

**FAO Planning representations
Development and Regeneration Services,
Glasgow City Council,
229 George St,
Glasgow
G1 1QU**

30 October 2017

Langside, Battlefield and Camphill Community Council representation re Victoria Infirmary site planning and listed building applications by Sanctuary Housing/Homes 17/02059,DC and 1702061/DC

On behalf of Langside Community Council, in whose area the site is located, I wish to make the following objections to these applications. We accept that the site is suitable for residential and associated uses in principle and do not wish to prevent development.

However, the application should be deferred as premature in the absence of an approved masterplan produced in accordance with the City Development Plan and PAN83 guidance. **The masterplan should ensure that the site is integrated into the surrounding area with proper consideration of its relationship to and impact on the local area in areas such as housing need, traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, schools capacity, Battlefield public realm and local economy.** It should not be understood as the developer's 'island'.

Our comments are also the culmination of a process lasting my entire period (14 years) on the Community Council - a period during which it was known that the Victoria Infirmary would be emptied and re-developed and during which the hospital sites were identified in city plans as sites requiring a masterplan. The Community Council has made enquiries and sought dialogue with NHGGC prior to sale and more recently with Sanctuary. Neither has been open to genuine community dialogue or even accepted that the community is entitled to much information or even a voice. Nor has a city-led masterplan been forthcoming during this period. The highly controlled, manipulative approach adopted by the applicant has been apparent both in the stage-managed design and architectural 'public consultations' and in the deluge of documents here submitted without any executive summary or masterplan. The hundreds of documents submitted here is almost impossible for any lay person to examine, let alone analyse and respond to. Some areas of great public interest, such as the numbers of dwellings of various sizes for sale and supported housing investment are extremely difficult to find. I do not find it surprising that relatively few people seem likely to have been able to summon the will, time, and analytical skills to study and respond to this vast application in the time available.

The Community Council has been pro-active in

- Undertaking a local business survey in summer 2015 revealing the vulnerability of local businesses following hospital closure
- forming the Victoria Forum which has, since autumn 2015, acted as a community advocate, representing several community councils and pressing for a holistic rather than purely architectural masterplan for this landmark site with large-scale public engagement..

The efforts made locally (with minimal resources but considerable commitment of volunteer effort) to make up for the lack of community engagement and contextual study are evident in the Victoria Forum's

- Policy research and consultation with Planning Aid.
- On-line survey of local people yielding c 1,000 comments.
- Community discussion meeting attended by 120 people and yielding over 1700 comments all forwarded to Sanctuary and made publicly accessible
- Attendance and questioning at Sanctuary Library events.

- Initial meeting with Sanctuary and passing on all research and survey data to them notwithstanding their declining invitations to take part in either the public meeting or the Council-led working group.
- Successful proposal to councillors of a short-life working group chaired by Cllr Archie Graham and supported by local councillors with council officers and VF members.
- Reporting news and making surveys accessible on facebook and in other media.

The objections we wish to make to the Planning application are on the following material grounds:

- **Contrary to the Development Plan –**

The omission from this application of any document identifiable as a Masterplan is a fundamental failing contrary to the City’s own policies and contravening Scottish Government planning advice as well as the explicit commitments advertised in leaflets, at consultations and in person by Sanctuary. Saying their masterplan is integral to the planning application is an inadequate explanation and provides no framework within which the planning application can be evaluated.

The application should not be permitted to proceed without such a masterplan involving the community and other agencies, including City Council departments, to ensure the community and area context are included. The application should be put on hold until a masterplan is produced.

- **Road safety, traffic and parking issues**

Road traffic will be materially affected by the addition of 413 new residences with just two points on entrance and exit onto Victoria Road and Grange Roads. The surrounding roads are already extremely congested during school and commuter times with long tailbacks.

Insufficient analysis has taken place of traffic flow and the community has yet to see any proposals for traffic circulation or road improvements. I entirely agree with the comments made by Mr McPhail concerning city plan policy on this and on the lack of pedestrian crossings. I applaud his initiative in developing a proposal for traffic alterations and look forward to seeing LES (Technical Services) options to simplify and improve traffic flow and improve the public realm environment of Battlefield. In addition to these developments other major housing developments in the area will add almost as many homes again, adding up to c10% to the local population over the next five years.

On site it is unclear whether there are areas where vehicle traffic and pedestrians share the same carriageway, putting pedestrians and children at particular risk.

Pedestrian safety is a chronic issue frequently occupying Community Council time, **To date no traffic amelioration proposals have been made to mitigate the effects of further growth in vehicle traffic and public transport needs.** Battlefield Place roundabout and its five junctions and the Battlefield Rest and associated roads are the repeated cause of complaint and pleas for pedestrian crossing points, enforcement of parking restrictions and traffic slowing measures. The pedestrian route across the site in the public realm sector is welcome though I found the plans quite hard to follow. However, there is no marked pedestrian crossing shown at either end, on Langside Road or on Grange Road by Battlefield Rest where the public realm, commercial elements and ‘right of way’ pedestrian route through the site are indicated. **We urge the provision of pedestrian crossings In Langside and Grange Roads as a condition attached to this application.**

The efforts made by Collective Architecture to accommodate underground parking on site are very welcome but there remain concerns about parking for customers of the commercial activity areas. No consideration is given to possible joint community and hospital use for the carpark in Grange Road.

- **Residential amenity (loss of privacy, overshadowing, loss of daylight, etc)**

There are no computerised projection daylight studies for times of year/day which prevents an appreciation of the public realm areas in particular. **When, for instance, will the café garden or raised garden get sunlight ? How are noise, smell and disturbance from the projected café in A2 to be isolated from the other occupants of this block?**

We reject and oppose unequivocally Sanctuary's disinclination to include the required amenity space for a children's play area on site. The suggestion that this could be provided in Queen's Park or in the space adjacent to Langside Library appears to overlook practical considerations, to sidestep the obligation for ongoing maintenance and ignore the needs of parents/carers with very young children. An enclosed, properly equipped outdoor play space with surrounding seating – on the model of like the numerous pocket parks in Paris , would provide supervised and socialised play and a social mixing point for parents.

I have been unable to identify any area where residents can dry clothes out of doors or in a sheltered area within their building. Is it now assumed that everyone uses tumble driers? Not very energy efficient!

- **Appearance (design, materials, scale, massing, etc)**

On plan the landscape design looks impressive if rather sterile. All seating in the public realm and shared areas appears to be the walls of elevated beds which would be not especially accessible or safe for many older people or young children. **Some seating should be provided in the public realm area.**

We share the concerns of Pollokshields' CC comments on the potential ill effects on the site should amenity details such as boiler flues, satellite dishes etc not be subject to planning conditions.

The lighting of the site at night will be important for community safety, especially for the public realm area to be welcoming and usable at night. The material provided does not greatly reassure me that this has been fully considered. Lighting the Nightingale turrets at night is a particularly nice touch but is it an actual proposal or an architects' visual flourish?

We note the extensive use of brick but also the rather vague specifications. **We recommend these should be subject to conditions both in material and also in the creative use of brick patterning to break up and enliven large wall expanses. Ochre sandstone should be used for detailing adjacent to the old buildings wherever possible and it is regrettable that the wholesale demolitions elsewhere on site have probably precluded the retention of some fine ornamental stone detailing.**

The new buildings should certainly not be higher than the Nightingale ward blocks and ideally should not compete with the Nightingale turrets, the design of the modern 'turret' elements being less than convincing.

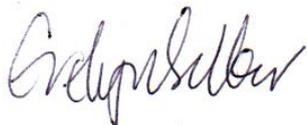
Despite the civic aspiration of the colonnades the model and preliminary projections for the central public realm area, flanked almost entirely by new build, do not appear at all welcoming. **The scale and massing of the central view through the public realm area seems very stark and its appeal and viability will depend a great deal on the imagination and sensitivity of the planting, lighting and material quality in the public realm areas. We query the commitment of the developer to avoiding duplication and damage to existing local businesses when they site a café (of which the area has no shortage) right beside the Battlefield Rest.**

- **Impact on the character and setting of a listed buildings and/or conservation areas**

The former hospital status and functional needs of this site are almost certainly the reason why the Nightingale wards and Private Patients wing' have not previously been listed. While it is pleasing that Sanctuary recognize the landmark quality and local importance of the Nightingale wards and have chosen to retain and re-purpose them, we deplore the applicants' refusal to engage with the Community Council or Forum in any discussion about the possible retention of other buildings on site. **In particular the Private Patients' wing (currently being demolished) provides an architecturally much more sympathetic setting for the Battlefield Rest than the new residential [and café?] block A2, which flanks the Rest and is much closer to it than the present building, and the commercial block B1. The design of block 2 should be re-considered.**

The Design and Access statement makes play of the listed buildings in the vicinity but **there is a failure to respond architecturally or in materials to the landmark listed Battlefield Rest.** Perhaps significantly there are visuals giving impressions of how the site will look post-development focus on the 3 angles of the triangular site but none with views from the upper part of the site down the public realm area, and the opposite one from beyond the Battlefield Rest looking uphill and taking in the road, pedestrian path and bulk of the adjacent commercial building B1. The plans and site model appear to show the Rest coming into view only from near the bottom of the public realm path, thus missing an opportunity for integration of the public realm within the site with the Battlefield community.

The historic character of the site and the desire expressed by the community to see this marked in some way is treated cursorily with a response to a community approach for an excavation. **One would wish to see a professionally commissioned work, perhaps supported by one of the public art agencies with expertise in commissioning, competition, contracts, materials and installation issues involved in creating a high quality commemoration of the Battle of Langside whose 450th anniversary falls in 2018 and also in a different form, acknowledgement of the Vicky and its history which has meant so much to generations of local residents and which was part of the evolving healthcare in the expanding late 19th century city.**



Evelyn Silber

Community Councillor for Langside and Chair, Victoria Forum