

**Listed Building Consent Application
at
92 - 98 Fountainbridge
Edinburgh
EH3 9QE**

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

10 September 2003

Proposal: Proposed office development incorporating the category B listed building with restaurant/public house at ground floor + basement,
Applicant: Scotmid/Bett Properties Ltd.
Reference No: 02/03754/LBC

1 Purpose of report

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

Conditions

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than five years from the date of this consent.
2. The boardroom ceiling and walls shall be restored, in their amended form, to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning and Strategy. Detailed drawings of the truncated panelling shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning and Strategy prior to the restoration works being undertaken
3. A schedule of stone repairs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy within three months of the date of this consent, or before work commences on site, whichever is the sooner.

4. The application shall be referred to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.

Reasons

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
3. In order to enable the Head of Planning & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
4. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
5. NB This consent is for Listed Building Consent only. Work must not begin until other necessary consents, eg Planning Permission, have been obtained.

2 Main report

Site description

The site is an existing listed building and surrounding open space/car parking on the corner of Fountainbridge and Gardners Crescent. The western part of the site is the former Port Hamilton canal route.

The existing building on the site is category 'B' listed, designed by Hippolyte J Blanc, 1880. It was extended westward by T P Marwick in 1904, with a rear brick bakery after the infill of Port Hamilton in 1922.

To the north and west of the site there is a significant office development, the Telephone Exchange, as well as private flats on Port Hamilton. The Chalmers building, that contains a number of flats, is located to the east of the site. To the south, across the roundabout, is the mixed use Lochrin Basin development and to the south east, a bingo hall, Tollcross School and student flat accommodation.

Site history

The existing listed building on the site is occupied as offices with a funeral parlour on the ground floor. The ground floor was previously used as a public house. It operated as a public house for up to 100 years until 1988. The east block facing Fountainbridge was built in 1880 and comprised shops at ground level, offices at first floor and residential tenement flats on the top two floors until 1926, when they became offices. The bakery building to the rear of the east block was erected in at least four stages by adding progressively further storeys between 1880 and 1896.

With the infilling of the canal in 1922, the bakery operation was transferred elsewhere and a number of changes were made to the building in 1926, including construction of a sandstone extension to the north west. The function of the building was converted mainly to offices, and the configuration that it has today was then achieved.

Development

This is an application to convert and extend the listed building and form a new office block on the site to create 11,894 sq.m (128,000 sq.ft) floor area of offices with 707.4 sq.m of public house/restaurant use. 20 car parking spaces are proposed in an underground car park, along with 41 cycle spaces.

The main front facade and the majority of the Baronial side facades of the listed building will be retained. The curved brick facade to the rear of the site will be recorded and dismantled to be rebuilt to match existing. All other existing fabric will be removed. A new contemporary style extension will be attached to the rear, 5 storeys in height, with the top floor set back. It will wrap round the back of the building and round to the east where a formal entrance will be formed onto Fountainbridge. A physically separate office development will be built on the west side of the site to enable a public access corridor to be formed on the designated route. This will match the style of the new extension to the listed building.

Internally, much of the interior has been compromised and there will be a major reconfiguration. The original boardroom will be retained with a lowered ceiling and the lower floor of the stone stair.

In terms of uses, the new build and upper floors of the listed building will be offices. The ground and basement floors of the listed building will be public house/restaurant.

A public open space runs through the site around which the buildings are to be grouped. The public open space runs approximately on the line of the former canal, a cycle route desire line.

Supporting statement

The applicant's revised supporting statement is available in the Party Group Rooms.

Consultations

Historic Scotland

The Inspectorate offers no adverse informal comment on the tabled submission, as the proposals accord with the conservation principles agreed with a previous scheme by agents Reiach and Hall.

Representations

The application was advertised on 1 November 2002. 3 letters have been received in respect of Scheme 1, including those from the Cockburn Association, The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, and Tollcross Community Council:

The Cockburn Association, whilst welcoming the redevelopment of this corner site, strongly objects to the demolition of part of the building, paying little attention to the integrity of the building or the history and evolution of the site. It suggests residential use of the rear part of the building in order to retain it.

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland raises concerns over detail - design somewhat bland, requiring better integration of old and new elements. The L plan of the existing building should be kept and the curved side wall re-emphasised by the new build behind. The mixed use is welcomed, echoing its original function and helping to ensure future sustainability.

Other comments:

- Not compatible with style of listed building

The revised schemes 2 and 3 have not been re-advertised, as there are no changes in these later schemes to the impact on the listed building.

Policy

The site is identified in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan as part of a Mixed Activities Zone. The western part of the site is designated as part of the Semple Street Major Development Opportunity to promote an extension of the prime business core as provided in the West Central Edinburgh Redevelopment Strategy and the significance of the site also lies in its relationship with neighbouring sites such as Lochrin Basin (mixed development) allowing a network of linked traffic free public paths and spaces.

Relevant Policies:

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

Policy CD3 (LISTED BUILDINGS - USES) establishes a presumption (with stated qualifications) in favour of retaining a listed building in (or restoring it to) its original use.

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

Non-statutory guidelines 'ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS' provide general guidance for assessing proposals for both internal and external alterations.

Non-statutory guidelines on 'SAFEGUARDING OF BUILDING INTERIORS DURING VACANCY' provide guidance on the safeguarding of the fabric and architectural features of historic buildings during periods of vacancy.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

DETERMINING ISSUES

The determining issues are:

- do the proposals preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses? If they do not, there is a presumption against the granting of consent;
- 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 the determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether the proposals have an adverse impact on the character of the listed building.

The proposal, in the main, results in the most important parts of the listed building being restored and kept in sustainable use.

The new build blocks either side of the listed building have been kept away from the existing building so that the front and side elevations can clearly be seen. The west side of the listed building has the benefit of a landscape open space on the line of the *original canal/open space*, which gives views of the building and reinforces its dominant setting on the street frontage but with a sense of spatial enclosure. The overall effect is that the listed building is left standing dominantly to the street frontage, its elevations clearly visible, with complementary, visually light weight blocks set back either side.

Internally, there are only two areas of architectural interest. Firstly, the entrance area, contains a decorative lift with a cast iron cage in an open shaft, plus the main stairs. Secondly, the boardroom contains an ornate ceiling, cornices and panelling. Both were installed in the refurbishment in 1926. The stairs to the first floor are to remain, but capped off at first floor level. The lift is to be officially recorded and removed. The ceiling in the boardroom is to be lowered and the panelling adjusted, in order to create habitable head height in the space above. Historic Scotland is satisfied with these works/retentions.

Justification for the demolitions to the rear is on the grounds that the incremental additions to the 1880 building are of little architectural merit and the many interconnections and differences in floor levels are not suitable for modern use. Nevertheless, the characteristic curved red brick wall on the north west rear, formerly addressing the canal, is to be rebuilt and incorporated in the new scheme, retaining a worthwhile part of the listed exterior. The timber floors are to be replaced and the roof redressed and a full stone repair schedule is proposed. The proposals will upgrade and enhance the primary listed building.

The proposals comply with the development plan and non-statutory policies and have no adverse impact on the character of the listed building.

There are no other material planning considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

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 31 -Fountainbridge

Local Plan Central Edinburgh

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision** Mixed Activities Zone/Major Development Opportunity

File A/F

Date registered 25 October 2002

**Drawing numbers/
Scheme** 027759-70/74-75; 007849-51; 27123-24; 31285
Scheme 3