

**Full Planning Application
at
23 Ravelston Terrace
Edinburgh
EH4 3TP**

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

Proposal: Refurbishment of existing office building
Applicant: The Council Of The Borough Of South Tyneside.
Reference No: 03/01159/FUL

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. A detailed specification, including trade names where appropriate, of all the proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site;
Note: samples of the materials may be required.

Reasons

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.

2 Main report

Site description

The application relates to an eight-storey office building known as Croythorn House situated on the north side of Ravelston Terrace. The building was constructed in the early seventies and is finished in facing brick with horizontal bands of glazing formed by continuous single glazed steel windows. The area is characterised by a mix of uses. Daniel Stewart's and Melville College including the main category A listed building is located to west of the site, with Dean Cemetery to the east and south. To the north there are two other office buildings. Dean House which is immediately to the north and is currently being extended, and Dunedin House which lies beyond, fronting Queensferry Road.

The site lies within the Dean Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site.

Supporting Statement

The agents submitted a Supporting Statement and a Design Statement. The Supporting Statement concludes that the proposal is in accordance with policy and improves the appearance and viability of the building. The Design Statement looks at the setting of the building and provides visuals of the refurbished building.

Both statements are available in the Party Group Rooms for inspection.

Site history

August 2002 - application ref. 02/02384/FUL - planning permission refused for the refurbishment and overclad of existing office building.

Development

The application is for the complete recladding of the building. The proposed works will reflect the same principles of the existing building and involve the addition of a 'transparent skin' to the external envelope. The building has a layered form and it is proposed to retain this by providing a solid base - ground and first floor - clad in natural stone and the four upper floors clad in planar glazing with horizontal timber louvres between to provide definition. The top floor will remain recessed and will also be glazed.

The building will be ventilated by a natural ventilation system which requires this double skin glazed facade. This overcomes the need for a central air handling plant. However, as a consequence it results in an increase in floor area of 2084 square metres, the existing amounting to 6750.5 square metres and the proposed 8834.5 square metres.

Consultations

Historic Scotland (verbal)

The Historic Buildings Inspectorate does not wish to object to this scheme under the 1992 GDPO.

Edinburgh World Heritage Trust

The Trust has no objections to these proposals and is very pleased to see that the original plans for this building have been significantly amended, and improvements made in the choice of materials. The choice of glazing and sandstone is much more appropriate for such a large building within the World Heritage Site and the weathering patterns of these natural materials will be more visually acceptable than the cladding material which was previously proposed. Also, the choice of glazing for the treatment of the stair towers will help to reduce their impact.

The Royal Fine Art Commission

No response.

Representations

The application was advertised as a potential Departure from the development Plan on 11 July 2003. Stewarts Melville College wrote commenting on the proposals and offering no objections.

Policy

EDINBURGH AND LOTHIAN STRUCTURE PLAN 2015 - FINALISED PLAN

Policy ECON 6 states that major office development should not be permitted outwith strategic business centres and business/industrial land identified in local plans.

LOTHIAN STRUCTURE PLAN 1994

Policy ED18 states that major business development will not normally be permitted in the urban area of Edinburgh outside the strategic business centres (City Centre, South Gyle and Leith) and land allocated for industry/business use.

Policy ED19 sets out two exceptions to ED18. One of these is where proposals Arise from the expansion and/or rationalisation requirements of existing organisations or enterprises within Edinburgh's urban area; the other exception relates to the use of listed buildings. If the proposal falls into one of these exceptions, then four policy tests must be rigorously examined:

- availability of alternative accommodation
- impact upon amenity
- public transport accessibility
- parking and access arrangements.

The Glossary to the Structure Plan defines "Major Business Development" as individual proposals exceeding 1000 square metres gross floorspace, and those proposals of less than 1000 square metres gross, which could be linked to existing or proposed business developments on adjacent sites, thereby creating combined developments which exceed 1000 square metres gross floorspace.

CENTRAL EDINBURGH LOCAL PLAN

The site is within an area allocated for Housing and Compatible Uses.

Relevant Policies:

Policy CD2 (LISTED BUILDINGS) sets out criteria for assessing proposals affecting listed buildings and seeks to safeguard their character and setting.

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.

Policy CD11 (NEW DEVELOPMENT - GENERAL) sets out general design requirements for new development, and requires particular attention to be paid to main approach roads to the city centre.

Policy CD17 (MATERIALS) sets out requirements for materials in new developments and seeks a greater use of stone, roofing slate and other traditional materials in appropriate cases.

Policy CD19 (BUILDING ALTERATIONS) sets out requirements for the design, form, materials and positioning of alterations and extensions.

Policy ED5 (BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - INNER HOUSING AREAS) sets out criteria for assessing business and industrial development in defined Housing and Compatible Uses policy areas.

Policy H11 (HOUSING AMENITY) establishes a presumption against new development and changes of use likely to introduce increased levels of traffic or activity to the detriment of residential amenity or to the reasonable prospects of further residential development where this is an objective of the Local Plan.

Policy T15 (PRIVATE CAR PARKING) requires all new development to comply with car parking standards set out in the Development Control Handbook, including provision for people with disabilities, and requires car parking to be designed to minimise visual intrusion.

Non-statutory guidelines on 'COLOUR OF BUILDINGS' provide guidance on this matter, in support of local plan conservation and design policies.

Non-statutory guidelines on the 'SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS' supplement local plan conservation and design policies, providing guidance for the protection and enhancement of the setting of listed buildings.

Non-statutory guidelines on 'SERVICES ON BUILDINGS' supplement local plan conservation and design policies, providing additional guidance on the installation of services on the exterior of buildings.

Non-statutory 'WORLD HERITAGE SITE CONSERVATION MANIFESTO' supplement Central Edinburgh Local Plan policies relating to conservation and design and seeks to assist in preserving the historic fabric of Edinburgh's World Heritage Site and to ensure that changes complement and enhance its special character.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

DETERMINING ISSUES

The determining issues are:

- 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:

- a) the increase in office floorspace is acceptable in principle in this location;
- b) the design of the alterations are appropriate to the property and the area as a whole
- c) The proposed works will have a detrimental impact on residential amenity and whether there will be any road safety implications.

a) The existing building already has a floorspace of 6750.5 square metres. New floorspace is proposed which would amount to an additional 2084 square metres, resulting in a gross floor space of 8834.5 square metres. Under the terms of The Structure Plan, this is a major business development. Given that the site lies outwith the City Centre strategic business centre (as defined by the Local Plan) such a major business development would not satisfy Structure Plan Policy ED18 or Policy ECON 6 as contained within the Finalised Structure Plan. The proposal therefore needs to be assessed against Policy ED19 of the current Structure Plan which allows exceptions to Policy ED18.

Croythorn House is an existing office building within Edinburgh's urban area, with adjacent buildings also in business use, and as such satisfies part of ED19. It is stated in the applicant's supporting statement that the proposals are to rationalise existing substandard office accommodation. Although the extent of the new floorspace, combined with the existing floorspace, is in excess of the 1000 square metres Structure Plan criteria, it is relatively modest in terms of how it will be incorporated into the existing building. The additional floorspace is linked directly with the minimum dimension required to incorporate the proposed natural ventilation system. It will extend over seven storeys and will therefore have a minimal impact on the useable floorspace of the building. The premises are occupied by various tenants and the nature of the works would cause minimal disruption to these existing tenants. Given that the site is well established in terms of its business use, the availability of alternative accommodation and relocation of this business use is not considered to be appropriate.

It is considered the proposal are in accordance with the terms of policy ED18. The increase in office footprint is acceptable in principle.

b) The building, although a good example of a slab block building of its period, does not provide the conditions required by modern office space. The proposed external alterations adopt the same principles of the original design concept. The existing building's visual impact is minimised by both the existing brickwork and its ability to absorb light and the predominance of the horizontal glazing which creates 'negative' corners and a 'negative' upper floor. The proposed recladding works will retain both the horizontal emphasis and the transparent edges with substantial areas of glazing. It is considered that the external alterations will neither detract from the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding Dean Conservation Area and World Heritage Site nor from the setting of the category A listed buildings within the nearby Daniel Stewart's and Melville College.

c) The use of the office premises as extended is unlikely to generate significant additional levels of activity. The site is accessed off Ravelston Terrace and lies outwith the controlled parking area. This street is currently heavily parked during the day and any further pressure on parking within this area will impact on nearby residents and residents further from the site. However, the office is located close to several bus routes and the level of parking provided is such that it meets the range permitted within the parking standards. As such there will be no impact on neighbouring residential amenity nor will there be any road safety implications.

In view of the foregoing it is considered that the proposed works will significantly improve this prominent building's appearance giving it a more updated image which will detract from neither the setting of the nearby category A listed buildings nor the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

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

Alan Henderson

Alan Henderson
Head of Planning and Strategy

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Ward affected 16 -Dean

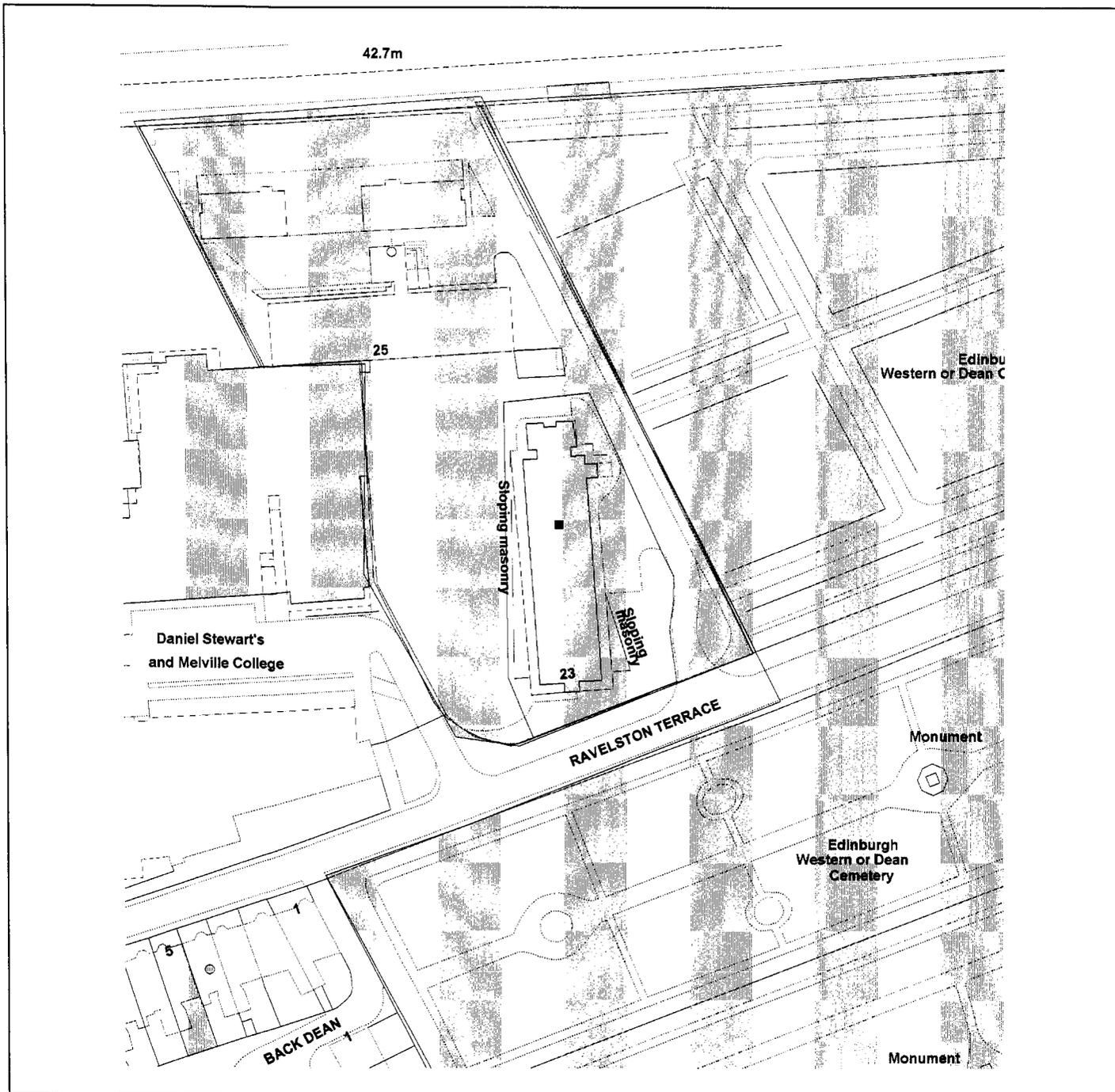
Local Plan Central Edinburgh Local Plan

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

File af

Date registered 17 April 2003

**Drawing numbers/
Scheme** 10, 12 - 14, 17 - 22, 24
Scheme 1



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PLANNING APPLICATION

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL			
THE CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT- PLANNING & STRATEGY			