

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 29 January 2014

**Application for Listed Building Consent 13/03994/LBC
At 10 - 11 Riddle's Court, 322 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh
Internal and external alterations with the insertion of a lift
shaft and creation of a plant room through roof extensions.
(as amended)**

Item number	9.1(b)
Report number	
Wards	A11 - City Centre

Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#) LPC, CITE4, CITE6, NSG, NSLBCA,

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Executive summary

Application for Listed Building Consent 13/03994/LBC At 10 - 11 Riddle's Court, 322 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh Internal and external alterations with the insertion of a lift shaft and creation of a plant room through roof extensions. (as amended)

Summary

The proposal complies with development plan policies and non-statutory guidelines. On balance the overall character of the building is improved through the works and its long-term future will be secured. No other considerations outweigh this conclusion.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below (in section 3 of the main report).

Financial impact

Both the main building and the basement cafe are leased by the Council. The lease of the main building, which is currently a short-term lease, will convert to a 99 year lease on completion of the restoration project.

The lease to 6VT cafe is renewable annually in April. The existing cafe have first option on re-occupying the basement following renovation but the applicant is permitted to include the cafe within their lease should 6 VT not take up this option.

The Estates section is actively involved in finding a new home for the cafe for the duration of the works, since the works will necessitate closure of their existing facility.

Equalities impact

The application has been assessed and has no impact in terms of equalities or human rights.

Sustainability impact

This application is not subject to the sustainability requirements of the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

Consultation and engagement

Pre-Application Process

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments

The application was advertised on 11th October 2013.

Sixteen objections were received of which two were from the Cockburn Association and AHSS. These raised material issues.

Material objections

The inappropriate form and design of the two new-build elements: the plant enclosure and the lift enclosure/glazed feature on the south block.

Non-material objections

Fourteen letters regarding loss of the 6 VT youth cafe and its vital social role.

Community Council comments

None.

Background reading / external references

- To view details of the application go to
- [Planning and Building Standards online services](#)

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1. Background

1.1 Site description

The property is an elaborate complex of buildings lying between Victoria Terrace and the Lawnmarket centred upon two inner courtyards of very distinct character. Superficially the buildings date back to 1590 but interiors indicate sections of far greater antiquity. The south side of the building was remodelled in the 1860s as part of the creation of Victoria Street/ Victoria Terrace. The building appears to have been reduced in height at that time to fit in with the streetscape created. The building was notably upgraded and altered under the guidance of Patrick Geddes in the late 19th century and several features specifically relate to this alteration. In more recent years the building was restored and altered in 1958 and again in 1969. The building was listed category A on 14.12.1970 (Ref.29242). The building is in Council ownership and is leased out to more than one tenant.

The building is currently in a very poor state of repair (requiring more than £1 million of works) and is on the Buildings at Risk register. The project is recognised as a valuable conservation project and will be part funded by Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund (both of whom support the proposals) under the over-arching control of the Scottish Building Preservation Trust, who are the occupants of the majority of the building and the applicant.

The building is surrounded by other listed buildings. Those on the Lawnmarket are all category A and include annex buildings to the National Library immediately to the east. To the west lie buildings on Upper Bow (mainly category B) which lead down to the Quaker Meeting House at the junction of Victoria Terrace and Upper Bow. As seen from the south the buildings sit on Victoria Terrace, the upper walkway which also serves as the roof of the Victoria Street commercial properties below, again all of which are listed category B.

The building lies in the World Heritage Site.

This property is located within the Old Town Conservation Area.

1.2 Site History

A parallel application for planning permission has been made (13/03993/FUL).

2. Main report

2.1 Description Of The Proposal

The application proposes a series of alterations in combination with several areas of restorative works.

Externally these primarily consist of the addition of a large plant room on the top of the currently truncated and flat-roofed central block and the creation of a glazed feature on the north side of the southmost block, standing over the southern courtyard. The latter stands adjacent to a restored chimney, which partly obscures a new lift shaft behind. The only other external alteration is the restoration of a door within an existing central window on the east side of the southern courtyard at ground floor level.

Internally alterations are widespread and extensive but largely restorative. The main areas of non-restorative alteration are:-

- creation of an open space in atrium style in the north-east corner of the southmost block, removing all existing floors in this zone and inserting a lift to the east and a series of connecting balconies on each floor;
- removal of a stair from ground to first floor in the southern block and replacement with a glazed floor allowing views down into the medieval stair below (on the line of the old close); and
- alterations within the minor rooms linking the central block to the south block.

Previous Scheme

The scheme was amended to reduce the bulk and the visibility of the glazed roof feature.

Supporting documents including a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Report and Justification Statement are available to view on the Planning and Building Standards online services.

2.2 Determining Issues

In considering whether to grant consent, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. For the purposes of this issue, preserve, in relation to the building, means preserve it either in its existing state or subject only to such alterations or extensions as can be carried out without serious detriment to its character.

Do the proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area? If they do, there is a strong presumption against granting of permission.

2.3 Assessment

To address these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether:

- a) the alterations have any adverse effect on the character of the listed building or its setting;

- b) the works preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- c) the proposal has any equalities or human rights impacts; and
- d) the representations raise issues to be addressed.

a) Impact on the Character of the Listed Building

Externally the most significant alteration is the addition of a plant enclosure on the central block. This stands on a current flat roof. The building has been truncated in the past and was formerly of greater height. The principle of adding a structure here is acceptable as the area is not part of the original form or character of the building. The feature has no effect on the character of the building.

The alterations on the southern block are visible from the southern courtyard and affect an area of 17th century roof (possibly rebuilt in the late 19th century but containing original structural elements). As seen from the courtyard the restored chimney screens most of the new lift enclosure plus this feature acts as a counterpoint to the new glazed feature added.

The addition of the lift enclosure and its glazed lobby does have a localised negative impact on one area of the roof. Lift access is required to the upper floor in order to comply with DDA requirements to this, the administration level. Without this the scheme is non-compliant. There is an impact on the listed building but given the requirement to provide disabled access to all levels, including this upper level, alongside the fact that the works form part of a wider repair and restoration package, the alteration is considered acceptable. Historic Scotland has no objections to the works (and, as stated earlier, are part-funding the scheme).

Internally all principal rooms of historic or architectural interest are maintained and restored.

Several areas of more minor interest are transformed, primarily the area under the glazed feature on the roof, which will become a small open atrium. Within this same zone a degree of fabric is lost at each level due to the loss of floors in this zone. However, this is acceptable in terms of the wider benefits to building operation. The attic level and the link block to the east are altered in layout, but these are not areas of architectural significance.

A staircase leading from the main ground floor meeting room to a first floor isolated room is removed in its entirety. Whilst this stair is of some historic interest, it has been altered in several respects but more critically, its removal allows insertion of a glazed floor to view downwards to the far more historically important close steps leading down to the basement level, the latter being currently blocked and largely unseen. This change will dramatically improve the archaeological interpretation of the building to visitors.

Several areas of enclosed remnants (fragments of stairs, old walls etc) are also lost in the replanning, but the net effect is one of enhancement both in visual and functional terms, since all of the many rooms of principal importance are fully retained and restored.

Whilst complex, it is considered that the major areas of restoration outweigh the minor areas of change and on balance the character of the building is improved by the works. The works also secure the long-term survival of the building as a whole.

In terms of setting the buildings are laid out around two small courtyards, from which (especially in the inner/southern courtyard) they have considerable historic character. Only the south elevation of the building is fully visible from a public street, but on this side the building has been remodelled to adopt a 19th century aesthetic, merging it with Victoria Street/Victoria Terrace. There is no change to the southern side of the building and so setting from Victoria Street/Victoria Terrace is unaltered.

Due to the restricted visibility of the alterations the effect upon setting of any adjacent listed buildings (as seen from the courtyards) is also minimal.

The works preserve the listed building, its setting and the setting of adjacent listed buildings.

b) Impact on the Conservation Area

Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal

"The spatial structure of the Old Town is a microcosm of urban development, reflecting the multiple layering of built heritage and responding to the drama of the site's topography and setting" A wealth of hidden, enclosed spaces characterised by their individuality. These are mainly accessible to the pedestrian only through curved arches, gates and narrow closes."

This section of the Lawnmarket is characterised by small courtyards standing behind a wall of tenements on the Royal Mile, accessed through narrow closes. As seen from the south, Victoria Street is characterised by bold town-planning, cutting through the medieval street pattern to form a unified plinth of shops on its north side, capped by a second road (Victoria Terrace) with a sweep of 19th century frontages looking down to the street below. The roofscape is characterised by a complex roofscape which has evolved over centuries. This has multiple layers and is typified by a predominance of slate, but many examples of older pantiles and more modern interventions in metal and by flat roofs amongst the pitches.

The new roofscape continues to fit with this overall character. The addition of a door in the inner courtyard also adds to character.

The appearance of this section of the conservation area is limited due to its enclosed location. Apart from the south side (which is unaltered in this application) the buildings are only visible from within very small private courtyards, with restricted upward views.

All new external works are confined to the inner courtyard areas and are not visible from neither the Royal Mile/Lawnmarket nor from Victoria Street/Terrace.

On the central block there is currently a flat roof. The building here has been truncated in the past and was formerly of greater height. The principle of adding a structure here is acceptable and the location and form are such that the additional plantroom is not seen from the outer more public courtyard.

The alterations at roof level on the southmost block are visible from the southern courtyard (a restricted and private view though often left open for public access) but not from any truly public area. These works are partially restorative and the reconstructed chimney serves to visually screen the bulk of the lift enclosure behind. The glazed alterations at the adjacent wallhead have been amended to be less visible from the private courtyard. The works alter the appearance of the inner courtyard at roof level, but the modern intervention may be partially offset against the adjacent restoration. This alteration is therefore considered acceptable.

It is acknowledged that the lift is essential to the operation of the altered building. The applicant has stressed the need for this section in terms of the overall replanning of the interior.

The new door in the southern courtyard has an acceptable effect on the appearance of the conservation area.

The overall and net effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area is minimal and acceptable.

c) Equalities and Human Rights

The proposal improves access across internal floors and would benefit use by people with disabilities.

d) Public Comment

16 representations were received.

Material Representations

-the form and design of the plant enclosure and glazed addition to the south - this is addressed in sections a) and b) of the Assessment.

Non-material Representations

- the closure of the existing cafe -The issue of the closure of the existing cafe is not a planning issue. As it is a Council-owned building the issue of the existing lease is discussed in the Finance section of this report.

Community Council Comments

None.

Conclusion

The physical alterations both internally and externally, on balance, improve the character of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. No other considerations outweigh this conclusion.

Conditions on several details are recommended. Approval is subject to the views of the Scottish Ministers.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below

3.2 Conditions/reasons

1. The application shall be notified to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.
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 Planning Authority before work is commenced on site; Note: samples of the materials may be required.
3. Details of the glazed feature and its junctions with adjacent historic fabric shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.
4. Details of all internal infilled archways and historical openings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.

Reasons:-

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to enable the Head of Planning Authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to enable the Head of Planning Authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
4. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Statutory Development Plan Provision

The site lies within the Old Town Conservation Area as shown in the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

Date registered 24 September 2013

Drawing numbers/Scheme 1-8,9a,10-12,13a,14-24,25a-27a,28,29a,30-33,

Scheme 2

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Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

Relevant policies of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

Policy Env 4 (Listed Buildings – Alterations & Extensions) identifies the circumstances in which alterations and extensions to listed buildings will be permitted.

Policy Env 6 (Conservation Areas Development) sets out criteria for assessing development in conservation areas.

Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines

Non-statutory guidelines 'LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS' provides guidance on repairing, altering or extending listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

