Plan 2030 is under examination at present and no significant weight can be attached to it at the current time. Notwithstanding that, there are no changes in the policy approach that are relevant in consideration of this application.

There has been no material change to the surrounding area.

As such the principle of the development remains acceptable.

SUMMARY

On the basis of the current design and delivery programme it is appropriate for consent to be granted for a (further) limited period of 4 years and that the road shall be removed prior to or on the date of expiry of the limited period of consent and any land restored to its previous condition within 3 months of the removal of the development.

The application is for temporary planning permission (which in effect is an extension to the duration of the access road constructed as a temporary planning permission reference 19/04307/FUL). The fee paid is on the basis of the construction of as service/access road. The Scottish Government also confirms in Scottish Planning and Related Fees – as of 1st of April 2022 – Explanatory document 11th May 2022 specifically in the final category 'Variations and Renewals' which includes "Renew or continue the current use, which was granted planning permission on a temporary basis" i.e. to continue a use that was granted on a temporary basis would incur the same fee.

I hope this can therefore again be considered favourably in the context of ongoing investment being made by The University, the changed circumstances and complexities of the global pandemic, and the ongoing commitment to delivery of the wider development.

It would, also be fundamentally senseless to not approve such an application and to require restoration only then to be faced with a repeat proposal for creating a construction access to serve the main development.

If you wish to discuss further or have any queries, please do not hesitate to call me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'REB EVANS', is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

Robert Evans MRICS MRTPI

Partner | Head of Planning
Ryden LLP

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