

**Conservation Area Consent
At
1 - 5 Baxter's Place
Edinburgh
EH1 3BD**

**Development Quality Sub-Committee
of the Planning Committee**

Proposal: Demolition of rear extension to Greenside Lane and of derelict outshot + front of No5 Baxter's Place
Applicant: Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Ltd.
Reference No: 03/02635/CON

1 Purpose of report

To recommend that the application be **GRANTED** subject to;

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than five years from the date of this consent.
2. The application shall be referred to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.
3. No demolition shall take place until the contract for the new development has been let, and written evidence of this has been made available to and accepted in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy.

Reasons

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.

2. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
3. In order to safeguard the character of the conservation area.

2 Main report

Site description

The application site lies on the east side of Baxter's Place and to the north of Greenside Lane. It consists of a row of Georgian townhouses dating from around 1798, and includes the land originally used for their gardens. To the rear of 1-2 Baxter's Place is a four storey 1970's office building that was developed at around the same time that the townhouse properties on Baxter's Place were converted to office use. The site slopes from Baxter's Place to Marshall's Court to the east, a fall of approximately 8.5m. Vehicular access to the modern office building to the rear is via Greenside Lane.

Directly to the east of the modern office building is a three storey tenement building. To the south is the service yard for the Playhouse Theatre. To the north, and rear of 3 - 4 and 5 Baxter's Place, is currently undeveloped ground with informal parking areas onto Marshall's Court. 4 Baxter's Place is in residential use.

The site lies within the New Town Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. Numbers 1 - 5 Baxter's Place are Category B listed.

Site history

16.07.2003 - Planning application for the refurbishment of existing offices (1-3 Baxter's Place), demolition of rear office extension, construction of new offices to rear of site, new outshot to 5 Baxter's Place to create restaurant + bar received (03/02635/FUL). This is considered in a separate report.

Development

It is proposed to demolish the existing 1970's office extension to the rear of 1-3 Baxter's Place to facilitate a new larger office block. The plans submitted suggest that the outshot to the front of 5 Baxter's Place will be removed. However, only the shop front and roof, which are in considerable state of disrepair, will be removed. The flank walls will be retained. As this is only an alteration and not demolition it will not form part of this assessment.

Consultations

No consultations undertaken.

Representations

The application was advertised on 01.08.2003. No representations have been received.

Policy

The site lies within an area identified as Housing and Compatible Uses in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan.

Relevant Policies:

Policy CD4 (CONSERVATION AREAS) requires that developments in a conservation area retain all features which contribute to the area's character and appearance.

Policy CD5 (CONSERVATION AREAS - REDEVELOPMENT) sets out the criteria against which new development in conservation areas will be assessed, and seeks to preserve or enhance their character and appearance.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Determining Issues

The determining issues are:

- do the proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area? there being a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission of this is not the case;
- do the proposals comply with the development plan?
- if the proposals do comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?
- if the proposals do not comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?


Assessment

To address these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether the proposal will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The character of the New Town Conservation Area is described in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan as:

A planned urban concept of European significance, the New Town has an overriding character of Georgian formality. The First New Town, built to James Craig's 1767 plan, has experienced significant redevelopment, while the Second, Third and Fourth New Towns, which were laid out on estates to the north, east and west retain most of their original buildings. Stone built terrace houses and tenements, built to the highest standards, overlook communal private gardens; to the rear are lanes with mews buildings, many of which are now in housing use. The importance of the area therefore lies in the formal plan layout of buildings, streets, mews and gardens and in the quality of the buildings themselves. Many of the New Town's buildings are listed category 'A' of national importance and the area contains some of the city's finest interiors.

The existing 1970's office building is of little architectural merit. As it offers little visual interest, its removal from the site will have no adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the conservation area, subject to the erection of an appropriate alternative development. An associated application is considered in a separate report (reference: 03/02635/FUL) and a condition is attached preventing demolition until a contract for new works is let.

It is recommended that the Committee approves this application, subject to the conditions stated.



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Head of Planning and Strategy

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Ward affected 20 -Calton

Local Plan Central Edinburgh

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision** Housing and Compatible Uses

File AF

Date registered 16 July 2003

**Drawing numbers/
Scheme** 12, 24