

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 12 August 2015

**Application for Conservation Area Consent 15/00323/CON
At 62 Morrison Street, Edinburgh,
Demolition of redundant Skyparks car park building.**

Item number	4.6(b)
Report number	
Wards	A11 - City Centre

Summary

The proposal is in accordance with the Edinburgh City Local Plan. The demolition of the existing building will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area and is acceptable in principle. The proposed replacement development is of a high quality and will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#) LPC, CITE5, CITE2, NSG, NSLBCA, CRPWEN,

Report

Application for Conservation Area Consent 15/00323/CON At 62 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, Demolition of redundant Skyparks car park building.

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that this application be Minded to Grant - Historic Scotland subject to the details below.

Background

2.1 Site description

The site is located off Morrison Street, on the site of the disused 'Skypark' building and the adjacent surface car park, which serves Capital House. The site can be approached from the south off Morrison Street (and Chuckie Pend) and from the north from Festival Square or Conference Square. To the immediate north of the application site lies the Sheraton Grand Hotel and to the north east Capital House which both front onto Festival Square, Atria One is located immediately to the west of the site. These are contemporary modern buildings. To the east and south are typical Georgian tenements with ground floor shops turning the corner of Lothian Road and Morrison Street.

The local area is characterised by a mix of uses with a commercial character dominated by business, office, retail and restaurant uses.

This application site is located within the West End Conservation Area.

2.2 Site History

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of existing Skyparks building and the associated Scottish Power substations and Capital House back-up generator.

3.2 Determining Issues

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

3.3 Assessment

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

- a) the loss of the building will adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- b) the proposed replacement development is of sufficient quality;
- c) the proposal will have any detrimental impact on equalities and human rights; and
- d) comments raised have been addressed.

a) Conservation Area

The demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area, in accordance with policy Env 5: Conservation Areas - Demolition of Buildings, will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. The proposal must be considered against the tests set out in policy Env 2: Listed Buildings - Demolition, in conjunction with Env 5, essentially meaning that it is assessed in the same manner as the demolition of a listed building. The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011) sets out that such applications for demolition will be assessed against;

- a) the importance of the building;
- b) the condition of the building;
- c) the economic viability of reusing the building; and
- d) the wider public benefits.

To obtain conservation area consent for demolition the proposal is required to satisfy at least one of the above tests.

The building to be demolished is of little architectural merit, in that it presents an unattractive opaque metal clad mass which is void of glazing, and does not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The significance of the building is such that its demolition will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area, and that the demolition of the unlisted building can be supported. This view is also supported by Historic Scotland.

b) Replacement Development

The proposed redevelopment of the site is the subject of a separate major application for planning permission (ref 15/00322/FUL). This assessment addresses the issue of the development's impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area, the setting of the listed building, and its scale and design.

To summarise, the redevelopment is a high standard contemporary design which will not adversely impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area, or on the setting of the listed buildings.

It should be noted that the proposed demolition of the existing building is acceptable in its own right and it is not dependent upon the proposed redevelopment of the site. However to avoid the possibility of unsightly building elements remaining visible in the absence of new development taking place it is recommended that a condition is attached specifying that 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.

c) Equalities and Human Rights Impacts.

This application has been assessed in terms of equalities and human rights. No impact was identified.

d) Public Comments

The application was advertised on 13 February 2015 and attracted two letters of representation, one in support and one objection.

Material Objections

None

Non-Material Objections

Potential structural impact on neighbouring properties - this is not a material planning consideration.

Proposed construction methods and impacts these may have on neighbouring properties - this is not a material planning consideration.

Support

A neighbouring commercial property supports the development of the site being used for a high quality scheme which, in their view, will enhance both the immediate area, the Exchange district and the City of Edinburgh.

The Tollcross Community Council

The Tollcross Community Council expressed support for the demolition and the proposed Scheme 2 of planning application (ref 15/00322/FUL).

Conclusion

The proposal is in accordance with the Edinburgh City Local Plan. The demolition of the existing building will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area and is acceptable in principle. The proposed replacement development is of a high quality and will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

It is recommended that this application be Minded to Grant - Historic Scotland subject to the details below.

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Conditions:-

1. 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 and Building Standards.
2. The application shall be notified to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.

Reasons:-

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

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.
2. No development shall take place on the site until a 'Notice of Initiation of Development' has been submitted to the Council stating the intended date on which the development is to commence. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of planning control, under Section 123(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
3. As soon as practicable upon the completion of the development of the site, as authorised in the associated grant of permission, a 'Notice of Completion of Development' must be given, in writing to the Council.
4. This consent is for conservation area consent only. Work must not begin until other necessary consents, eg planning permission have been obtained.

Financial impact

4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:

There are no financial implications to the Council.

Risk, Policy, compliance and governance impact

5.1 Provided planning applications are determined in accordance with statutory legislation, the level of risk is low.

Equalities impact

6.1 The equalities impact has been assessed as follows:

This application was assessed in terms of equalities and human rights. The impacts are identified in the Assessment section of the main report.

Sustainability impact

7.1 The sustainability impact has been assessed as follows:

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

Consultation and engagement

8.1 Pre-Application Process

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

8.2 Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments

The application was advertised on 13 February 2015 and attracted two letters of representation, one in support and one objection.

Material Objections

None

Non-Material Objections

Potential impacts on neighbouring properties and the public realm, arising from the construction process - these are not material planning considerations.

Support

A neighbouring commercial property supports the development of the site being used for a high quality scheme which, in their view, will enhance both the immediate area, the Exchange district and the City of Edinburgh.

The Tollcross Community Council

The Tollcross Community Council expressed support for the demolition and the proposed Scheme 2 of planning application Ref: 15/00322/FUL.

Background reading/external references

- To view details of the application go to
- [Planning and Building Standards online services](#)
- [Edinburgh City Local Plan and Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan](#)
- [Planning guidelines](#)
- [Conservation Area Character Appraisals](#)
- [Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#)
- [Scottish Planning Policy](#)

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision**

The Edinburgh City Local Plan was adopted in 28 January 2010. Within that Plan the site is identified as being located within the Central Area and the West End Conservation Area. The Second Proposed Local Development Plan also allocates the site as being located within the Central Area and the West End Conservation Area.

Date registered

30 January 2015

Drawing numbers/Scheme

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Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

Relevant policies of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

Policy Env 5 (Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings) sets out criteria for assessing proposals involving demolition of buildings in conservation areas.

Policy Env 2 (Listed Buildings - Demolition) identifies the circumstances in which the demolition of listed buildings will be permitted.

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.

The West End Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises that the area is characterised by mixed, residential commercial buildings. The central section of the conservation area is a major modern financial area consisting of modern offices. The Georgian and Victorian tenements within the area are mainly 4-6 storeys, and constructed of stone with pitched, slated roofs.

Appendix 1

Application for Conservation Area Consent 15/00323/CON At 62 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, Demolition of redundant Skyparks car park building.

Consultations

Historic Scotland

Thank you for your consultation dated 05 February which we received on 05 February.

We have considered your consultation and have no comments to make on the proposals.

Tollcross Community Council

Scheme 1

Tollcross Community Council is generally supportive of this proposal. We agree with development on this site and with the proposed uses. We are particularly keen on the improved public realm for Chuckie Pend. We are concerned about permeability through this district and feel that the walkway behind the proposal so as to link Conference and Festival Squares is a positive step and will contribute to the Southern Arc Strategy. However we have one major reservation. We feel that the building is too high and that the top two floors are poor, architecturally. It is particularly these two floors which are viewed from a variety of locations and appear incongruous within their surroundings. In particular, the view from the Castle ramparts is made poorer. Also from Cambridge Street and Festival Square the views of the corner of Festival Square are diminished by non-matching materials and heights. We hope that some agreement can be achieved to ameliorate these concerns.

Scheme 2

We have studied the revised plans and undertaken a site visit. I have canvassed opinions from the Community Councillors. As you know our only concern was the rather over-burdensome top of the building in terms of views from a variety of directions. We are supportive of all other aspects of the development. The consensus view is that the changes in stepping back the upper floors and lightening the materials that have been proposed go a long way to alleviating these concerns. It is felt that the changes make a sufficient difference, such that the building would be much less obtrusive. The extra public space at ground floor level is also welcome. Therefore we are able to support the amended proposal and hope that it can go ahead.

