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Design Statement for 33-34 Seaview Terrace, Joppa, Edinburgh

Presented to City of Edinburgh Council



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Details

The site which this application relates to is 34 Seaview Terrace, Joppa. The site comprises of a gap site between 2 long well preserved Victorian sandstone terraces built circa mid to late 19th Century, which are raised at ground floor level to a plateaued front garden half a storey above pavement level. The Victorian terraces command a prominent view over the Firth of Forth and the Joppa promenade which extends to the North West to Portobello and to the South East to Musselburgh.

The existing terraced houses are generally 2 storey high, with pronounced bay windows and original slate pitched roofs.

The existing property on the gap site, which this proposal pertains to, is a 1 storey bungalow built circa mid 20th Century and is not in keeping with the proportion, construction or material of the Victorian Terrace. The property is vacant and the building and associated gardens are falling into disrepair.



Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of Site from North



Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph of Site from South

1.2 Background Information:

The property and associated land was recently purchased and the owner approached block 9 Architects to undertake feasibility studies to reinstate the massing of the original Victorian Terrace Streetscape with the intention of taking it back to something closer to its original town house density and massing as opposed to the incongruous juxtaposition of the small scale existing bungalow.

1.3 Statutory Designations:

Not listed and not designated as Conservation Area.

Planning Restrictions

NAME

Zones For Development Control Parking Standards (Zone 04)	Parking Standards	Zone 04
Core Paths	Within 50m of a core path	Within 50m of a core path
Edinburgh City Local Plan	Local Plan	Within the boundary of the Edinburgh City Local Plan
Within 50m Of A Proposed Off-Road Cycleway	Cycleway Proposed Offroad 50m buffer	Within 50m of a proposed off-road cycleway
Coal Mining Standing Advice Area	Coal Auth Referral+Standing Advice Area	Coal Authority consultation area

1.4 Description of the Site:

The site is a gap site along the main Joppa promenade which provides a link and costal route between neighbouring Portobello and Musselburgh. The B6415 road is a wide, open road with a regular bus service. The Victorian Terrace Streetscape of Seaview Terrace along this link is very prominent with its raised aspect creating a feeling of grandeur. The site at 34 Seaview Terrace at present contains a non descript, mid 20th Century, 1 Storey, low quality rendered bungalow which significantly breaks the rhythm and quality of the streetscape which is jarring to the eye.



Figure 3 – Panoramic view of site in context of of Seaview Terrace

The site frontage on Seaview Terrace enjoys open aspects onto the Firth of Forth seascape and overlooks the Joppa promenade. There is a flat area towards the street frontage and the site extends back some 40metres towards Seaview Crescent which slopes sharply upwards to the back of the site. To the rear of the site, out with the site boundary, there are existing garages which front onto and are accessed directly via Seaview Crescent. This site articulation will therefore not present any problems with overlooking or preclude views from any properties on the elevated Seaview Crescent.



Figure 4 – Panoramic view looking North from the site

1.5 History of the Site, Current Use and Condition of the existing Property:

We have carried out a thorough search for any historical information or documentation for this site in the Historical Planning Records and Plan Store which unfortunately did not prove successful and did not yield any relevant information.

There does appear to be evidence that this site was originally a continuation of the Victorian Terrace, which currently bounds either side of the site, and would have consisted of perhaps 2 or 3 townhouses in the same configuration.

The site is located in a residential area where housing use class is supported. The current property on the site at 34 Seaview Terrace is a residential dwelling in the form of a low quality single storey bungalow. The property is vacant at the moment and the building and associated gardens are falling into disrepair.



Figure 5 – Existing bungalow on site

Figure 6 – Rear elevation of existing bungalow from South

2.0 PRE PLANNING APPLICATION MEETING & SUBMISSION

Following a feasibility scheme design to establish the density of development which could be accommodated on site, an initial meeting was arranged with Paul DeVaney of Edinburgh Planning on 04th September 2014. The site and initial scheme was briefly introduced and a drawing set including site layout, schematic plans and some precedent studies were left for comment. A written response was received on 24th September which confirmed that the principle of residential development at the proposed scale was likely to be supported. There were reservations of a previously proposed basement level (half a level below street level) and the off street parking which it accommodated, and as such this was removed in subsequent proposals.

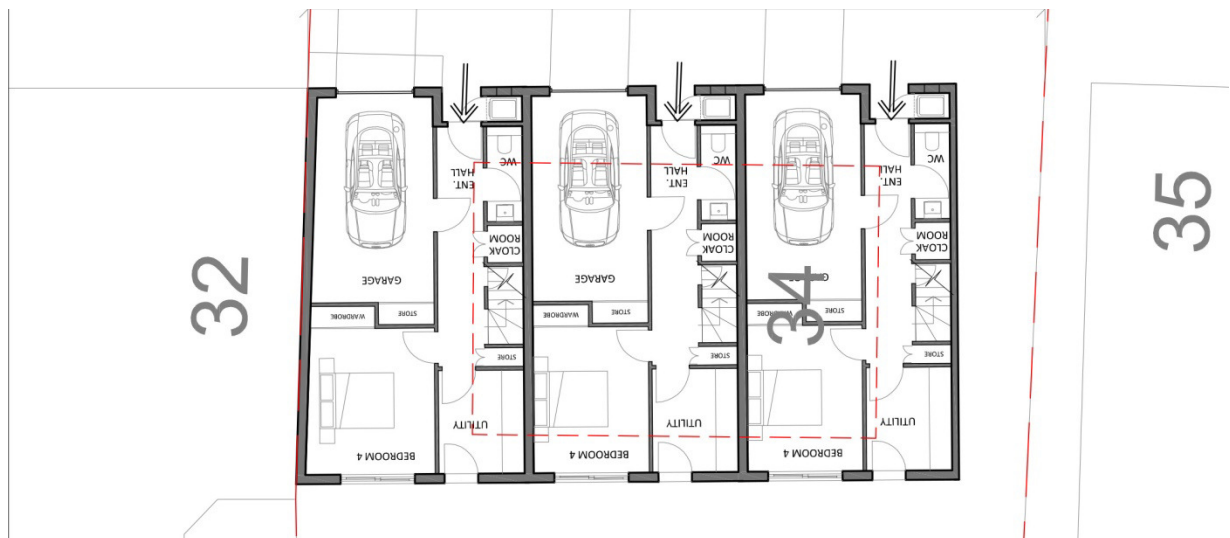


Figure 7 – Initial sketch design for basement plan with off street parking

It was also requested that the eaves and ridge of the adjacent properties should be closely adhered to. It was confirmed that flat roofs could prove to be controversial and that schemes of a similar nature had been refused in the past as deemed out of context with the prevailing character of the area. Attention was also pointed out to ensure the prevalent proportion of the existing terrace, and that this should be respected within the planning submission.

With regards to materials, it was noted that stone to the frontage would be 'preferable'.

Following this initial feedback from planning, 3 design schemes were progressed which would take into account these comments, and were presented to our client. It was decided that the submitted solution would be the most in-keeping with the existing built form of Seaview Terrace. This scheme was developed and modelled in context to illustrate the massing and elevation treatment of the proposals. The plan and elevations drawings were then resubmitted with the 3D model shots to Edinburgh

Planning on the 01st December as a pre-application enquiry, and a response was received on 03rd December from Elaine Watson.



Figure 8 – Alternative Front Elevations Option 1



Figure 9 – Alternative Front Elevations Option 3

In her response, Elaine indicated general support of the proposals, reiterating that the use of the site would be supported and that despite the proposals constituting a modern interpretation of the existing Seaview Terrace, it did so with respects of the prominence of the existing form and massing.

Attention was drawn to the omission of stone as the predominant material on the primary elevation, and that if this was not being specified, we should provide justification for this alternative which is incorporated within this design statement.

Elaine also commented on the potential for overlooking from the west most property's balcony to the next door rear garden at 32 Seaview Terrace. The rear elevation was amended to incorporate side walls to prevent any direct overlooking and subsequent invasion of privacy, as well as an overhead canopy so the balconies could be used during less clement weather.

It was also noted that the proposal fails to comply with the non-statutory Parking Standards which requires dwellings of this size in this location should have a minimum of two off road parking spaces per dwelling. However, it was indicated that an exception could be argued in the interests of townscape to justify this infringement. Given that this stretch of road is rarely over used for parking, and also Paul DeVaney's initial reluctance to accept off street parking at basement level, we would expect consideration to be granted for non compliance to this standard.

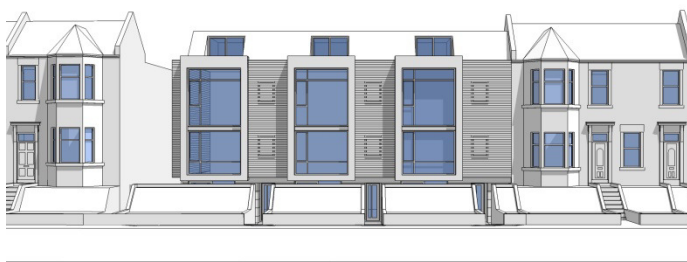


Figure 10 – Developed sketch model front elevation



Figure 11 – Developed sketch model aerial view from NW

3.0 THE PROPOSED DESIGN

3.1 Design Approach

The design approach was a contemporary interpretation on traditional terraced townhouses which would restore the density of the streetscape and at the same time complemented and sit in harmony with the existing Victorian Terrace as was encouraged at the pre application stage. The site allows for three well proportioned townhouses to fit comfortably and naturally into the Street.

The streetscape was of great consideration and a strong frontage with projecting bay windows was adhered to from the outset. On analysis of the existing Victorian Street it became obvious that the double rhythm of the terrace's bay window was broken down slightly as it approached the site, with a slight asymmetric anomaly directly adjacent to the site. It was clear that rather than strictly following and replicate a forced existing rhythm a contemporary approach was required which would simply follow the cadence of the existing terrace and be in keeping with what is immediately adjacent. The simplified rhythm of the existing bay windows therefore is picked up in the expressed feature projections of each townhouse.



Figure 12 – Final front elevation to Seaview Terrace

Further to the East along Seaview terrace there is an obvious example of a significant and unsightly break in the street rhythm where we see a gap site which has been at some time converted to domestic garages. This is quite clearly out of scale & rhythm with the Victorian Street. The proposals we put forward for the site at 34 Seaview Terrace greatly improves on what is there at present and in addition greatly enhances the continuity of the streetscape as a whole.



Figure 13 – Existing gap site to garages, between old terrace and mid 20th century terrace

It was also paramount that the form, ridge and eaves height tied in with the existing terrace front elevation. The roofscape design is such that a mansard roof is incorporated into the design to the front elevation to minimise the impact on height and complement the roof heights of the terraces adjacent whilst allowing the accommodation to be maximised and incorporate the second floor plate. To the rear this is achieved with a flat and pitched roof, with maximised glazed elements to exploit the south light to the second floor plate.

The elevation to the rear of the property expresses a similar rhythm to the front elevation with projections forming south facing balconies to capture the maximum sunlight and compensate for gardens of restricted widths.

3.2 Proposed New Layouts

The proposals to reinstate the rhythm and scale of the Victorian Terrace also provided a rare opportunity for each townhouse to maximise the unique views offered by this high quality site and this greatly influenced the proposed layout. With a contemporary take on the traditional town house, the living accommodation was carefully considered and is situated on the top floor which benefits most from the panoramic seascape the site conveys. Balconies in this location provide a private and functional outdoor space which captures the views and at the same time is protected from the noise of the B6415 road below.



Figure 16 – Prop. Grnd Floor Plan

Figure 17 – Prop. 1st Floor Plan

Figure 18 – Prop. 2nd Floor Plan

Each town house is located on a raised plateau approximately half a storey above pavement level in line with the Victorian Terrace adjacent. Entry is via a private terraced garden which is landscaped to provide screening for the B6415 road. A main entrance door provides access into a generous and bright entry hall which offers clear vertical and horizontal circulation. The rear garden is accessed via a utility room on ground floor level.

The town houses provide 5 Bedrooms, 2 of which have en-suites, over the ground and first floor levels. On the first floor, Bedroom 2 allows for a generous south facing balcony to the rear which overlooks a long terraced garden. As noted previously, the second floor level is given over to the living accommodation with a spacious open plan Living, Dining and Kitchen area. The articulation of the angled glazing/roofscape to the rear floods the upper floor plate with South light.

3.3 Materials

In accordance with Edinburgh Design Guidance section 2.4. Materials and detailing, careful consideration was given to the pallet and application of materials which was kept to a minimum.

The Victorian buildings adjacent are largely clad to the North in sandstone and it was felt that it was important to reflect this in the proposed townhouses and utilise stone in a striking and contemporary way. Stone has therefore been used on the most prominent and conspicuous feature of the building which is the projecting bays. Stone has also been used to create a stone plinth element which wraps around the base of the townhouses, providing an elegant continuity along the streetscape. The articulation of the elevation allows for the glazing to be maximised and the views exploited. All glazing throughout will be a dark grey aluminium clad framing system, double glazed.

The boundary to the street frontage is a low stone wall with planting/hedging screening all to accord with the local context and the existing Victorian frontage on Seaview Terrace.

Carrying on in the vein of utilising natural materials used in a modern application, well detailed dark timber cladding is proposed to follow on the Victorian building line. The timber will not be out of place

in a costal environment in terms of weathering and aesthetic. The sharp, simple lines of the plane of timber are secondary to and enhance the projecting stone features creating an effortless hierarchy of materials. There is an architectural play of solid and void in the detailing of the windows within the timber plane which acts as a louver providing diffused lighting and privacy in the entrance hall and ensuite bathroom at 1st floor.



Figure 19 – Dark timber cladding



Figure 20 – Zinc Mansard Roof



Figure 21 – Feature tall plane windows

The roof is set back from the main front edge of the properties to align with neighbouring eave height, whilst insets within the roof create a balcony area. The roof is finished in seamed zinc which has been specified as a modern alternative to the slate roof which it complements in material, tone and colour. Upstands separate the properties above party walls, replicating parapets to the neighbouring properties.

The elevation to the rear of the development is articulated in much the same way as the front elevation in terms of rhythm, proportion and materials. The projecting forms reflect the front bays but in this orientation provide private balconies at first floor level. The material in this location is smooth silicon white render which provides crisp, sharp lines and finish. A dark grey aluminium cladding and glazing system provides inserts to the balcony. The balconies are enclosed on both sides providing screening to accord with privacy criterion with reference to section 2.9 of the Edinburgh Design Guidance.



Figure 22 – Development design CGI from West on Seaview Terrace

Again, the building line is formed by the dark timber cladding which ties the elevation frontage together. The Zinc roof is again set back but in this orientation is angled with the glazing maximised to get full benefit of the South Light within the living accommodation to the top floor.

The gable elevations are of very simple proportions and articulation. The stone plinth and dark timber cladding wrap around with the timber detailed with a long vertical slot window providing additional light to the heart of the East unit's floor plate.

Overall the material and finishes provide a muted pallet of colour to complement and harmonise with the Victorian Terrace paying respect to the traditional natural materials but articulating the elevations in a contemporary way which enhances the aesthetic of the streetscape as a whole and provides a lasting solution.

Further to the East side of Seaview Terrace there is evidence and examples of an eclectic mix of materials which are not in-keeping or appropriate with the original Victorian Street. There is evidence of red brick, coloured render, grey stone and grey & green shingles. In one stretch of modern terrace houses, stone has been used as a minimal gesture towards a feature element with the majority or the front elevation in white render. This is the opposite of what our proposal is aiming to achieve with the use of materials. As expressed above, the stone will be used in a modern application but used to feature the most prominent element of the elevation, and sit in harmony with the limited pallet of materials proposed, which fits comfortably with the Victorian terrace. The proposals greatly improve on what is existing both on the site (brown dash walls & concrete roof tiles) and elsewhere on the Street (see below photos).



Figure 23 – New terraced houses to East of site on Seaview Terrace



Figure 24 – New terraced houses to East of site on Seaview Terrace

SUMMARY

In summary, Seaview Terrace is a prominent, well preserved Victorian sandstone terraced street with some ill-fitting, unsightly, infill developments along its length. Our site comprises of a gap site along this length on which a 20th Century bungalow sits, and is of little architectural merit, vacant and in disrepair. It is not in-keeping with the surroundings in terms of proportion, construction or material.

Our proposals are to enhance the existing Victorian Terrace Streetscape with the inclusion of three well proportioned townhouses designed to fit naturally and comfortably into the gap site, and following a similar frontage repetitive pattern. The density of the streetscape would be restored and the development would complement the Victorian terrace and sit in harmony with the street as a whole.

The design approach to achieve this is to pay respect to the traditional terraced town houses in terms of scale, rhythm and materials but introduce a contemporary interpretation and application.

It was of great importance that the form, ridge and eaves height tied in seamlessly with the existing terraced Victorian houses adjacent. Projecting bays were introduced as a prominent feature to emulate the proportions, rhythm and material of the Victorian bays. The roofs are minimised to reduce impact in terms of aesthetic and height to complement the traditional roofs.

The design of the layouts and articulation of the elevations' material, glazing and proportion is such that the full potential of the site is realised to take advantage of this rare opportunity to significantly add to a prominent Victorian Street whilst benefiting from the spectacular views this site has to offer.