

# Gorgie Dalry Community Council



## Planning Response to 21/04469/FUL

**Gorgie Dalry Community Council Comments on the proposals for the conversion of the former Tynecastle High School site into student accommodation - application ref: 21/04469/FUL - Partial demolition, change of use and new build to form student residential development and community facilities with associated infrastructure, landscaping and access. Former Tynecastle High School 17 Mcleod Street Edinburgh EH11 2NJ**

**Monday 11th October 2021**

Gorgie Dalry Community Council (GDCC) have been consulted on the above application and have facilitated discussions around these proposals for the last few months, including hosting S1 Developments to discuss the pre-application consultation (21/00988/PAN) application with residents. You can see more on what community consultation we have undertaken at the bottom of our decided page for the Old Tynecastle High School:

<https://gorgiedalrycc.org.uk/2021/09/06/oldths/>

We would like to preface our response with an acknowledgment regarding the community aspects of the scheme and pre-application discussions. The proposed community facility and garden will be of benefit to the local community and community groups and we would like to thank the applicants for these being included. We do also appreciate the community engagement with ourselves and other groups, but we note that we were not included in any of the discussions with LOVE Gorgie Farm, Big Hearts or People Know How. We also received many comments from residents at our meetings that the live public consultation from 3pm to 7pm on 18th May 2021 was poor and not very accessible, being only online despite Covid-19 restrictions in Level 0 where some outdoor gatherings were permitted. It was also very short in length and on one day, missing out on a large proportion of our community who work shifts/evenings and all of our residents who do not have access to the internet. We also had discussions with Living Rent Gorgie Dalry branch members who were excluded from any consultations and whose requests to the developers were ignored. We would like to note that all community groups in our area should be equally consulted and included in such a large development proposal on such an important site in our area.

It is important to say that the GDCC and the local community welcome students to our area and appreciate all the current student residents who live within the GDCC boundary. Students play an important role in the local community, with many studying locally choosing to stay after finishing their studies. We have made efforts to offer extra support to students during the 2020 Covid-19 national lockdown and want to engage our students in the local community as best we can in future.

However, we have spent considerable effort to produce a community survey on the proposals, the results of which are the basis for our response below alongside the thoughts we have heard in our meetings.

**Gorgie Dalry Community Council wish to object to the proposals due to the overwhelming opposition of local residents.** 87% of our survey respondents indicated that they were opposed to the proposals (see Survey Results in Appendix A at the end of this letter).

## 2016 Edinburgh Local Development Plan

In terms of the 2016 Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP), the proposal contravenes several of the policies, and we have outlined these below.

### **Del 1 – Developer contributions and infrastructure delivery.**

Lack of infrastructure contributions in these proposals. Loss of the opportunity to improve the road surface and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on McLeod Street, the proposal mentions the benefits of the site being in close proximity to the Roseburn to Union Canal link and is also very close to the West to East link. This proposal includes no mention of contributions to improving McLeod Street or Russell Road to make better use of these new facilities.

Excessive pressure on local amenities and facilities, such as the local GP surgery. 64% of survey responses noted that the development would put excessive further pressure on local infrastructure such as GP services and buses. Along with Murieston Crescent student accommodation and Westfield Road student accommodation, there are no assurances on improving local services or indeed providing new local services to serve the potential 545 new residents this scheme would bring to the area.

### **Des 1 - Design Quality and Context**

Residents raised concerns over the design quality of the new blocks and the nature of the mono-block design. The proposal does not make a positive contribution to the area, nor does it tie in with or complement the existing listed building. The relatively bland and block-like new build parts do not draw upon positive characteristics of the surrounding area. The existing school is mostly harled, with details accentuated in brick, yet the new blocks are all brick, of varying colours, yet no render has been proposed to fit in with the old school building.

The listed building record published by Historic Environment Scotland mentions the bays of the elevations of the school building which are obviously part of the character of the special interest

of this building: “*Central bays arranged as 6 groups of 3 with wallhead stacks between; in each case central bay with blocking at both floors, moulded cill at 1st floor and cream ashlar pedimented (alternatively triangular and segmental) dormerheads. Central window just breaks eaves line, broader than flanking windows.*”. Yet, under ‘articulation’ (p.64) of the Design and Access Statement, the applicant notes that: “*The facade composition and design of the newly proposed development adopts and relates to the characteristics of the listed building. The design must have a sense of rhythm, composition, materiality and character that speaks to the building and to enhance its surroundings.*” However, the final design of the new build blocks is very monotonous and there is no articulation or rhythm much like every other student residential block or hotel proposal in the city; they are featureless and do not reference the old school’s 3-window bay design whatsoever. We would like Gorgie Dalry to have high-quality designed buildings being built to improve our area and contribute positively to it.

The design also does not contribute to the local context, with no mention of the surrounding architectural features of other buildings.

We would have appreciated a view from Gorgie Road to show whether the new 7-storey block will have a visual impact on the local area.

### **Des 3 – Development Design – Incorporating and enhancing existing and potential features**

Loss of significant existing features (both Workshop ranges, Gym Hall, Janitor’s House, early school extension). The design incorporates only a small portion of the existing features of the site (the original building is the only remnants of the current site). There seems to be no detail to explain why the Workshop ranges cannot be retained within the scheme; only the concluding statement that they are not viable for retention/development. However, listed buildings are listed for a reason, and the Workshops form part of the special interest of this set of buildings, which relate to it being the former Technical School. There has been no mention of how the Workshops, Janitor’s House, and Gym Hall could be retained (the Workshops would be great for small businesses or artists studios) nor is there an accompanying Condition Report, detailing the existing condition and categorising the level of repairs needed. Listed buildings also require higher costs to maintain and protect, and demolishing these special buildings due to the ‘economics’ of them is not a satisfactory reason for their irrevocable loss. We would like them to be retained and repurposed for future generations to enjoy.

### **Des 5 - Development Design – Amenity**

The single-use aspect of the proposals is very unsustainable and potentially detrimental to our balanced community in the future. Des 4 mentions that: “... *b)the design will facilitate adaptability in the future to the needs of different occupiers, and in appropriate locations will promote opportunities for mixed uses...*” and also “*115...Buildings should be designed to be flexible in use...*”. There is a concern on the viability of this scheme being single-use for students: what happens if the Universities end up losing student numbers in 5-10 years and

demand for student accommodation dramatically decreases? We would be left with a 545-bed site which is not fit for conversion to a sustainable community. The site can only really be converted to short-term lets or hotel, which would be detrimental to the balance of our community. Other properties on MacLeod Street nearby are residential, and there could be impacts of noise due to the large-scale single-use of the development (student parties etc).

This site should be a mixed-use proposal to ensure the impact on the amenity of the area is reduced.

Our survey found that 43.1% of respondents think that mixed-use is the most preferable way to house students and 25% think that it would be preferable to have students live in traditional housing stock. Both of these numbers increase when we look at people who are or have been students and have personal experience with what is preferable.

### **Des 6 – Sustainable Building**

The applicant does not take into account the embodied energy of the existing buildings and this information is entirely lacking in the Sustainability Statement, which seems to treat and assess the 3 proposed blocks as new build development, where there is no mention of the existing school building being just that; existing. The substantial demolition has a huge environmental impact not only in the immediate time frame, but going forward. The amount of embodied energy lost is not calculated or assessed. A major part of becoming net zero (which has been outlined in the City Plan 2030) is the reuse of existing building stock, not just building high-performing new buildings. This brownfield site is ideal for the reuse of existing buildings (especially as they form part of a statutorily protected Category B listed building).

### **Des 8 – Public Realm and Landscape Design**

Lack of public art or contribution to the public realm. There is no provision for public art, or evidence of this. The applicant should include the Gorgie Collective in their plans and discussions for this, to enable a meaningful place to be created, which incorporates public art and contributes to the public realm. It is not clear whether the 2 proposed courtyards will be publicly accessible, or able to be enjoyed by local residents. The proposals contravene Policy Des 8.

### **Env 22 – Pollution and Air, Water and Soil Quality**

There is a lack of evidence of harmful impacts to a residential scheme. The developers included an Air quality assessment within their application, in this the main factors they look at rightfully included the North British Distillery, Tynecastle Stadium and the Approach road.

The developer in the Design Access Statement, makes the claim that Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and private residential is undesirable due to the noise and air quality constraints imposed by the local conditions of the site. Yet, in the developers own air quality and noise assessment, there is no mention of the site being unsuitable for private residential properties. In fact, the noise assessment makes it clear that PBSA has the same “high”

requirements under the Scottish Government standards for noise as private residential would (Page 7, ITP Energised Noise Impact Assessment).

It is a faulty argument to say that students should put up with higher levels of noise compared to normal residents of a property. Many students look to live in their flat for the whole year and any respectable landlord should allow for this. The previous year has had students doing most of their learning remotely in their rooms, although we can expect this to reduce a large proportion of learning at universities and colleges will be done in the students bedroom. Therefore, students should have the ability to study in peace and quiet, if the developer feels that the site would be too loud for private residences, this certainly will be far beyond the levels of noise appropriate for students trying to study at home.

It is GDCC's position that private residential would be suitable either by itself or as part of a mixed use development, if the developer was seriously assessing the site why was only two design options looked into? The option with some private residential situated the residential closest to the Approach Road, and did not make use of the original building which is farthest from the HSE no-build zone.

### Hou 8 – Student Accommodation

The development (along with all current PBSAs under construction or those that have received planning permission in the local area) contravenes Policy Hou 8 due to the excessive number of student beds being proposed which would increase the levels of students in the area to a detrimental level.

Hou 8 states: *“Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation where...The proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation (including that in the private rented sector) to an extent that would be detrimental to the maintenance of balanced communities or to the established character and residential amenity of the locality.”*

The data used by the applicant to justify the numbers for this development are not a realistic representation of the real numbers of student density in the area. That is, the data used only looks at other PBSAs within the GDCC boundary (which is relatively small) and does not take into account any other existing or proposed PBSAs within a short walk from the boundary. For example, within a 15min/1 mile walk from the site leads you to Fountainbridge, Slateford or further out towards Chesser. Table 1 contains all the PBSA built or approved in and around GDCC's boundary since 2011.

Table 1 - Built and Approved PBSA in and around GDCC						
Plan App	Beds	Provider	Name	Address	Status	Location
12/01928/FUL	234	Napier	Orwell Terrace	44 Orwell Terrace	Built	GDCC (Area 1)

12/03392/FUL	256	Fresh Student Living	The Mill House	396-400 Gorgie Road	Built	GDCC (Area 1)
11/02165/FUL	179	Nido Student	The Haymarket	4 West Park Place	Built	GDCC (Area 1)
19/01970/FUL	349			24 Westfield Road	UC	GDCC (Area 1)
19/04425/FUL	120			27-29 Murieston Crescent	UC	GDCC (Area 1)
11/01669/FUL	217	Napier	1 Slateford Road	1 Slateford Road	Built	Outwith (Area 2)
15/05422/FUL	225		Silk Mill	162 Dundee St	Built	Outwith (Area 2)
11/00123/FUL	778	Napier	Bainfield	Bainfield Dr	Built	Outwith (Area 2)
12/00128/AMC	307	Student Housing Company	Arran House	5 Drysdale Rd	Built	Outwith (Area 2)
20/00619/FUL	217		553-55 Gorgie Road		Approved	Outwith (Area 2)
19/01795/FUL	269		543 Gorgie Road		Approved	Outwith (Area 2)
17/03675/FUL	337		Pentland House, Robb's Loan		Approved	Outwith (Area 2)
21/04413/FUL	153		Haymarket Yards		Approved	Outwith (Area 2)

During our meetings with S1 Developments and Teague Tynecastle Ltd we requested that they include nearby areas just out with the GDCC boundary in their assessment of existing student residential provision and we were promised by them that they would do so. It is therefore misleading to promise the Community Council something and then totally disregard our request. (They did however stop using the whole Sighthill Gorgie council ward as the analysed area which is an improvement)

As the most recent data available is from the 2011 Census, any claims will be based upon projections from data, which is now over a decade old. We have been given data compiled by the City of Edinburgh Council, after a data request from Cllr Ashley Graczyk. The methodology is that the student numbers from 2011 will be used plus additional numbers of student beds from the built and approved PBSA as of October 2021. This is a good approximation of the current levels of students, but certainly will underestimate the current levels due to both not modeling increases in the student numbers in private rental flats or if the built numbers in PBSA's vary from their planning applications.

We will be looking at three levels of geography in this analysis, this methodology formed by professionals within the Council and does offer two different fair ways to analyse the census data. The first looks more directly at the GDCC boundary and the other includes bordering areas, such as areas with significant recent development for which the population naturally affects GDCC due to our high street and shops.

Table 1 - Student Population Analysis Areas		
Gorgie East 2	Data zone "S01008498" - Gorgie East 02	The very local area around Tynecastle (Star)
Area 1	Datatzones with their polygon's centroid within GDCC area.	Purple colour boundaries on the map
Area 2	Datatzones with minor overlap of GDCC area	Purple colour boundaries on the map

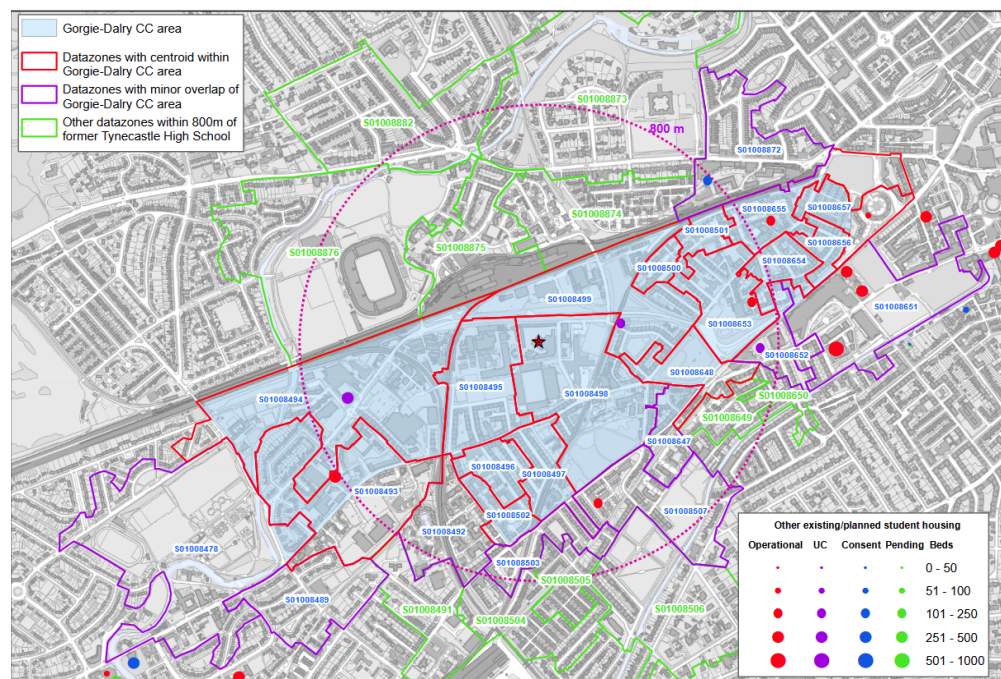


Table 2 - Analysis of Student Populations						
	2011 Pop	Full Time Students	% of Population 2011	New Beds since 2011 (Including this App)	Est Student Population 2021 % (2011 + PBSA)	Est Student Population 2021 % (2011 + PBSA + App)
Gorgie East 2	772	113	14.6%	0 (545)	14.6%	49.9%
Area 1	11,955	2,333	19.5%	1,138 (1,713)	26.5%	29.6%
Area 2	19,063	3,708	19.5%	3,737 (4,312)	32.7%	34.3%

The student population in Gorgie-Dalry in 2011 from both areas stood at 20%. 1,138 new Purpose Built Student Accommodation have been built or approved since then using the Area 1

boundary and this would be an even larger 3,737 using the slightly larger Area 2. **This is a rise in student numbers of 49% and 100% respectively.**

In terms of the immediate neighbourhood of the build (Gorgie East 02 Data zone) the **student population would more than triple** if the new development goes ahead, from 113 students or 15% of the population **to 658 or 50% once built.**

Both of these situations at the local and neighbourhood levels paint a picture of an already excessively high concentration of students and this further development will add yet more numbers. Making it yet harder to form a balanced community. From the applicants own documents they admit that students are likely not to stick around in the long term locally or even constantly through the year. This will form a transient community hollowed out twice a year during holiday breaks and with a guaranteed yearly rotating population.

Table 3 - Individual Constituent Data Zones.					
DataZone	Name	Population	Full Time Students	FT Students as % of Population	Areas
S01008493	Gorgie West - 02	793	103	13	1 & 2
S01008494	Gorgie West - 03	688	76	11	1 & 2
S01008495	Gorgie West - 04	891	175	20	1 & 2
S01008496	Gorgie West - 05	956	177	19	1 & 2
S01008497	Gorgie East - 01	786	110	14	1 & 2
S01008498	Gorgie East - 02	772	113	15	1 & 2
S01008499	Gorgie East - 03	996	226	23	1 & 2
S01008500	Gorgie East - 04	402	76	19	1 & 2
S01008501	Gorgie East - 05	607	129	21	1 & 2
S01008502	Shandon - 01	635	156	25	1 & 2
S01008648	Polwarth - 04	610	121	20	1 & 2
S01008653	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 03	684	151	22	1 & 2
S01008654	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 04	937	208	22	1 & 2
S01008655	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 05	796	186	23	1 & 2
S01008656	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 06	644	122	19	1 & 2
S01008657	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 07	758	204	27	1 & 2
S01008478	Stenhouse and Saughton Mains - 06	840	53	6	2



S01008647	Polwarth - 03	589	116	20	2
S01008651	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 01	965	406	42	2
S01008652	Dalry and Fountainbridge - 02	567	89	16	2
S01008489	Slateford and Chesser - 04	620	61	10	2
S01008492	Gorgie West - 01	944	112	12	2
S01008503	Shandon - 02	833	128	15	2
S01008507	Shandon - 06	897	224	25	2
S01008872	Deans Village - 05	853	186	22	2

### **Loss of a balanced community**

This is further substantiated in the Student Housing Guidance (City of Edinburgh Council, 2016) which notes that: *“Balanced sustainable communities require the dominant residential component to be permanent and not transient. The student population, where not living at home, can be a significant element of the transient population. While students make many positive contributions to society, excessive concentrations may over time result in a poor quality of place, a diminished sense of community and make an area less attractive to all sections of the population.”* (pg 6)

We have mentioned previously that the single-use of such a large and prominent site within the community is unsustainable, and this is further substantiated by the Student Housing Guidance, which states that: *“It is particularly important that the design of purpose- built student accommodation should create safe and pleasant places for residents and the wider community, create a mix of uses avoiding a single land use and ensure adaptability.”* (pg 7).

It is evident from our previous discussions at our meetings and our survey results that local residents and our local community are in dire need of social and affordable homes being built in our area, but also that maintaining our a balanced community for future sustainability is paramount. A large 545-bed single-use proposal is very risky and goes against the Council’s own guidance: *“Large mono-use development has significant potential to harm the character of an area. Locational and design guidance criterion c) seeks to guide the mix within larger proposals to ensure a balance between the need for student accommodation and housing, while mitigating the impact upon the character of an area.”* (pg 7).

The lack of any affordable and social housing included (let alone standard residential) for a site more than 0.25ha (this site is ~1.4ha) is also contrary to the Council’s own planning policy (ECLP Policy Hou 10 and LDP Policy Hou 8). The site does not directly sit within or share a boundary with any university (see the applicant’s sheet on proximity to universities in their Design and Access Statement) so a minimum of 50% of the total new build should be residential, as stated below:

*“The criteria in ECLP Policy Hou 10 and LDP Policy Hou 8 will be applied to proposals for student housing using the locational and design guidance set out below:*

*a) In locations within or sharing a boundary with (or separated only by a road) a main university or college campus, as identified in Map 1, student housing will generally be acceptable.\**

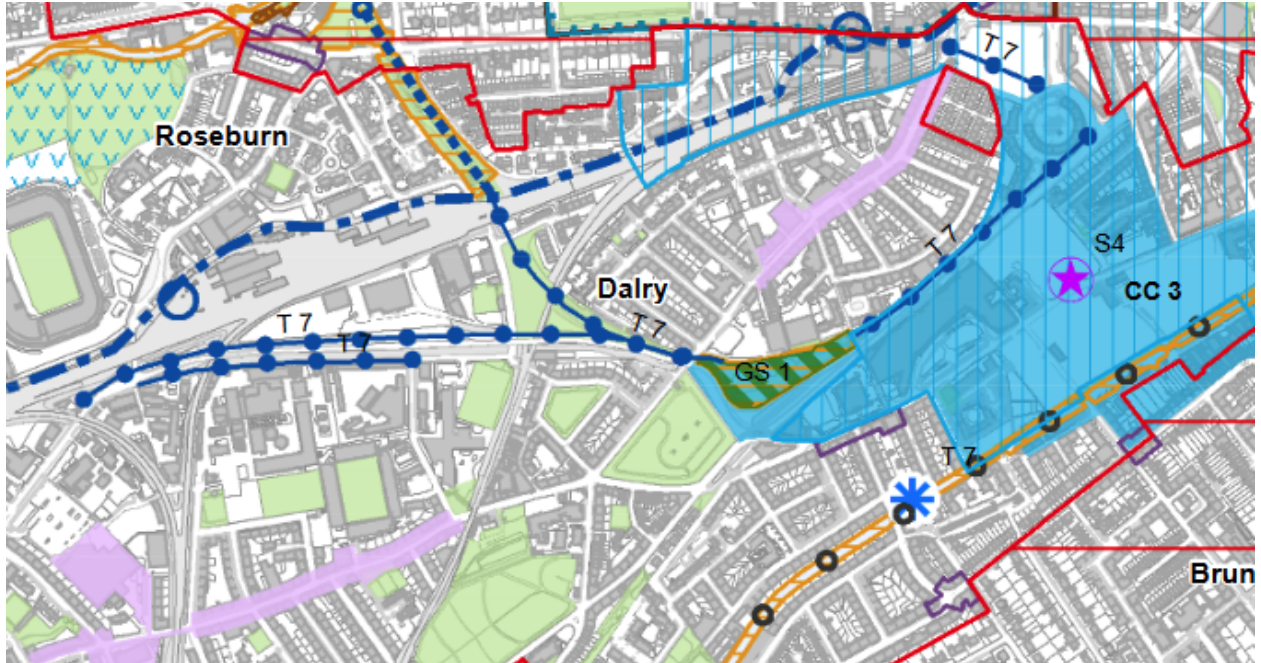
*b) Outwith criteria a) student housing will generally be supported on sites with less than 0.25ha developable area. Consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of student housing, and other land uses which contribute to a transient population, where these uses will have a detrimental impact on character.\* \*\**

*c) Outwith criteria a) and b) sites identified as a high probability of delivering housing within Map 5 taken from the LDP Housing Land Study (June 2014) and sites with greater than 0.25ha developable area must comprise a proportion of housing as part of the proposed development, to balance the mix of land uses and to contribute to housing land need. On these sites the new build residential gross floor area shall represent a minimum of 50% of the total new build housing and student accommodation gross floor area.\*...” (pg 8, Student Housing Guidance, 2016)*

### **Tra 1 – Location of Major Travel Generating Development**

As previously mentioned this proposal does not make any contribution to Local Transport Strategy objectives. As this development seeks to be car free very admirably, and does provide extensive cycle parking/storage, we do hope that some of this will be accessible to visitors of the building and not just residents.

More importantly due to the site's location in relation to a number of active travel proposals in the LDP 2016 (and carried into the in development City Plan 2030), a contribution should be made. If the student accommodation which forms part of the Fountainbridge allocated site is to contribute to the redevelopment of Dalry Community Park (GS1) and the Roseburn to Union Canal Active Travel scheme (T7) it would be right for a similar contribution to be made from this site to both of these LDP proposals. A route is shown in the LDP under T7 traveling along the approach road from Westfield to the community park, since this site borders these LDP proposals a contribution should be made to improving the active travel connections of the site, also making the claim that this a car free development more credible.



### **Tra 2 – Private Car parking**

As mentioned previously there is a lack of parking due to the “car free” nature of the development. As there is no mention of any enforcement or guarantee that each of the 545 students will have no car. It is highly likely that some will have a car and will need to park in nearby streets outside the new development, further adding to the pressure on local services and amenities.

### **Tra 9 - Cycle and Footpath Network**

The transport statement provided nor any document we can find makes reference to how this proposal does not prevent the full implementation of the proposed cycle paths/footpaths in the LDP 2016 proposals. T7’s indicative route runs either directly north of the site or would make use of part of this site. It is unclear if there has been any thought into how this proposal could be detrimental to T7, specifically the Westfield to Dalry link or if this proposal could play a part in delivering part of this link.

# Planning Response to 21/04468/LBC

**Gorgie Dalry Community Council Comments on the proposals for the conversion of the former Tynecastle High School site into student accommodation - application ref: 21/04468/LBC - Selective demolitions to enable adaptation of original school building to long-term future use including preservation of essential special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its setting. | Former Tynecastle High School 17 Mcleod Street Edinburgh EH11 2NJ**

## 2016 Edinburgh Local Development Plan

In terms of the 2016 Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP), the proposal contravenes several of the policies in relation to the listed building and its setting, and we have outlined these below.

### **Env 2 – Listed Buildings – Demolition**

The proposals contravene Policy Env 2 due to the unsubstantiated conclusions on the economic viability of retaining the existing buildings and instead proposing excessive demolition of a listed building. The policy states that: *“Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, taking into account: a) the condition of the building and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value to be derived from its continued use...”*. There is no evidence from the applicant that other avenues have been explored which include the Workshops, to a sufficient level of detail. Nor are there any outline cost reports from a Quantity Surveyor or similar professional which show the costs that would be involved in repairing and altering the Workshops (and Janitor’s House) to enable their continued use. Have the applicants explored a design where the Workshops are retained and converted to lettable commercial units that can be used by the community, such as community groups, local artists or local small businesses? There are also many grant-aided funding streams available to the repair and reuse of existing listed buildings.

Loss of rare school type survival (Tynecastle Supplementary School and Workshops) and associated workshops. It is clear from the applicant that the loss of the Workshops is “regrettable” (as stated in their Design and Access Statement and their Heritage Statement) and we do not agree with their demolition. Residents have mentioned the importance of the school as a key part of the local area’s social history and the Workshops are a rare survivor of a form of education which was a key part of Gorgie-Dalry in the past, and which has since been lost to new methods of education. The Janitor’s House also contributes to the history and development of the school buildings, as all pre-1919 schools contain a janitor’s house and modern schools do not. The Janitor’s House also contributes positively to the main school building and MacLeod Street elevation.

From our survey, many respondents noted that the demolitions were too many and would be a detrimental loss to the area. Of those who oppose the application (n=99), they would argue against using these arguments: 37% would say “*the demolitions are too many and result in a detrimental loss to the heritage of the site and local area*”.

The lack of evidence on converting, restoring or renovating the Workshops and other buildings within the curtilage of the listed building goes against the Council’s own guidance for listed buildings, which states that: “*The sympathetic conversion and re-use of existing buildings on the site, particularly stable blocks, mews, service courts and steadings, should be considered prior to developing proposals for new build; care should be taken to incorporate surviving original features in these buildings where possible. However, any proposals to alter unsympathetically, relocate or remove items within the curtilage, such as stables, mews, garden walls, stone steps, stone paving and cobbled or setted areas are likely to detract from the quality of the building’s setting and are unlikely to be approved.*” (pg 22, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

The loss of the Workshops and Janitor’s House is therefore objectionable and contravenes Policy Env 2.

### **Env 3 – Listed Buildings – Setting**

New 7-storey block will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the existing building, which will be irrevocably damaged by the significant loss of historic fabric. The existing buildings are much lower, with the main central pavilion of the original building being the highest existing building level, but still lower than the proposed 7-storey block. This goes against the Council’s own guidance on views of and from listed buildings, which states that: “*New development should not restrict or obstruct views of, or from, the listed building or rise above and behind the building so that its silhouette can no longer be seen against the sky from the more familiar viewpoints. Distant views of features and landmarks which may have been exploited in the design of the building should not be obstructed by the development.*” (pg 22, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

The removal of a large amount of the original and historic railings to the principal frontage on MacLeod Street will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the building, and goes against the Council’s own guidance on railings and gates of listed buildings, which states that: “*Balconies, gates, railings and handrails are usually formal components in the design of an elevation. They should be maintained and repaired and, if they have to be replaced, should be erected on a like for like basis. The recommended paint colour is black gloss.*” (pgs 8-9, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019). The proposed drawings showing the external railings and gates make no mention of material, finish or colour. It is evident that their design is not in keeping with or on a like for like basis with the original railings and gates.

## Env 4 - Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions

The applicant has provided no information or detailed drawings on the internal alterations to the existing building, in sufficient detail. There are some plans showing the communal spaces and their layout, but there are no drawings or schedules outlining what is happening to the main stair, its decorative roof light, the classrooms, any existing decorative plasterwork, etc. It is imperative that any existing features are maintained, protected, and enhanced. The proposals therefore contravene Policy Env 4, which states that: *“Proposals to alter or extend a listed building will be permitted where a) those alterations or extensions are justified; b) there will be no unnecessary damage to historic structures or diminution of its interest; and c) where any additions are in keeping with other parts of the building.”*.

The replacement of all the original windows to the existing school building is objectionable and goes against the Council’s own guidance on listed buildings, which states that: *“Original windows are important features of any building and should not be removed or altered. The complete replacement of original windows will only be approved where they have clearly deteriorated beyond practicable repair. Proposals must be accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they are beyond repair; a professional survey may be requested.”* (pg 13, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

The repainting of the existing harling goes against the Council’s guidance on Painting and Render, which states that: *“Walls covered with smooth cement render or a harled finish should generally be painted in earth colours or neutrals (grey, cream or beige).”* (pg 11, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

From our survey, many respondents noted that the proposals were detrimental to the existing listed buildings, appearance and/or historic interest and/or setting. Of those who oppose the application (n=99), they would argue against using these arguments: 26% would say *“the proposals are detrimental to the existing listed buildings’ architectural character, appearance and/or historic interest and/or setting”*.

The loss of the Early Extension and Janitor’s House, which are of historic and architectural interest, as noted in the Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement, will be permanently lost in this proposal, and not repaired or restored. This is against the Council’s own guidance for listed buildings, which states that: *“Where there is an existing extension of historic or architectural interest, such as a conservatory or outshot, this should be restored or repaired, rather than replaced.”* (pg 11, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

There is the removal of an historic staircase shown on the ‘Downtakings Main Building’ plan, noted as the “third storey of accommodation, and no evidence has been provided to explain why. This is against the Council’s own guidance for listed buildings, which states that: *“The removal or alteration of any historic staircase, including handrails and balusters, is not normally acceptable.”* (pg 20, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, City of Edinburgh Council, Feb 2019).

## Public Comments

GDCC is aware that often planning committee members from the City of Edinburgh Council do not see the exact comments received from the local residents, as a sanitised and summarised version is presented by the planning official. As GDCC wishes to be as fully transparent as possible, below are a collection of comments we have received from residents on their reasons to either support or oppose this development. Some responses where the resident did not wish to be named have been removed, or the respondent lived too far from the area and short comments which are very similar have been combined but this is made clear in the table.

<p>Angela Smith &amp; John Thain (Dalry). Garry Williamson (Fountainbridge). Audrey Whitehead, Conxi Fornieles, G.Inglis, Ian Cowan, Jacqueline McGowan, John, Mark Anderson, Rachel &amp; William Thorburn (Gorgie). Nancy Bryson (Murieston). Carolyn Rowan (Sighthill). Kevan Waldie &amp; Lucy Gibson (Slateford). Michelle Turnbull, Jim Gray &amp; Moira Gray (Westfield).</p>	<p>There is an excess of student accommodation. We need affordable/social housing, not yet more student accommodation. (Collective Summary)</p>
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Name	Position	Why do you support or oppose this development?
Adam Heydon, Dalry	Opposed	<p>This does nothing for the community of Gorgie Dalry. The development will consist of rooms that are only fit for students under regulations so there is no capacity for local residents or future prospect of conversion. Providing no parking means residents will suffer further with cars filling up streets. The community will be broken as students will not mix with residents or respect that this is a living / working community that supports its businesses and respects everyone's rights to a quiet and safe atmosphere. Turning Gorgie Dalry in to a student area will drive locals further out of Edinburgh through lack of affordable housing or people not wanting to settle in this part of town, crippling further our communities. Soon Edinburgh will be the city of tourists and students and we'll all soon be left wondering "where did it go wrong".</p>

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Aditi Jehangir, Haymarket/ West End	Opposed	I believe the area does not need another unaffordable and obtrusive purpose built student accommodation. Gorgie/Dalry has several other large PBSA buildings and the area is already at capacity for services such as parking and GP surgeries. These accommodations usually are too expensive for the vast majority of students, do not promote integrated communities and take up valuable space that could be used for green space, affordable housing or community space.
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Alan Bygate, Westfield	Opposed	There is a chronic housing shortage in Edinburgh and there are adequate student housing developments in the west of Edinburgh. If there are residential building works going on then they should be affordable social housing developments for people who really need them.
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Anonymous, Gorgie	Support	The site currently has no use. There appears to be little else it can be used for. Unlike other student accommodation proposals this is relatively out of the way and won't be directly affecting existing residents. Around half of my tenement stair are students who can often be noisy and don't take care of the stair due to the short term stay. Having a dedicated site for student would hopefully mean more property available for residents and not necessarily an increase in overall student numbers in the area.
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Alison Cluness, Dalry	Opposed	We do not need any new student accommodation in the area. There have been 3 large new blocks of student flats go up and in a time where regular people are struggling to buy property it is unfair and unnecessary.
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Alison Kidd, Gorgie	Opposed	Another PBSA is not needed in the area, it should be redirected to the needs of the community which are not being met. Such as more green spaces, community buildings and social housing. PBSA is also too expensive for most students. Gone are the days when the majority of students are all middle to upper class from high income families. There are a lot of working class students that simply cannot afford the cost of living.
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Anonymous, Murieston	Opposed	I believe student halls make sense, those provided by the schools. However private profit-driven student accommodations I think are excessive and there are far too many being built in Edinburgh residential neighbourhoods not even near a campus (such as this one and the one on Murieston Crescent). The influx of students in such high numbers to this small neighbourhood will surely raise noise pollution, waste issues (just take a look at fountain park waste and glass bins after a weekend), littering, foot traffic, use of parks, etc.
Amelia, Gorgie	Opposed	I think we need more social housing/affordable housing. There are student flats popping up on every corner around this area. The only non student accommodation is the spring well development which is out of reach in terms of affordability for a lot of "normal" people. Do something for working class people that's nice and help first time buyers get on the ladder. We don't need another student hall where these companies overcharge their parents for profit. Thanks.
Amy, Dalry	Opposed	There is already a surplus of student accommodation in Edinburgh, with many rooms left empty due to COVID-19-induced remote learning. We do not know how long this may last, or indeed if flexible learning - as with office working - will become more prevalent in post-pandemic life. Why build more student accommodation when it might not be needed? Affordable housing for long-term residents (as opposed to students who only stay for 3-4 years) is the obvious preference here.
Ann, Murieston	Opposed	I am afraid of the calm residential area turning into a student party area, thus forcing me as a working professional to move further out to make room for students. There are already new student accommodations built around my area and there's no need for more as the area has many already existing student developments nearby and I have a feeling another student development will take possibilities away from locals and families living or wanting to move to this area.
Anonymous, Gorgie	Support	I believe Gorgie as it is now requires development to improve the local area. Some buildings have not been properly maintained and the general Gorgie area feels uncared for, with many people (including residents) not respecting the area - examples being fly tipping or theft/drug use. Introducing students to the area will likely bring investment to the local area, attracting desirable businesses (new cafes etc), which I hope would result in the improved upkeep of Gorgie. Students will also demand the area to be safe and I would welcome this - I do not feel comfortable walking around Gorgie. I would hope the safety of the area would improve, whether from improved maintenance or lighting, reducing likelihood of crime, or more security/police presence. I believe the

positives of improving Gorgie outweigh the potential negatives. However, a big negative for me would be even more issues with parking, which is already problematic. I would welcome the introduction of permitted parking.

Anonymous,  
Gorgie

Opposed

I don't think this development benefits student or non student residents. I'm the Gorgie/Dalry area there have been more student residencies built than other types of accommodation in the 9 years I have lived in the area. The developers can make more money by fitting more higher paying people on the same footprint compared to affordable family or single person housing.  
For students it restricts integration into the local community. Student housing is very helpful for students from overseas and also if they are new to the area out with this I only see these halls as a cash cow for developers.

Avril Cuthbert ,  
Hutchison  
/Chesser

Opposed

They have not adequately proved that the site is safe for student housing. If it's not suitable for residential living, it's not suitable for student living. Also, Gorgie desperately needs truly affordable housing.

Anonymous,  
Murieston

Not sure

I think this place could be developed for small first time buyer places rather than more student accommodation. There are so many student accommodation blocks around here that I'm surprised Edinburgh needs more. There is limited parking for people that live in Dalry already so building another large student block would limit those spaces even more.

Caroline Astor,  
Stenhouse

Opposed

I oppose this plan, Edinburgh is saturated with student housing and particularly in close proximity to this site, with an abundance within walking distance. The doctors and dentist surgery's in the area are all already bursting at the seams unable to accommodate the requirements of the area as it stands. Students pay no council tax therefore no contributions made towards refuse collection for example. There is no requirement for this type of accommodation.

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Charlotte Cooper, Gorgie	Support	Something needs to be done with the site and it is unlikely long term rental or buying will be desirable with the stadium, distillery and road surrounding it. Students in short term rentals will give a use to the area and smarten it up. Car free is essential. The community aspects really appeal to me.
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Anonymous, Ex-Tynecastle Pupil	Opposed	No more student accommodation is needed in Gorgie Dalry. This does not support the historical nature of the building or the needs of the surrounding area. An area desperately in need of social housing and community amenities.
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Daniel Gospodinov, Dalry	Not sure	Ideally, I would like affordable housing built for residents. It's not a secret for anyone that demand on Edinburgh housing is huge and rents and property prices have exploded in recent years.
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Then again, I appreciate students are an important contributor to the economy, and purpose-built student accommodation is a very efficient way of housing them, while being conducive to the traditionally strived-for student experience. It also frees up spaces in traditional tenements for families and professionals. PBSA, however, isolates students from the wider community of the area and creates fertile ground for conflicts between the two types of residents - students and non-students.

So, I'm not necessarily opposed to the development but don't necessarily support it either. What I do know is that it needs to provide good-quality housing, needs to be affordable even for students of poorer backgrounds, and needs to be mindful of how to integrate students into the wider community of Gorgie.

David MacLennan, Roseburn	Support	Nothing much else seems financially viable with all the planning constraints. S1 have an excellent track record of developments. They developed a site over the garden wall from us 10 years ago when they were much smaller. I have no other or better 'vision' for the List B site. Social or mixed housing, although needed, would seem not to work on that site.
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David McLaren , Gorgie    Opposed    History of the area would be ruined with students

David Stewart, Gorgie    Support    Its a useful site that would benefit from redevelopment and in my opinion, given its location, it would be better served as student accommodation than other type of residential properties.

Given the proximity to the distillery and the noise and odour that is emitted I doubt any families or professionals will want to live in the area. Also noted is the guidelines that they need to follow re the ventilation and seems sensible that student accommodation is the most likely option.

David Waters, Gorgie    Opposed    The density of student accommodation within the Gorgie / Dalry is substantial, with multiple developments already underway within a half-mile radius.

This development doesn't serve the wider needs of Gorgie/Dalry in providing affordable new housing stock and will be to the detriment of the area as parking spaces needed by locals will be taken up by this substantial uplift in student population.

Dee Shaw, Dalry    Opposed    I feel Gorgie/Dalry have enough new build student accommodations on the go. Edinburgh has been allowing lots of student accommodation to be built everywhere and not enough social housing. How about some homes for the people of Edinburgh first and foremost.

Diane Clifford, Ardmillan    Opposed    The area is already saturated with student blocks and it's time that social and affordable housing was given priority to local people and first time buyers. Council Tax revenue would also be lost if student accommodation was built and the council need all the money they can get to provide services.

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Eben Dombay Williams, Gorgie      Opposed      Edinburgh is overly saturated with PBSAs as a result of the unsustainable growth models of our universities (aiming to continually increase profits by raising student numbers by up to 5% per year). Private developers and investors want to share in these profits by constructing expensive and often poor-quality student housing to then charge extremely high rents, which is an extremely inefficient use of land and construction resources during a housing crisis in which we have an especially critical shortage in social and affordable housing.

Student numbers are also not going to rise forever. The vast number of students targeted by these developments come from abroad, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic which has restricted international travel shows how unsustainable this business model can be based on global trends. This waste of resources on a housing development that can only be used by students, rather than both students and longer term residents also has a negative environmental impact which is reckless during a climate emergency and cannot be fixed by simply installing a community garden. We must also recognise that this is a case of public land going into private hands. We need to protect our public land as it is otherwise very difficult to find sites for the social and affordable housing we desperately need to drive down the skyrocketing rent prices in our community.

Anonymous, Gorgie      Opposed      We don't need any more student housing. Gorgie and the surrounding area is being overrun with student housing and there is a huge lack of affordable family homes for people who live here. Since the census information is 10 years out of date I cannot believe there is sufficient demand for yet more student housing that will lie empty for most of the year.

Etta Proudfoot , Gorgie      Opposed      Gorgie already has a huge amount of student accommodation. There is not enough affordable housing in Edinburgh/ Gorgie for individuals/ families. This is an inappropriate development for these reasons. I also object to the "no parking spaces" proposal. How naive to think that the students who will live there, will not have cars. I live very close by and can barely park my car (which is essential for my job in social care) now. This ridiculous idea will only put more pressure on parking in the street and surrounding area, which is already difficult.

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Euan McLean, Slateford	Opposed	There is a clear drive across Edinburgh to push for the development of student accommodation despite the fact that it has never been more difficult for those not undertaking full time study to afford a flat (though I do not doubt there are people who are in full time study who also have this issue). This will only make this problem worse as the supply of new flats are pushed towards the student housing market with the aim of profiting from Edinburgh's student population. There are already numerous student flats being built close to the GDCC area so there is no argument, in my opinion, that there is a clear need for more student housing on this site. The site should be used for a flat development with the aim of providing affordable flats for people who live and work in this city, not rental assets for landlords.
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Fiona Allen, Lauriston	Opposed	500+ student premises creates a little non-integrated mini-community, who use all the facilities of the city in terms of transport, water, and leisure amenities, but pay no Council Tax. In addition, outwith term times, the premises either lie empty (wasteful) or are re-purposed as STLs (anti-social).
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Georgie, Murieston	Opposed	It will overpopulate the area. More student housing is not needed. There is already a lot of student housing in the area. The area desperately needs more affordable accommodation for residents of the area NOT more students. Within less than a mile there is already Another student development underway at Murieston park. There is no need in the area for more. There is more need for residential housing! Locals and residents will want to move away. The area will lose its community and it will push out locals.
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Giedrius, Dalry	Opposed	Purpose built student accommodation is a rip off for both students and general public. It is often highly overpriced and only demographic it benefits is the developers. In my view, there should only be 'official' student accommodation provided by the educational establishment and the rest should be a free market for professionals and students that do not wish to live in student-only tenement.
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Ian McSherry, Gorgie	Opposed	There is already an over-supply of such accommodation within reasonable walking distance of the site mentioned. Alongside the dearth of reasonably-priced housing for families within the inner Edinburgh area, this makes this development entirely inappropriate, in context.
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Iga szczudlo , Murieston	Opposed	There is already a new built student accommodation on Murieston crescent. There is no affordable housing for young couples and professionals. Edinburgh has enough student acc already. Students can rent normal flats as well.
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Irene Beavis , Roseburn	Opposed	We have sufficient student accommodation in the city. This application would change the community aspect of the area. I would prefer to have affordable housing instead.
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Anonymous, Gorgie	Opposed	What the area needs it more high-quality housing stock that is accessible to all residents and not just students. There are already a lot of student housing developments in and near Gorgie/Dalry. In fact, it seems like every new building going up is student housing. While there is obviously a need for student housing, this should not exclude the people who live in Edinburgh year round and have to deal with what is already a difficult private housing market
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Jenna Pike , Gorgie	Opposed	We need affordable housing in our area. We need people putting down roots, to improve the area. Not those who will leave after a year not caring. We don't have the services and students don't contribute in forms of council tax to add to them. The development is far too close to a high school, where the road is already saturated during peak times. Further bodies leaving at similar times would cause carnage.
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Jo Ramsay , Murieston	Opposed	There are far too many student flats in Edinburgh and there is already one being built at murieston crescent, there's students flats in Gorgie, fountain park etc and Edinburgh needs to start think of their own people and soon there won't be spaces for Edinburgh residents to do anything such as world of football being knocked down for student flats, utterly farce!!
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John Whyte, Murieston	Opposed	Murieston already has Student Accommodation being built, & right next to me. There are too many proposals for this type of accommodation locally.
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John Wilkinson, Murieston	Opposed	This will put a strain on Springwell Medical Centre surgery and should be used instead for general social housing.
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Katharine Hughes, Gorgie	Opposed	I believe that luxury student housing is not beneficial to students or the local community. I have no problem with the site being developed however it should be affordable housing for everyone. I am also concerned that Gorgie does not have the amenities to support a sudden influx in population - it is already very difficult to register at the local GPs, for example.
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Laura major, Murieston	Opposed	The area is in desperate need of affordable housing for a broader swathe of the population - the site should be developed for this purpose. Developers have argued that it is not a suitable site for housing development because of emissions from the brewery - in which case it is not suitable for student housing either and should be repurposed for other community functions. As the report stated a full extended survey of student housing over a wider area has not been conducted and so the argument for the business model is flawed and based on insufficient data.
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Lynsey Higgins , Murieston	Opposed	I am strongly opposed to this application on the grounds that we are currently surrounded by student accommodation in an area with very little affordable housing for normal Edinburgh residents. In this area there are currently two new student accommodation sites in the process of being built. We do not need any more student accommodation!
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Lynsey Nairn Houston, Shandon	Opposed	There is no further need for student accommodation in Edinburgh at present, however there is a huge need for affordable housing. There's already student accommodation in progress just around the corner. Equally there is the nearest college or university in relation to McLeod Street. There's also a neighbouring nursery which forms part of the stadium now which will suffer severe disruption by these proposals.
Margaret Menzies, Gorgie	Support	The site has been empty for far too long and the old school building is in a bad state
Anonymous, Murieston	Opposed	There have been hundreds of student accommodation beds provided in the Dalry Fountainbridge Slateford area. I don't understand in the current housing shortage why not providing and social or mid market accommodation is acceptable. The arguments made by planners about the site being surrounded by industry and roads making the plot not financially suitable for mainstream houses is ridiculous unless all of us who live in the area and buy properties here are all wrong. They are deliberately marginalising the city's residents who live here all year round and contribute to the economy.
Muireann Crowley, Bruntsfield	Opposed	Gorgie has a dire shortage of affordable housing and this development will do nothing to address it. PBSAs are more expensive than the average private rental in Edinburgh and trap students into fixed-term tenancies that are more restrictive and punitive than regular private lets. PBSAs generate profit for developers and international investors, and because they are built to different (lower) standards they cannot be easily repurposed for general-purpose housing thereby adding nothing to the generally available housing stock. The development is extremely high density and does not address the impact a development of this size will have on NHS medical and dental practices, nor is there any provision of housing. Some students do own cars and without addressing this need they will increase pressure on street parking. This is an extremely short-sighted development that is both a bad deal for students and for the community.

Onintza Garai, Gorgie      Opposed      From fountainbridge to gorgie in the last decade the number of student accomodations has taken over the affordable and other much needed amenities in the west of Edinburgh. There is a serious thinking to do of what kind of city we want Edinburgh to become. Personally I prefer to have more sports, social facilities or even a green space.

Paul Beswick, Tollcross      Opposed      The concentration of student residences has become too high in this SW slice of central Edinburgh. Residences should be nearer to student campuses - Herriot Watt, Queen Margaret's, Napier Sighthill and Craiglockhart, King's Buildings. It distorts the demography. Too little housing for long term residents is being built.

Anonymous, Gorgie      Opposed      The area is in dire need of affordable housing and associated parking. Though I believe we would benefit from the green space, the last thing Gorgie needs is more student housing. The impact on traffic (and further street parking) would almost be dangerous, with the high school at the bottom of the road and the football club. The traffic on game days is already incredibly difficult to navigate so to add 500+ more students and their inevitable parking/food deliveries/grocery deliveries is unthinkable. The Dalry Gorgie area is crying out for affordable housing and the economical advantages this would bring. The shops and restaurants would benefit greatly from working families moving into the area, especially as we emerge from the Covid restrictions and hard times. The noise and litter already experienced by local residents living close to student housing already in the area needs to be taken into consideration. The near constant parties and frequent police presence at the student housing near Caledonian Crescent is horrifying for the residents and wholly unfair, and I dread to think what the properties on McLeod St would experience. I have no issue with students - and of course once was a student - but the centre of Edinburgh is quickly becoming unaffordable for working families and individuals. I agree something needs to be done to the old school, but Dalry and Gorgie needs affordable non-student housing.

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Rachel Ryan , Gorgie      Opposed      We are in dire need of affordable and social housing across the country, and Gorgie is no different. There is already a huge provision for purpose built student accommodation in Edinburgh, particularly west of the city centre. Yet families and single people spend months, and years, on social housing waiting lists. And buy-to-let landlords and AirBnB entrepreneurs buy up the remainder of the housing stock in Gorgie. Students have a role to play in a city. I myself studied at Edinburgh University and lived in University owned accommodation in 1st year and rented flats subsequently. Gorgie has a proud tradition of community, and a thriving contemporary community. Adding student accommodation will erode that as they are transient by nature. There are already far too many short term lets in Gorgie. We need to focus on building homes and welcoming people to the area who intend to live in and contribute to the community.

Anonymous, Gorgie      Opposed      It homogenises the area which is in dire need of proper housing and community areas that improve and invest in the continuity of the community. Not housing for a transient population that could otherwise be properly integrated into the community if they lived amongst locals in tenements.

Scott Gordon, Dalry      Opposed      I'm a 26 years old young working professional who stays in the area in a rented flat. Spent all my childhood growing up in Gorgie, Dalry, Fountainbridge and attended Tynecastle High school itself. Growing up in the area I've seen so much student accommodation being built within these areas, far more than housing, it feel as though every inch of land that pops up is snatched up by developers for more student accommodation, especially in recent years. As a first time buyer it's incredibly difficult to get a home or even afford one in the Gorgie-Dalry neighbourhood.

The Tynecastle High School site is massive and at the very least should include some affordable housing. I can't understand how there can be more need for more student accommodation, especially given the amount build nearby recently.

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Shaun Cassidy, Westfield	Opposed	Gorgie and Edinburgh more widely is in desperate need of more genuinely affordable housing. Rents are spiralling out of all control all across the city and large corporate investors are increasingly buying up all the land to build luxury flats which operate at massive profit and drain massive amounts of money from local people and the local community. The fact that this former publicly owned site is to be used in this way, to rinse the pockets of cash cow students at great profit for massive private profit is a disgrace. The local council needs to use its powers to stop this runaway train and to start prioritising the needs of normal working people.
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Anonymous, Murieston	Opposed	Too many purpose built student developments are already in place. There is a reasonably large development happening in Murieston Crescent which is designated student accommodation. An even larger one just around the corner would ruin the family oriented and residential nature of the area. It's for this reason I'm very opposed to this plan.
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Gemma, Gilmerton	Support	I think it will be a great asset to the city but also to Gorgie as a small town.
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Vicki Allardice, Fountainbridge	Opposed	The explosion of purpose built student accommodation in the area is excessive and to the detriment of our services (like GPs) and does not offer affordable housing that is desperately needed
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# APPENDIX A -

## Summary of survey results - Tynecastle Student Accommodation (October 2021)

### Background

In order to inform the Gorgie Dalry Community Council's (GDCC) response to planning applications for student accommodation on the site of the old Tynecastle High School, GDCC conducted an electronic survey to gather the views of community members about the proposals. This report presents a summary of the key findings (percentages given have been rounded to the nearest whole number). The survey was advertised online through social media, the GDCC email mailing list and on the street via paper flyers.

### Respondents

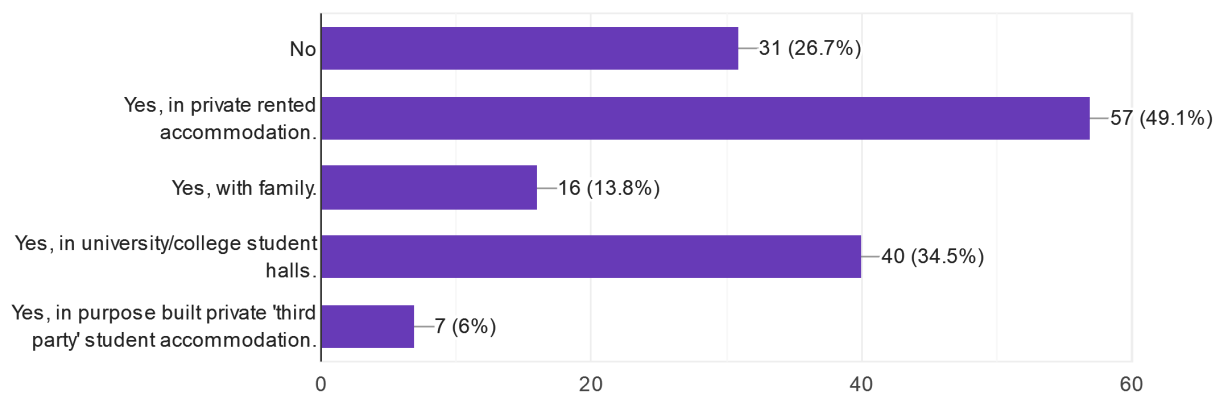
The survey ran for 25 days and received 116 responses.

34% of respondents live in Gorgie, 15% in Dalry and 14% in Murieston. The remainder of respondents lived in various localities including Ardmillan, Westfield, Fountainbridge and Shandon. 72% of respondents live within the GDCC boundary and 91% live in or closely border the boundary.

In addition, 73% of respondents indicated that they had themselves lived as students, with 25% indicating multiple choices when asked about where they lived during that time.

Have you lived as a student (either college or university) in Edinburgh or another city? Select all that apply.

116 responses



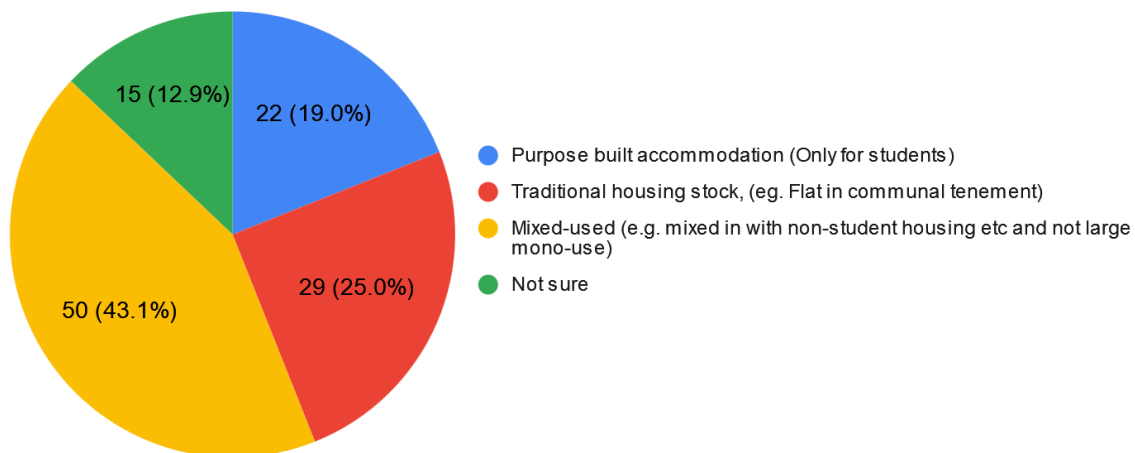
## General views on student accommodation

When asked about the suitability of various types of housing stock for students, the greatest proportion (43%) of respondents indicated that they believed mixed-use accommodation to be preferable. However, 19% of respondents indicated a preference for purpose built accommodation.

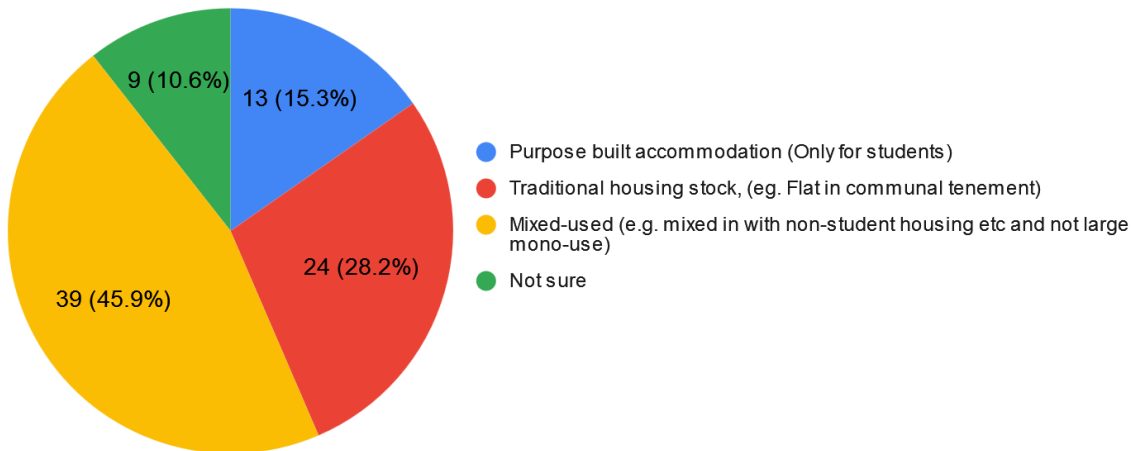
There is however a factor where those who have lived as students, don't think it is preferable for students to live in purpose build private student accommodation at a higher rate compared to those who have never been a student.

There is a clear preference from this data that people think students should live in mixed-use developments or within traditional housing stock e.g. tenement buildings. This aligns with the policy of the council to foster integrated and cohesive communities, and it is clear from the data that respondents want students to live within their community, and avoid creating isolated and transient areas.

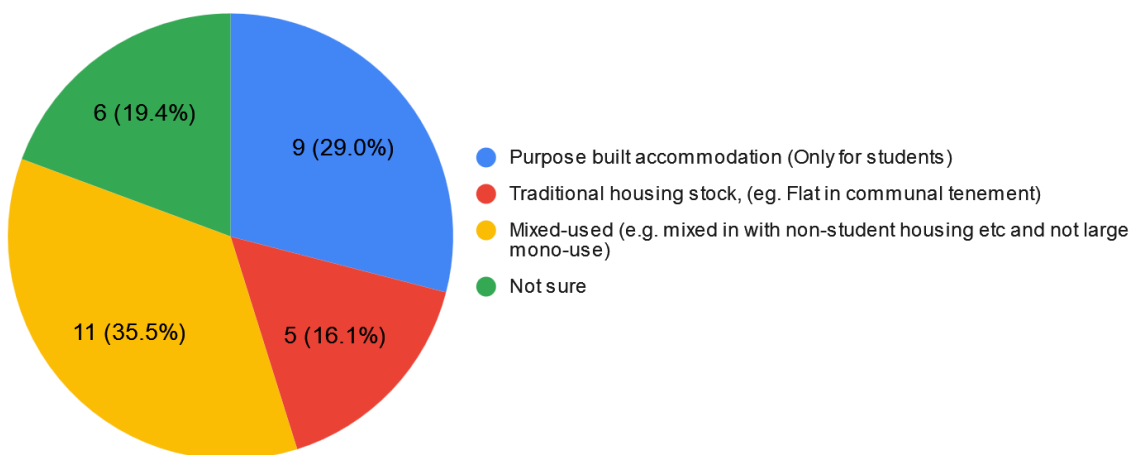
What type of housing stock would be most preferable for students to live in?  
n=116



What type of housing stock would be most preferable for students to live in? -  
People who have been students. n=85



What type of housing stock would be most preferable for students to live in? -  
People who have never been students. n=31



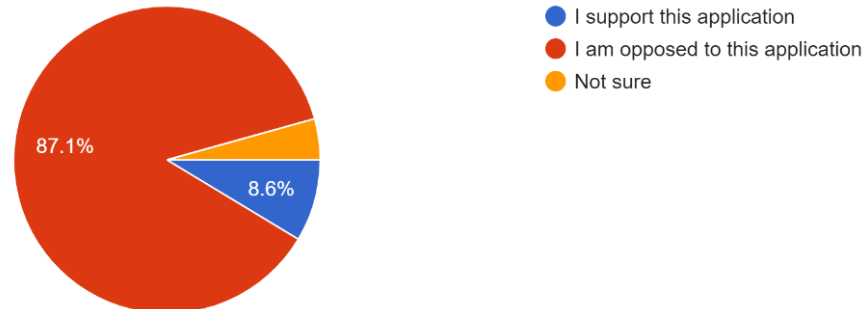
## Views on proposed development

When asked about their position on the proposed student residential development, a significant majority of respondents (87%) indicated that they were opposed to the application, with 9% of respondents indicating that they supported the application and 4% that they were unsure.

This result is comparable with the public comments on the council's planning portal for the 21/04469/FUL application; it has a higher response number at 219, with 85% being opposed to the development.

What is your position on the proposed student residential development at the former Tynecastle High School site on McLeod Street?

116 responses



## Open Ended Question

Respondents gave various reasons for their chosen position, with the need to prioritise affordable / social housing being the most commonly cited reason for opposition to the proposals. A summary of the respondents free text comments is provided below:

### Reasons for support

- Site not being used / little else it can be used for
- Would free up housing stock
- Reduce impact of students in other areas e.g., noise in tenements
- Will bring investment / new businesses into the area
- Could improve general upkeep and safety of the area
- Good location for student accommodation – not suitable for families
- Building currently in disrepair

### Reasons for opposition

- Affordable and/or social housing should be prioritised
- Concerns that site is unsuitable for student accommodation
- West of Edinburgh already has large number of student developments
- Pressure on parking / reject “no parking spaces” proposal
- Concerns about overpopulation of area / pressure on infrastructure and services
- Loss of community / local residents moving elsewhere
- Preference for long term / working residents (as student population transient, don't pay council tax, don't contribute to local economy etc)
- Concerns over traffic at peak times
- Concerns over proximity to a school / nursery
- Concerns over quality of purpose built student accommodation e.g. poor quality
- Unsustainable business model / short-sighted development
- Environmental impacts



- Preference for green space / sports / social facilities
- Purpose built accommodation too expensive/overpriced for many students
- Concerns over use of site outwith term-times e.g., short term lets
- Increase in noise, litter etc – unfair to neighbours
- Don't accept that site is not suitable for other purposes

## Specific Reasons Either Way

In addition, respondents were asked to select from a list of arguments they would use in supporting and opposing the application.

Of those who oppose the application (n=99), they would argue against using these arguments:

- 85% would say *“the proposal will result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation (including that in the private rented sector) that would be detrimental to the maintenance of diverse and balanced communities”*.
- 66% would say *“it would be preferable to have other buildings on this site, such as commercial, offices or housing”*
- 65% would say *“the development will put pressure on local infrastructure such as GP services and buses”*.
- 50% would say *“I do not believe that purpose-built student housing is the most appropriate way to house students”*.
- 37% would say *“the demolitions are too many and result in a detrimental loss to the heritage of the site and local area”*.
- 26% would say *“the proposals are detrimental to the existing listed buildings’ architectural character, appearance and/or historic interest and/or setting”*

Of those who oppose the application (n=66), they would use/understand these arguments in support:

- 50% say *“The proposal will make use of currently unoccupied space in our community.”*
- 23% would say *“The location is appropriate in terms of access to university and college facilities by walking, cycling or public transport”*.
- 14% would say *“The proposal will lessen the impact on the local housing stock by students”*

Of respondents who supported the application (n=9):

- 7 would say *“The proposal will make use of currently unoccupied space in our community.”*
- 6 would say *“The proposal will economically benefit the local community”*
- 3 did however say *“The development will put pressure on local infrastructure such as GP services and buses”*

## Survey Analysis Conclusion

From the results of this survey, we can clearly understand that people do want to see this site be developed, as currently the old school building is a large site that is not being effectively used yet has the potential like the rest of Gorgie and Dalry as being a great place to live due to the

local amenities and transport links. However, most do not think that there is the need for more purpose built student accommodation as the number of students living in the area is already “excessive” and this would pose a challenge in continuing to be a diverse but stable community.

Many also don't think that purpose built student accommodation is even an appropriate way to house students and definitely is not preferred. The argument is often made that building new student accommodation lessens the load on the existing housing stock, yet from this survey we can see that very few people agree with this statement. We can see that the local community wants to have students living within the community and not in mono blocks, creating transient populations that move away as soon as they arrive.

There is also the fact that most people, even a group within those that support the proposal, are worried about the impact on local GP services and transportation. Although some students have access to specific university GP surgerys, Napier Students have no such provision, Heriot Watt students are likely to prefer a local GP compared to getting a bus to Riccarton and the Edinburgh University GP is busy and hard to register with. It doesn't seem local people are against students living locally, GDCC welcomes them, but we do want students to have just as good local services when they live here as anybody else.

In terms of the planning proposal, there is a significant minority who are worried about the loss of the Old School buildings and think that too much is to be demolished. Potentially this is in reference to the workshops on the site edge, for which it is hard to think of another school building in Edinburgh that has similar architecture.