

**Full Planning Application 05/01411/FUL  
at  
Waverley Steps  
Edinburgh  
EH2 2EH**

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

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**1 Purpose of report**

To consider application 05/01411/FUL, submitted by Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd. The application is for: **Interchange and access improvements to the steps, including provision of lifts and escalators and roof canopy (as amended).**

It is recommended that this application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions in Appendix B.

**2 The Site and the Proposal**

**Site description**

The application relates to Waverley Steps and the north entrance to Waverley Station. The steps are located in the gap between the Princes Mall shopping centre and the Balmoral Hotel. The entrance to the station at the bottom of the steps has a stone archway and a large advertisement hoarding set over this entrance. There are a number of retail units located within the basement level of the Balmoral Hotel, and two access points linking into Princes Mall off the existing landing areas. The roof of Princes Mall is flat with existing pedestrian access and has railings and soft landscaping on the east boundary with the existing steps.

Waverley Station is category A listed (Item No. 2642) and is located within the Old Town Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. The steps are within

the New Town Conservation Area. The Balmoral Hotel is category B listed (Item No. 2695) and is within the New Town Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

### **Site history**

The station has had a number of internal alterations in the past and has much of its original interior altered.

Listed building consent application pending consideration for re-profiling of platforms 12-19 and replacement of existing canopies with new.

05/02987/LBC

Listed building consent application pending consideration for two new platforms with stair/lift access and extension of former platform 3.

05/02989/LBC

### **Description of the Proposal**

The amended proposals involve remodelling the existing steps to allow for the installation of new steps, up and down escalators, two passenger lifts and a glass canopy covering the new steps and escalators. An area on top of the existing Princes Mall will also be altered to accommodate access to the new lifts. The existing stone entrance arch and advert panel will be removed to form an enlarged access point into the station.

One continuous escalator will be located to the south of the steps and will take pedestrians down only to the station. The 'up' escalators will be located on the west side of the existing steps, with a set of new steps formed on the east side of the site which will allow pedestrians to walk to and from the station. The 'up' escalators will be separated by the existing landing areas and will continue to provide access to the retail units on both sides of the steps. The proposed lifts will also stop at these landing areas and will be accessed from Princes Street over the roof of the existing shopping centre.

The proposed glass canopy is curved in profile and will be supported on 'structural trees' made of steel with stainless steel lattice trusses holding the glass panels in place. The canopy will project slightly onto Princes Street and will incorporate signage and security doors. The lifts will also be constructed in glass with internal steel supports.

The proposals were amended to remove the canopy from over the lifts and have this canopy covering the 'down' escalator only.

## **Supporting Statement**

The agent has submitted a number of supporting statements, which are available in the Group Rooms. The supporting information covers:

- The requirement and justification for the proposals.
- The philosophy behind the design solution.

## **3 Officer's Assessment and Recommendations**

### **DETERMINING ISSUES**

The determining issues are:

- Do the proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area? If they do, there is a strong presumption against the granting of permission;
- 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 permission. For the purposes of this issue, "preserve", in relation to a 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 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:

- a) Whether the proposals have an adverse impact on the building or its setting;
- b) Whether the proposals have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c) Whether the design is satisfactory given the setting of the site;
- d) Whether the proposals are detrimental to residential amenity or road safety.

a) The proposed glass canopy has been designed so as not to touch the Balmoral Hotel and will follow the contours of the building profile. This will ensure that the fabric of the listed building is respected and no damage occurs to existing stonework.

A small element of the west facade of the Balmoral at lower basement level will be affected due to the slightly different alignment of the new steps. This will have minimal impact on the overall facade and a condition is recommended to ensure this area is finished to match the remaining elevation.

The proposed canopies and lift will have some impact on the setting of the Balmoral. The scheme was specifically amended to take this into account and has seen the removal of the canopy over the lifts. The removal of this element has reduced the overall visual impact of the canopy on the west elevation of the Balmoral and respects its special setting.

The Balmoral Hotel does have a unique setting within the World Heritage Site and any development close to this building will impact to some degree on its setting. In terms of the current proposals, the canopies and lifts have been designed to minimise the impact of the development whilst providing an enclosed environment for users of the station and retail units. The proposals have been designed to take account of this special setting and propose a solution which will minimise the impact on the setting of the Balmoral Hotel. The impact of these new elements will be largely limited to views from the west and north-west and, in terms of the large scale and mass of the facade of the Balmoral, these elements will have limited impact on its overall appearance and setting. The overall aspect and appreciation of the Balmoral will be respected and the proposed contemporary addition will read as a clearly modern intervention, announce this entrance into the station.

The proposals will have no adverse impact on the buildings or their setting.

b) The character of the New Town Conservation Area is described in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan as follows:

*"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 steps have been significantly altered over the years and currently have a textured concrete finish with modern handrails. The proposal to remove the steps is acceptable in principle. The proposed replacement steps will largely follow the profile of the existing steps with minor changes made to the steps and landing areas to rationalise their position. The formation of actual steps will retain this existing characteristic and allow this feature of the conservation area to remain whilst allowing continued pedestrian access.

The proposed entrance canopy when viewed from Princes Street will have an affect on the immediate view south over the roof of Waverley Station towards the Old Town. This view is currently constrained by the Balmoral to the east and Princes Mall to the west, with a large advertisement hoarding terminating the view at the bottom of the existing steps. The use of glazing supported on lattice trusses will allow for a degree of transparency and a view across the valley will still be achieved when descending into the station. The overall appreciation of the valley and the view south across to the Old Town will be respected and the openness of the views across the roof of the Princes Mall will be maintained.

The views of the canopies from the north will be limited as it will be set down into the gap between the existing buildings and will be screened from a number of viewpoints. The agent has submitted photomontages and a model of the proposals to demonstrate the impact the works will have on the existing buildings and views.

The existing stone entrance feature at the bottom of the steps will be removed to accommodate the new escalators and provide an enlarged opening into the station. The stonework of this feature is in a poor state of repair and its integrity has been compromised by the addition of cabling and signage. The removal of this feature is considered acceptable in this instance to allow an enhanced access to the station.

The proposals have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.

c) The design of the proposed canopies and lift are overtly modern and will be constructed using high quality modern materials, such as glass, steel and stainless steel. The design of the proposal is derived largely from the constraints of the site and has been detailed in a manner which addresses the requirements of inclusive access, whilst providing a high quality design solution using contemporary materials and adding visual interest to the streetscene.

The proposed lifts have been designed to allow disabled access to the landing areas on the new steps. This level of access is currently unattainable and will provide enhanced access to the retail units within the Balmoral basement area and Princes Mall.

An area of the Princes Mall roof will be extended over the existing steps to accommodate the new lifts and entrance to the down escalator. This area will

be approximately 3 metres away from some of the windows on the ground floor the Balmoral Hotel. Whilst the existing hotel use is not afforded the same level of amenity as a residential property, the area for accessing the lifts and down escalator will have a limited impact on the privacy of the hotel. The proposed sectional elevations show that the majority of windows on the west elevation will remain unaffected by the proposals and the level of the access will only allow limited views into the hotel. The cill height of the hotel windows is approximately 1.5 metres above the level of the access area and it is anticipated that this open area will be used as a transitional space where people are moving into and out of the station.

The non-statutory guidelines on 'Daylight, Privacy and Sunlight' makes exceptions for steeply sloping or unusual sites, and in this instance due to the constraints of the site, the commercial use of the affected neighbour and the unusual nature of the location, an exception to the normal standards is acceptable.

The proposed entrance canopy will project approximately 1 metre in front of the facade of the Balmoral Hotel but will remain behind the boundary wall to the front of the hotel. This projection is required to give some presence to the entrance and will provide a larger circulation area for people arriving at the top of the steps. This area is currently constrained by a narrow footpath with heavy pedestrian movement. The proposed projection is considered acceptable in this instance to provide enhanced access/egress for the station.

The design is satisfactory given the setting of the site.

d) The proposals will have no adverse impact on residential amenity as there are no residential units in close proximity to the steps. The proposed new access arrangements will enhance this busy route to Waverley Station, will provide better access for disabled persons and will not be detrimental to road safety.

In conclusion, it is acknowledged that the proposals will have some impact on the setting of the nearby listed building and views south. However, this impact will be minimised through the current design solution and on balance, the proposals represent a design solution which will significantly enhance access to Waverley Station, will respect the setting of surrounding buildings and the immediate site and will add a feature of visual interest within the streetscene.

The proposals comply with the development plan and non-statutory policies, with the minor breach of non-statutory guidelines on privacy being within acceptable limits. The proposals will have no adverse effect on the character or appearance of the conservation area or the building and its setting, and have no detrimental impact on residential amenity or road safety.

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

It is recommended that the Committee approves this application, subject to the conditions requesting details of the lifts, signage, lighting, materials, boundary treatments and security barrier.

*Alan Henderson*

**Alan Henderson**  
Head of Planning and Strategy

<b>Contact/tel</b>	Damian McAfee on 0131 529 3529 (FAX 529 3717)
<b>Ward affected</b>	34 - Holyrood
<b>Local Plan</b>	Central Edinburgh
<b>Statutory Development Plan Provision</b>	Retail Core
<b>Date registered</b>	12 May 2005
<b>Drawing numbers/ Scheme</b>	01, 03, 07, 12, 14, 16, 18-27 Scheme 2

**Advice to Committee Members and Ward Councillors**

The full details of the application are available for viewing on the Planning and Building Control Portal: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning).

If you require further information about this application you should contact the following Principal Planner, Martin Easson on 0131 529 3989. Email: [martin.easson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:martin.easson@edinburgh.gov.uk).

If this application is not identified on the agenda for presentation, and you wish to request a presentation of this application at the Committee meeting, you must contact Committee Services by 9.00a.m. on the Tuesday preceding the meeting on extension 4229/4239. Alternatively, you may e-mail [blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk) or [sarah.bogunovic@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bogunovic@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Application Type** Full Planning Application  
**Application Address:** Waverley Steps  
Edinburgh  
EH2 2EH  
**Proposal:** Interchange and access improvements to the steps, including provision of lifts and escalators and roof canopy (as amended).  
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## Consultations, Representations and Planning Policy

### Consultations

#### Historic Scotland

##### Scheme 1

*Historic Scotland recognises the importance and priority of improving accessibility to the 'A' listed Waverley Station. We are, however, seriously concerned at the significant visual impact the proposals, which include the provision of lifts, escalators and a roof canopy, will have on the setting of the Balmoral Hotel, townscape of the Waverley valley and wider views within the World Heritage Site. The proposed removal of the original walkway fabric and stone portal entrance also seems unnecessary and is a major concern.*

*With regard to landscape setting, page 30 of the of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan (Final Draft) states 'This setting, with its valleys and ridges, is created by the Site's geology, especially the distinctive crag-and-tail formation on which the Castle and Old Town developed. The associated flanking valley of Nor' Loch (now containing the main railway station and Princes Street Gardens) and the South Loch (now the Meadow), provide exceptional opportunities for vistas and panorama out of, into and within the site. 'Policy 13, within the Management Plan, seeks to protect planned vistas and encourage the creation of new vistas and views where this does not threaten existing townscape.'*

*The visual impact of the middle section of the canopy is highly significant in relation to the Balmoral Hotel. The canopy should not detract from the immediate detail of the Balmoral nor the world famous views along Princes Street. Consideration should be given to reducing this middle section, removing the escalators and perhaps detailing only a simple glass box for the lift enclosure in this location.*

*The entrance canopy on Princes Street seems to interrupt the existing building line and this element should be set further back. Depending on its design, it could still act as a welcoming focus.*

*This proposal also seems to be a separate consideration to other aspects of the redevelopment of Waverley which is also unsatisfactory.*

*The proposal as submitted seems to depart from the earlier ideas discussed between all parties. More detailed visual information is ideally required to fully assess the impact of the proposals on the longer view across the Waverley valley and Princes Street. We therefore object this application in its current form and hope that a meeting can be arranged with all parties to discuss amendments to the proposals and the overall vision for the redevelopment of Waverley Station.*

### **Edinburgh Access Panel**

*No concerns with regard to provision for disabled people.*

### **Transport**

*No objections.*

### **Historic Scotland**

#### **Scheme 2**

*Historic Scotland consider that these revised drawings go some way to lessening the impact of the proposed canopies on the setting of the Balmoral Hotel and wider views into and out of the Waverley Valley and central focus of the World Heritage Site. Your Council should satisfy themselves that this design is the lightest and least intrusive that can be achieved within the terms of the brief in this highly sensitive location.*

*The projection of the entrance canopy forward of the Princes Street building line of the Balmoral Hotel needs justification and careful handling if it is to remain as detailed. The stone portal, dated 1897, and cast iron panels to be removed should be carefully salvaged and stored on site for re-use in any future redevelopment and we would be happy to comment on all further details as they become available.*

### **Representations**

The application was advertised on 27 May 2005.

Four letters of representation were received.

The AHSS commented on the proposals and did not object to the application but felt the works should be part of a master plan.

The Balmoral Hotel and a commercial unit located on Waverley Steps objected to the proposals on the following grounds:

- Adverse impact on setting and appearance of hotel, will obscure facade.
- Inappropriate materials, lighting and signage within the World Heritage Site.
- Loss of privacy and light within key public rooms of the hotel.
- Fails to take account of longer term redevelopment of station.
- Will set a precedent for development above street level.
- Impact on business.

A local resident objected on the following grounds:

- Visual intrusion and unfortunate relationship to the Balmoral Hotel.
- Other locations for access should be considered.

The revised scheme was re-advertised on 9 September 2005 and neighbours re-notified.

Three letters of representation were received.

The Balmoral Hotel and two of the commercial units located on Waverley Steps objected on the following grounds:

- The revisions fail to address concerns.
- Detrimental impact on hotel and surrounding area.
- Proposals will adversely impact on business.

***Full copies of the representations made in respect of this application are available in Group Rooms or can be requested for viewing at the Main Reception, City Chambers, High Street.***

## **Planning Policy**

The application site lies within the City Centre Retail Core: proposals for redevelopment should primarily provide for shopping uses of the Central Edinburgh Local Plan. Waverley Station is defined as an area of Major Development Opportunity, within the Mixed Activities Zone.

### Relevant Policies:

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

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.

Policy CD10 (NEW DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVE) encourages new development of the highest possible architectural and urban quality.

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 CD12 (HEIGHT CONTROL) protects the city's historic skyline and views from adverse high development.

Policy CD13 (HEIGHT AND TOPOGRAPHY) requires the suppression of the height of new building where necessary to retain or emphasise the significance of important topographical features, including valley features.

Policy CD14 (MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES) sets out general requirements for the development of major opportunity sites (identified on the Proposals Map) and other large or phased development sites.

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 CD18 (SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY) requires the design and layout of development proposals to meet safety, sustainability and accessibility objectives.

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

Policy CD22 (STREETSCENE) sets out design and quality objectives for street furniture and paving.

Policy L9 (VISITOR MANAGEMENT) supports measures and proposals intended to meet the information and movement needs of tourists provided that they are sensitive to the city centre's historic environment.

Policy T10 (PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT) sets out the Council's objectives for improving the pedestrian environment of the city centre and other main areas of pedestrian congregation

Non-statutory guidelines 'ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT' seek to ensure that development proposals and streetscape works take account of the needs of disabled people.

Non-statutory guidelines 'DAYLIGHTING, PRIVACY AND SUNLIGHT' set criteria for assessing proposals in relation to these issues.

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 '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.

Non-statutory guidelines on Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design sets criteria for the quality of design in new development to maintain and improve the visual image and identity of Edinburgh.

The New Town Conservation Area is typified by the formal plan layout, spacious stone built terraces, broad streets and an overall classical elegance. The buildings are of a generally consistent three storey and basement scale, with some four storey corner and central pavilions.

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## Conditions/Reasons associated with the Recommendation

### Recommendation

It is recommended that this application be **GRANTED**

### Conditions

1. The works 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.
3. Details of the proposed lifts shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site.
4. Details of all proposed signage, lighting and the security barrier shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site.
5. Details of the proposed boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site.
6. The areas on the west elevation of the Balmoral affected by the new steps shall be repaired/restored to match the original facade. Details of these areas and the proposed finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Head of Planning and Strategy prior to the commencement of works.

## 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 & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to enable the Head of Planning & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
4. In order to enable the Head of Planning & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
5. In order to enable the Head of Planning & Strategy to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
6. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
7. NB This consent is for planning permission only. Work must not begin until other necessary consents, e.g. listed building consent, have been obtained.

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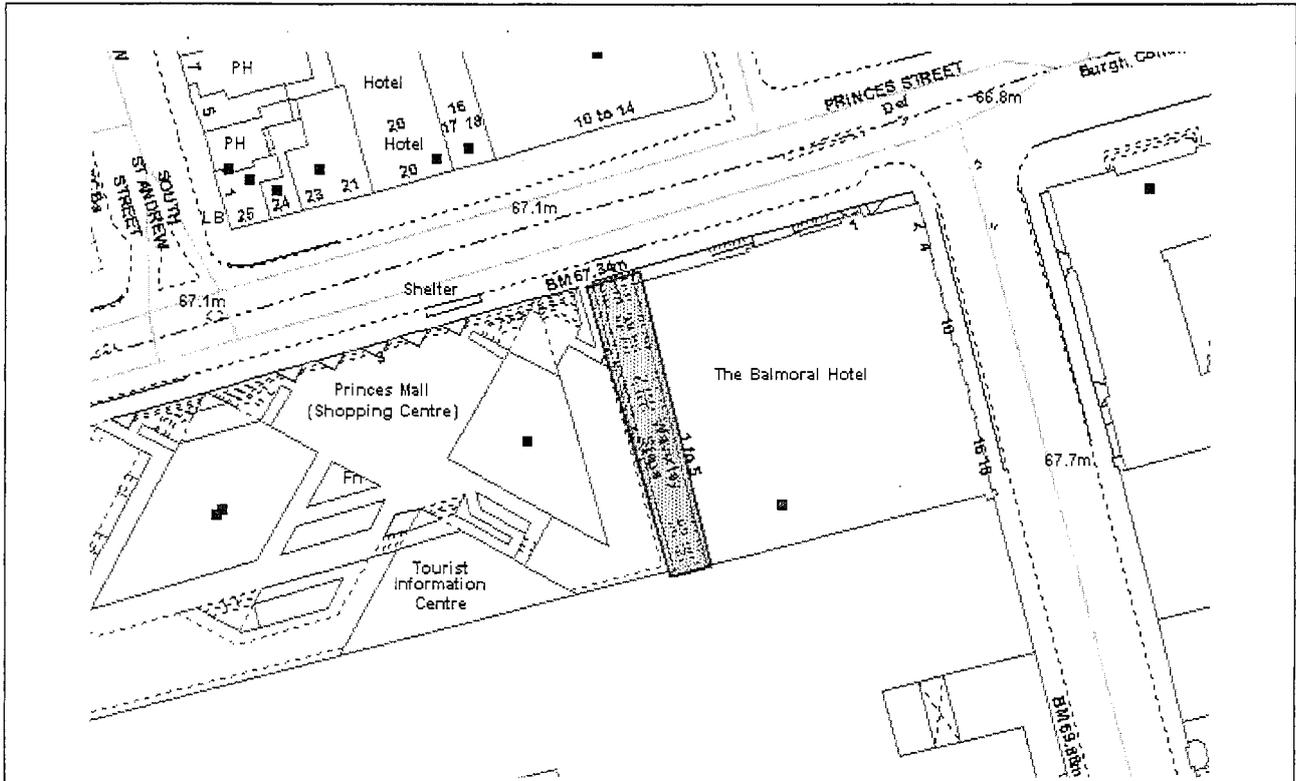
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### Location Plan



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