

Blacket Newsletter: 10 February 2011

Alfred Place Development - Approval for revised proposals

In October 2010, shortly before construction work commenced at the Alfred Place site, a further application was submitted by S1 Developments to the Council proposing some amendments to what had been approved by the Planning Committee in August. Some of the proposed changes were to details such as windows and doors, but a significant change was to replace the block of 5 flats with 4 terraced houses, and also to alter ground, eaves and ridge levels.

The reason given for raising the base-level for construction was to minimise the amount of material to be removed from site. The height of the August-approved development, in relation to the surrounding houses, had been a matter of concern from the beginning and the amended proposal was therefore not welcome. For the proposed terrace of 4 houses the proposal as submitted did not include driveways and this was considered likely to worsen the overall parking situation.

Following a number of comments and representations (including the submission from the Blacket Association), the amendments which have now been approved by the Council incorporate some modifications which address several of the concerns raised. Although approval was given for raising the ground level by 20cms, houses 1 to 4 at the west end of the site will be reduced in height and the ridge heights will therefore remain as originally approved, units 5 & 6 will be 10cms higher and only unit 15 will be significantly higher, by 1.49 metres. The footprint of the block of 4 terraced houses will be smaller than the previously-intended flats in order to increase the garden ground. 3 of these houses will now have their own driveway (the 4th has insufficient garden ground), and this therefore means there will be a modest increase in visitor & permit-holder parking space.

Construction work is continuing on site and in early February, with Council approval, contractors were onsite to carry out pruning and height reduction on those trees which will remain at the east and west ends of the site.

Community action & information

There was some discussion at the recent Committee meeting about whether it might be possible to form a small 'action' group – a group of able-bodied people who might be willing, on occasion, to be called out to support and organise the occasional local neighbourhood initiative, if and when a need arises.

The specific background to this was the recent spell of bad weather and the failure of the Council to grit the pavements. Had it been possible to get a supply of grit, a series of small groups could have combined forces and kept most pavements within our five streets' substantially clear of ice. Three members of the committee expressed interest, but it probably needs at least three or four more people to make it a viable proposition. Please contact Karin Froebel, (40 Blacket Place, tel: 667 0450, email: info@blacket.org) if you are interested in taking this idea further.

Gardens Event

As we are already into February it is not too early to be thinking ahead to better weather and planning for our next Open Gardens evening. There was disappointment that we were unable to

have one last year and we have therefore already pencilled in a 2011 date of Friday 17th June in the hope that the necessary arrangements can be made. This however depends very much on YOU, so please consider whether you could provide one of the venues, and/or speak to any member of the Committee. While residents are always interested to see how others have dealt with the opportunities & constraints of their gardens, the event is almost as important as a social gathering – something which we enjoy in Blacket.

Other ongoing items

Local speed limits....The Council has a proposal for a pilot 20 mph speed limit in all residential streets - across South Central Edinburgh (which would include all of Blacket). The Committee is broadly in favour of this as a means of making the area safer, and hopefully deterring unnecessary through traffic.

Parking Zone extension....There are also proposals to extend the Controlled Parking Zone(CPZ) to the south & west of Blacket with the aim of reducing commuter parking. The means of doing this would be by controlling parking for a short time period each day, thus preventing all-day parking, but with provision for residents and their visitors.

Cameron Toll....Consultation regarding expansion proposals for the Cameron Toll Shopping Centre has been ongoing for a number of years. Approval was given by the City's Development Management Sub Committee(DMSC) on February 9 for a scheme which adds an east-west oriented extension at the south end of the present structure, and a multi-level car park at the south-east corner. The latter proposal replaces the lost area of surface parking but also takes away the continuous road access round the perimeter of the site which currently offers flexible access.

Ray Footman Chairman

Ian Carter, Hon. Secretary: