

West Craigs Ltd

**West Craigs, Edinburgh
Proposed Mixed Use Development
Non-Technical Summary
October 2007**

West Craigs Ltd

**West Craigs, Edinburgh
Proposed Mixed Use Development
Non-Technical Summary
October 2007**

ENVIROS 

Introduction

1. This is a Non Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the outline planning application that has been submitted by West Craigs Ltd (the applicant), for a proposed residential development on a site at West Craigs in West Edinburgh (Figure 1).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

2. EIA is a procedure that should be followed for certain types of development before they are granted planning permission. The EIA procedure in Scotland derives from the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 and requires the applicant to establish the likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed development and to report these in an ES, together with any proposed mitigation measures. The ES must be circulated to statutory consultation bodies and made available to the public for comment. Its contents, together with any comments, must be taken into account by the local planning authority before it may grant planning permission.
3. The EIA reported in this ES was commissioned as an independent assessment of the potential environmental impacts arising from the construction and occupational use of the proposed development.

Access to and Viewing the Planning Application

4. The Planning Application and associated documentation, including this ES, are available to view at the Local Planning Authority at the following address:

City of Edinburgh Council

Planning Helpdesk

Waverley Court

4 East Market Street

Edinburgh

EH8 8BG

5. Copies of the ES on CD rom can also be obtained from:

Rebecca Sturrock

Enviros Consulting Limited

61 The Shore

Leith

Edinburgh

EH6 6RA

Site Selection and Alternatives

No other suitable sites are owned or available to the developer, hence consideration of alternative sites was not an exercise that was pursued.

Alternatives – Design

The design of the site has taken account of the following:

- The need to minimise visibility of the development from the north, including Cammo estate;

- CAA development restrictions;
- The need for local amenities and services;
- Transportation links;
- Sustainability considerations;
- Constraints identified during the EIA.

Consultation

6. The applicant has received comments on the proposed scheme from a formal consultation exercise conducted through City of Edinburgh Council. The major issues arising were fed into the outline proposals and the incorporated within the individual environmental assessments.

Project Description

7. The proposed site for the West Craigs residential development (**Figure 1**) extends to 190 acres. It is proposed that 60 acres are developed to form a community of 650 homes. Of these, a minimum of 215 would be developed by Dunedin Canmore Housing Association as affordable housing, mainly for family occupation across a range of tenures. No flats are proposed, the house types will be semi-detached, and detached.
8. The remaining 130 acres would be landscaped, with 50 acres nearest to Cammo being proposed as an informal park with full public access (**Figure 2**).
9. A new access road would be formed from the existing roundabout on Maybury Road, which currently serves Bughtlins. This

would function as the main vehicle access. The West Craigs area is served by public transport, with frequent buses along Glasgow Road and Maybury Road. In future, this will be added to by Tram Line 2, which would operate in close proximity to West Craigs. It is expected that the provision of 650 households will also encourage the re-routing of bus services into West Craigs.

10. New community facilities are also proposed, including a local shop, doctor's / dentist's surgery, primary school and community hall. Existing secondary school provision is within catchment distance of West Craigs.

The Environmental Statement (ES)

11. Chapters 1 to 3 of the ES provide information on the background to the EIA of the West Craigs development. These describe, in turn:
 - The introduction to and reasons for the ES;
 - Details of the approach to the EIA and preparation of the ES; and
12. Each of chapters 4 to 11 deals with a specific environmental issue and includes the following:
 - A description of the aspects and processes that could give rise to impacts;
 - A detailed description of the baseline conditions (i.e. the datum against which the

scale etc. of the impacts have been assessed);

- The prediction methods used and the results;
- An assessment of their significance;
- The potential for further mitigation and an assessment of residual impacts; and
- A summary

13. The ES also contains:

- technical appendices, comprising supporting reports/other information on specific issues; and
- plans and drawings.

Environmental Assessment

Ecology

14. Existing habitats at West Craigs were surveyed and evaluated in terms of their ecological importance. Evidence of use by protected species was also considered.
15. The survey found that the site is dominated by managed agricultural habitats with associated poor biodiversity. Hedgerows are for the most part defunct and tree-lines generally discontinuous.
16. While these farmed habitats may be impoverished and of no particular ecological interest in themselves they may have a secondary supporting ecological function e.g. the fields are likely to be used by foraging badgers and hedgerows and tree-lines are likely to function as

movement corridors. Taking these factors into account the existing farmland habitats are considered to be of importance in a local context.

17. No badger setts are known to occur within the site boundary. However, active main setts are within 200 and 350 metres of the site boundary. Animals from these setts are considered likely to range over the site for the purposes of feeding or commuting.
18. No evidence of use of the site by otters and water voles was found. However, the canalised burn at the northern edge of the site is potentially suitable and will be re-surveyed during the period April to October.
19. Although much of the open agricultural land which dominates the site is unfavourable for bats, some peripheral trees have bat-roost potential. No trees are to be felled as part of the development; therefore no adverse impacts are anticipated.
20. Buildings associated with Meadowfield Farm Steading also have bat roost potential. Interior and exterior bat surveys will be undertaken prior to conversion
21. Breeding bird surveys will be undertaken to provide an objective basis for impact assessment associated with the loss of 60 acres of farmland habitat. Depending on the findings of this survey, suitable mitigation measures will be adopted and agreed with the local authority ecologist. If appropriate mitigation is applied, the loss of farmland is unlikely to be significant.

22. Badgers could be adversely affected by the loss and fragmentation of feeding habitats and by higher road collision mortality. Without mitigation a significant negative impact at a local level is considered probable.
23. Effective badger mitigation measures will be implemented at the West Craigs site and with mitigation the effects of development are considered unlikely to be significant.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

24. A desk based study was carried out to identify potential sites of cultural heritage and archaeological significance, which was followed by an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on these sites.
25. The desk-based assessment covered all known cultural heritage sites within the site and within a 500 m buffer of the application boundary. This wider study area allowed the identification and assessment of cultural heritage features with sensitive settings which may potentially be compromised by the proposed development.
26. Two features of archaeological significance were identified on the site. It is considered that there is the potential for disturbance of these features as result of the development proposals due to ground works. The City Archaeologist has also stated that there is the potential for prehistoric archaeology to be present within the area. It is considered that the mitigation measures that will be

adopted will minimise any potential impacts.

27. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings with the site boundary or the wider study area. The city archaeologist has identified Meadowfield Farm and associated cottages to be of cultural heritage significance although they are not formally designated. However these buildings have been granted planning permission for refurbishment under a separate planning application.
28. In advance of the implementation of the mitigation strategy, consultations will be undertaken with the City Archaeologist in order to develop a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the application area. This will include field walking, earthwork survey and historic building assessment in the first instance.
29. The impacts identified will be addressed through the WSI and significant cultural heritage sites will be recorded and archaeological finds preserved. Therefore there are unlikely to be any further impacts.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

30. A Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) was carried out to identify the potential effects of the proposed development at West Craigs on the landscape and visual amenity, assessed within a 5km radius study area. The study area was centred on the proposed development. The assessment has been based on available best practice guidance provided by the

Landscape Institute, the Institute of Environmental Assessment, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The scope of the landscape assessment was agreed through consultation with the City of Edinburgh Council.

31. The assessment demonstrates that the siting of the proposed development is appropriate in terms of the scale of development, the nature of the receiving environment and the extent of the predicted visibility of the development. This has been concluded through a desk based assessment and subsequent field work; including viewpoint and landscape character assessment which was facilitated through the use of computer generated photomontages of the proposed development.
32. The application site is not located within any regional or local landscape designations, although these do exist within the study area. There are areas of Outstanding Landscape Quality (AOLQ) at the Cammo Estate, Ratho Park Golf Course, Dalmeny, Millburn Tower and Gogar Park.
33. Effects on the existing landscape character as a result of the proposed development are considered to be limited. The proposed West Craigs development is situated within a landscape character area comprising rolling agricultural land which rises gently from the coastal landscape of the Firth of Forth through gently undulating land to the Pentland Hills. The characteristics of this landscape result in the development being mainly visible from areas to the south and west of the site, with its location on a south west facing slope limiting visibility from the north and east. There are no significant effects on the wider landscape character, except a local effect on the component of the Lowland Plains Landscape Character Area in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. There will also be a locally significant effect upon the Cammo AOLQ, a designated landscapes and historic gardens, which lies immediately to the north of the proposed area of development and within which part of the proposed site access road is routed. It is considered that this locally significant effect will decrease with time as the proposed structure planting matures.
34. The site layout has been designed with no built development in the north east corner of the site to allow for sensitive earth modelling to form a platform and a setting for new development whilst new woodland planting will be established to minimise visibility of the elements of the development from the north. It is considered that the development has a good fit with this landscape and takes advantage of the containment offered by the rolling character of the area, and the existing road network.
35. Significantly, within the local landscape alongside the existing developments associated with the western fringes of Edinburgh there has been ongoing development associated with upgrading of transport corridors (A800 and the the

Edinburgh Tram) and Edinburgh Airport as well as the new developments at the new Royal Bank of Scotland Head Quarters at Gogarburn and recent developments at the. In this context of recent change, the scale of the landscape is considered to be sufficiently large to accommodate a new residential development of the scale proposed. The development will introduce local change, adding visual diversity and a new feature and foci into the landscape. The effects upon landscape character are significant within the vicinity of the development; however these effects reduce with distance so that only a small component of the landscape will be significantly affected by the proposed development.

36. Potential effects on visual amenity were assessed from six viewpoints which were agreed with Edinburgh City Council. The receptors on the Craigs Road and some areas of Cammo AOLQ will experience locally significant visual effects as a result of the development. It should be noted that these are local receptors, close to the proposed development.
37. At greater distances from the proposed site, the visibility of the development recedes to the north and east of the study area, with views contained by the local topography, woodland cover and the built forms of the urban environment. Views will be more open immediately to the west of the south and west of the site, with opportunities for distant filtered views from the Pentland Hills, Ratho Station and limited views from

the west within the lowland plains landscape.

38. Any new development may result in potentially significant effects to the landscape quality and visual amenity of the locality. In the case of the proposed development at West Craigs based on viewpoint assessment, locally significant effects on landscape quality and visual amenity will exist within 5km of the site. It should be noted that significant effects are not necessarily deemed to be unacceptable, especially where good design and high quality built forms are combined to produce an attractive environment in which to live.
39. It is considered this development will not have any significant effect on the integrity of the Greenbelt objectives in the Rural West Edinburgh area as the proposed development will allow a new, defensible Greenbelt boundary to be established based upon existing features along the ridge line occupied by Craigs Road, in contrast to the current boundary in the vicinity of the A902 Maybury Road and the Gogar Roundabout which is not related to any obvious physical features in the landscape.
40. Overall, the landscape and visual assessment has established that the proposed development will change the baseline conditions in relation to both landscape character and visual amenity of the immediate site area. There will be a local effect on the landscape resource and

visual amenity as a result of the development; however the potential impact in the wider sub-regional and regional context will be low. In landscape planning terms, siting the proposed development in such a location and context would be appropriate.

41. Within this context, having carefully examined the potential effects on landscape and visual amenity associated with the proposed development, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in this location in landscape and visual terms.

Geology, Hydrogeology and Hydrology

42. An assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the geology, surface water and groundwater has been carried out. The study area was centred on the site and included the watercourses into which the surface water from the site drains; the Bughtlin Burn, the Gogar Burn and the River Almond. It is considered that the construction of the development would have little impact on the surrounding surface water, groundwater or soils.
43. All construction works will occur at least 300m from surface water courses, and this distance, along with appropriate management of earthworks and soil stockpiles, will prevent any impact occurring on the Bughtlin or Gogar Burns. Pollution of these watercourses by spills or leaks of oils or fuel will be prevented by maintaining distance from the water and undertaking best practice materials management.

44. The adjacent Braehead Quarry was used as a landfill site until 1982 with further small quantities of waste being deposited till 2005. This has been identified as a potential source of landfill gas which might be migrating onto the development site. However, there will be no risk to the development, as prior to the start of any construction activities, a line of gas monitoring boreholes will be established along the site boundary by the quarry. These will be monitored and, if any gas is migrating towards the site, suitable remedial works will be carried out to prevent it having any impact on the site. No further waste will be deposited on the landfill site in the future.

45. Once the development is constructed, there will be an increase in surface water run-off as a result of the area of hard standing. This will have no impact on the receiving watercourses as a suitable sustainable drainage system has been designed by the consultants Halcrow Yolles which is described in a separated report. This report also describes the system required to deal with the waste waters generated once the housing development is occupied.

Noise

46. The proposed redevelopment has the potential to generate noise impacts at existing local sensitive locations, due both to noise associated with its construction, and to noise generated by future increases in road traffic arising from its occupation and use.
47. In turn, existing noise sources in the area (particularly road traffic, railway and aircraft

noise) have the potential to impact on the proposed new residential properties within the West Craigs redevelopment scheme.

48. The site is considered suitable for residential development, in relation to the existing noise environment that includes contributions from rail, road, aviation and industrial sources. Some noise mitigation measures will be required, in the form of ventilation; however the predicted noise levels from the transportation sources are within the guideline categories.
49. It is not possible to determine the construction noise impacts for the proposed development as detailed information on the proposed construction methodology is not available at this time. However, potential demolition/construction noise impacts are likely to be mitigated by the applicant/contractors adhering to a Code of Construction Practice, to be agreed with the City of Edinburgh Council, which would require all plant to be appropriately silenced, limit hours of working, etc. The Council may also require that noise/vibration monitoring is carried out.
50. The assessment showed that the additional road traffic generated once the redevelopment scheme is fully occupied is predicted to give rise to a long term, adverse impact of minor significance at existing sensitive locations.
51. Subject to appropriate mitigation measures being implemented, the residual construction noise impacts were assessed

as representing occasional and short term adverse impacts, which are not considered significant.

Air Quality

52. The dominant influence on air quality in the vicinity of the application site is from existing vehicle traffic using the surrounding road network.
53. The impact of the development on air quality was assessed by predicting the impact of road traffic from the development at sensitive receptors, across the entire site and at St John's Air Quality Management Area. Two scenarios were assessed – with and without the proposed development, using traffic data information supplied by the traffic consultants.
54. The assessment results show that predicted concentrations for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter are not significantly affected by the traffic associated with the West Craigs development and that the concentrations for nitrogen dioxide for both scenarios would not exceed present and future Air Quality Objectives, across the entire site and at any of the sensitive receptors.
55. The assessment predicted that the development will not have a significant impact on air quality concentrations at the site, in the surrounding area or at the St John's Air Quality Management Area.
56. The impacts on air quality resulting from the proposed redevelopment were also

assessed for the construction phase. The use of appropriate mitigation measures should be sufficient to control dust emissions to an acceptable level. There would be no significant impact on dust levels surrounding the site, once the redevelopment becomes fully occupied.

57. Due to the proximity of the site to the Braehead Waste Management Facility and concerns raised by the City of Edinburgh Council, the potential impact from this facility with regards to odours, bioaerosols and dust across the West Craigs site has been assessed.
58. The assessment identified that whilst there is the potential for emissions of dust, odour and bioaerosols to be generated due to operations at the Braehead facility, these are unlikely to result in unacceptable impacts at the proposed development location.
59. On this basis, it was concluded that the operations of the Braehead facility should not significantly impact on residents at the proposed development location and that no further mitigation measures would be required in order to reduce impacts of emissions from the facility.

Traffic and Transport

60. Arup Scotland has been commissioned by West Craigs Ltd to prepare and submit a Transport Assessment (TA) in support of the planning application for the West Craigs development. The West Craigs development relates to the construction of 650 households of which a minimum of 33% would be affordable housing. To encourage a sense of community, the development will also include facilities such as a new Primary School, local shop, Doctor/ Dentist surgery and a community hall. Connectivity within the site and to the wider local area has been a key criterion within the design of the site layout. The development proposals aim to make the West Craigs area accessible to a range of transport modes, providing existing and future residents with a genuine travel choice for journeys to local and strategic destinations.
61. West Craigs is located to the west of Maybury Road on land currently designated as green belt, however, this area is well served by both commerce and employment opportunities at the Gyle, Edinburgh Park and the new Gogarburn Royal Bank of Scotland Headquarters. Public transport provision in the general area is well established, particularly the bus services on Glasgow Road. Connectivity between the site and the local public transport network are a desirable and realistic goal for the successful development of the site. Preliminary discussions with local bus operators have been encouraging, indicating that regular bus services from the development to local destinations, including bus and rail interchanges can be established.
62. It is proposed as part of the development that pedestrian, cycle and public transport links will be created to connect with the

existing facilities provided within the surrounding area. One key proposal is to improve the accessibility of the area for pedestrians and cyclists by way of a formal signalised crossing on the busy distributor road of Maybury Road.

63. The main access to the development will be taken from a fourth-arm at the Bughtlins Roundabout on Maybury Road. A new access road will be constructed to link Maybury Road to Craigs Road. Two strategies to access West Craigs are considered in detail within the TA. The preferred option is centred upon a bus gate on Turnhouse Road, with all private vehicles being re-routed via Bughtlins Roundabout and along the upgraded Craigs Road. Under the preferred option, the existing residents of West Craigs would benefit from a reduction in commercial vehicles using Turnhouse Road as well as the increased range and frequency of bus services.

64. An alternative option would maintain Newhouse Road in its present arrangement, with some improvements associated with the proposed development. If support for the bus gate option were not forthcoming, the resulting development traffic volumes on Turnhouse Road (to the west of the Glasgow Road off-slip) would still only increase by less than two vehicles per minute during the weekday peak periods, representing an insignificant impact.

65. Both Maybury and Barnton signal controlled junctions currently operate at or above practical capacity with lengthy queues and delays experienced during peak periods. The analysis indicates that following the opening of the development, these junctions would continue to operate within acceptable tolerances achieving an overall no net detriment situation when compared to the existing situation.

66. A Travel Plan will be developed to encourage and develop options for the residents of the proposed West Craigs development. The potential measures contained within the plan, which will be issued to all new residents, will centre upon raising awareness of the travel options on offer, which will include membership of the Edinburgh City Car Club.

Socio-economic Impacts

67. The socio-economic impact assessment has been concerned with the following specific areas of potential impact.

- Impacts from the loss of local agricultural resources
- Impacts on population from potential influxes of additional residents in terms of housing, community services and amenity
 - i. Impacts on local opportunities for business and employment
 - ii. Health and quality of life impacts on local residents during construction

68. The baseline survey has included investigation into:

- Agriculture on site and comparison with Scottish agricultural trends
- The socio-economic make-up of the local area
- Prospective residential occupants of the development and their need for housing and local services such as Education and Youth Services, Healthcare, Public Amenity and Recreational Space and Local Retail
- Prospective employers and workers of the development and their needs
- Employment in construction in Scotland

69. The impact assessment considered that the proposed development has the potential to give rise to an overall long term positive socio-economic impact, as long as suitable mitigation is delivered in order to counter any specific areas of local services and the current housing pressures in the area where an undersupply in relation to the additional needs of the proposed population influx arises.

Sustainability

70. In order to satisfy the planning requirements the planning application for the proposed development at West Craigs must be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement as determined by the Supplementary Planning Guidance: The Edinburgh Standards for Sustainable Buildings. The Standards address six

principles of recognised good sustainable development practice, which allow the proposed development to be scored.

71. A Sustainability Statement has been prepared to support the outline planning application, and an indicative score of 70 out of 81 was achieved. Given that a number of credits were unavailable due to the development not being situated on brownfield land, a score of 70 represents a significant commitment to achieving sustainable development on this site.

72. Within the Standards there are two priority Standards which must be achieved. An assessment was carried out to model the potential energy requirements of the development so that the requirements to achieve a 5% improvement on building regulations and a 20% on-site energy/heat generation from micro-renewables could be achieved. This study identified that the proposed development will achieve the two priority standards.

Impacts from Accumulative or Inter-related Impacts

73. This assessment has not identified any known or reasonably foreseeable future development projects that are likely to give rise to significant cumulative impacts that could overlap with those predicted to occur from the proposed West Craigs development. Cumulative impacts have been specifically assessed in the air quality, traffic and noise assessments.

Conclusions

74. This Environmental Statement is a key part of the design process that will form the detailed design plans of the West Craigs development. The resulting application scheme will incorporate the findings of the environmental assessments and further consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies, thus ensuring that the final West Craigs development is well conceived and designed, but also in accordance with planning policy, whilst realising sustainable development and minimising impact to the environment.

75. In summary the main conclusions of the environmental impact assessment are:

- With the use of appropriate mitigation and following further surveying, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on habitats or protected species
- The development will have negligible impact on the historical and cultural heritage surrounding the site.
- Effects on the existing landscape and on visual amenity as a result of the proposed development are considered to be limited
- The site is considered suitable for residential development, in relation to the existing noise environment following suitable ventilation and glazing.
- No adverse effects have been identified in terms of air quality, regarding the additional traffic and the construction phase of the development.
- The existing operation at Braehead Civic Amenity Site will not significantly impact upon future residents of the West Craigs development and no health implications have been identified.
- Existing traffic levels will not be significant affected by construction traffic. The development proposals aim to make the West Craigs area accessible to a range of transport modes, providing existing and future residents with a genuine travel choice for journeys to local and strategic destinations.
- Both Maybury and Barnton signal controlled junctions currently operate at or above practical capacity with lengthy queues and delays experienced during peak periods. The analysis indicates that following the opening of the development, these junctions would continue to operate within acceptable tolerances achieving an overall no net detriment situation when compared to the existing situation.
- The proposed development has the potential to give rise to an overall long term positive socio-economic impact, with suitable mitigation integrated.
- The sustainability assessment indicates that the proposed measures to be implemented within the development design represent a significant commitment to achieving sustainable development on this site.