

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 12 August 2015

**Application for Approval of Matters Specified in Conds
15/01858/AMC**

At 1 - 3 St James Centre, Edinburgh, EH1 3SS

**Application for approval of matters specified in Condition 23
of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to
design of the central hotel building (Block C) and associated
landscaping and external lighting.**

Item number	6.1(b)
Report number	
Wards	A11 - City Centre

Summary

The proposed building is greater in its form and height than the form established by the outline planning permission, 08/03361/OUT, to which this application relates. The proposed form would have an adverse impact on the City's Skyline contrary to Policy Des 10 Tall Buildings, because it is too big at the uppermost levels of the building and because the spiral feature proposed is too visually bulky.

The proposed hotel would adversely affect the character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area and would have a detrimental impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, contrary to policies ENV6 and ENV 1 respectively. The proposals would also have an adverse impact on the setting of key listed buildings contrary to policy ENV 3.

There are no material considerations that outweigh this conclusion.

Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#)

LPC, CITD1, CITD3, CITD4, CITD5, CITD6, CITD7, CITD10, CITE1, CITE3, CITE6, CITE8, CITR1, CITR6, CITT1, CITCA1, NSG, NSGD02, NSLBCA, CRPNEW,

Report

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At 1 - 3 St James Centre, Edinburgh, EH1 3SS

Application for approval of matters specified in Condition 23 of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to design of the central hotel building (Block C) and associated landscaping and external lighting.

Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that this application be Refused for the reasons below.

Background

2.1 Site description

The site is to the north of the east end of Princes Street. It is 5.2 hectares and includes James Craig Walk, Elder Street, St James Place, Little King Street, Cathedral Street and much of both Leith Street and Multrees Walk.

Within the site, there is the St James Centre, the New St Andrew's House office, the King James Hotel and two multi storey car parks.

Two category 'B' listed buildings are within the site boundary. These are: James Craig Tenement (formerly 27-31 St James Square) (item no 30027, 27 January 1992); and, St Andrew's Hall which is part of the St Mary's (Roman Catholic) Cathedral listing (item no 27449, 19 December 1979).

Surrounding streets and spaces are characterised by both historic and modern buildings. There are a considerable number of listed buildings nearby. These include the following Category 'A' listed buildings: General Register House (Item no 27636, 14 December 1970); 23, 24, 25 and 26 St James Square (item no 29728, 14 December 1970); 30 - 34 (even numbers) Elder Street, including railings (item no 28731, 14 December 1970); 21 York Place, and 38 Elder Street, including railings and lamps (item no 29963, 14 September 1966); and, 27 York Place, 29-31 (odd nos) York Place, 33-37 (odd nos) York Place, 39- 43 (odd nos) York Place, 47-49 (odd nos) York Place, 51 York Place, 53-55 (odd nos) York Place, 57-61A (odd nos) York Place, 63-67 (odd nos) York Place and 69-73 (odd nos) York Place, all including railings (item nos, 29964, 29965, 29966, 29967, 29969, 29970, 29972, 29973 and 29974 respectively and all listed on 14 September 1966).

There are also the Category 'B' listed buildings nearby including the following: 45, 45A and 45B York Place, including railings (item no 29968, 14 September 1966); 5-11 (odd nos) Leith Street, 13 and 15 Leith Street, 27-35 (odd nos) Leith Street and 37-43 (odd nos) Leith Street and 8-12 Calton Road (item nos 29250, 29251, 29252 and 29253 respectively, all listed 19 December 1979).

Modern developments include the Multrees Walk shopping street and on Leith Street, offices and the Omni Centre.

Sandstone is the dominant external material, being used extensively on both the old and the new buildings. This provides visual cohesiveness. The Omni Centre is an exception, with its frontage being glass.

There is a mix of uses surrounding the site. There is the institutional use of General Register House. On James Craig Walk, there are flats and student housing. A related planning permission which is currently pending decision, permits the change of use from student housing to flats and shops. Along York Place, uses include residential and business. The tenements on Leith Street have shops and pubs at their ground levels with residential above. There are shops and hotels on Princes Street.

There are two birch trees at the Princes Street entrance of the existing centre. There are trees and vegetation outside New St Andrew's House next to James Craig Walk.

The application site is in the World Heritage Site.

This application site is located within the New Town Conservation Area.

2.2 Site History

25 March 2009 - Conservation area consent was granted for redevelopment and refurbishment including demolition works and new buildings to provide mixed use development comprising retail (Class 1), leisure and culture (Class 10 and Class 11), hotel (Class 7), offices (Class 4), food and drink (Class 3), residential, and other related ancillary uses (including Financial, Professional and other Services - Class 2), car parking, servicing, access arrangements, provision of new public realm and refurbishment of existing department store, detailed approval of siting and maximum height of building blocks, points of vehicular access and egress and location of pedestrian routes at the St James Centre, Edinburgh (reference 08/03361/CON).

29 April 2009 - Outline planning permission was granted for the redevelopment and refurbishment including demolition works and new buildings to provide mixed use development comprising retail (Class 1), leisure and culture (Class 10 and Class 11), hotel (Class 7), offices (Class 4), food and drink (Class 3), residential, and other related ancillary uses (including Financial, Professional and other Services - Class 2), car parking, servicing, access arrangements, provision of new public realm and refurbishment of existing department store, detailed approval of siting and maximum height of building blocks, points of vehicular access and egress and location of pedestrian routes at the St James Centre, Edinburgh. This is the outline planning permission to which this application for approval of matters specified in condition relates (reference: 08/03361/OUT).

23 May 2014 - Application for matters specified in condition 23 (ii) of planning permission 08/03361/OUT submitted. It is superseded by AMC approval reference, 15/02054/AMC. This is pending consideration (reference: 14/02070/AMC).

2 July 2015 - AMC approved for matters specified in condition 23 (i), (iii), (vii), (ix), (x), (xi), (xvi) and (xvii) of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to number of residential/commercial/business units, design of external features and materials, pedestrian and cycle access arrangements, treatment to adopted roads or footways, car parking venting, servicing, surface water and drainage, and hard and soft landscaping details. (reference: 14/05263/AMC).

2 July 2015 - AMC approved for matters specified in condition 23(iv), (v), (vi), (viii), (xii), (xiii), (xiv) and (xv) of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to cycle parking facilities, showers/lockers, signing of pedestrian/cycle routes, car parking bays, external lighting, hours of deliveries/collections, waste management + hours of operation. (reference 15/01742/AMC).

2 July 2015 - AMC approved for matters specified in Condition 23 of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT for 'the precise location and extent of individual uses. (reference: 15/02054/AMC).

The St James CPO

9 October 2014 - The St James Quarter Edinburgh (Number Two) Compulsory Purchase Order 2014 was made. This site forms part of the Compulsory Purchase.

24 February 2015 - The St James Quarter Edinburgh (Number Two) Compulsory Purchase Order - Under consideration of the Scottish Government's Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA reference CPO-EDB-005).

Other related applications within the main site

27 April 2015 - Listed building consent granted for internal and external alterations and erection of extension and ancillary works at 3 St James Place Edinburgh. The existing building is St Andrew's Hall and is used as the John Lewis Collection Point (reference 14/05144/LBC).

29 April 2015 - Planning permission granted subject to legal agreement for change of use from student accommodation to Class 1 (Shops), Class 2 (Financial, professional & other services) and/or Class 4 (Business) uses and residential apartments, proposed alterations and ancillary works at 27, 29, 31 James Craig Walk Edinburgh. Currently pending decision (reference 14/05147/FUL).

20 May 2015 - Planning permission granted for change of use to Class 3 (Food and Drink) and Class 4 (Business) uses, proposed alterations, erection of extension and ancillary works at 3 St James Place Edinburgh EH1 3JH (reference 14/05143/FUL).

9 June 2015 - Planning permission granted for alterations to department store including reconfiguration of existing entrance, creation of new entrance and provision of temporary plant at 69 St James Centre Edinburgh (as amended) (reference 15/01659/FUL) - This application is for changes to the John Lewis Store to facilitate the development during its construction.

31 July 2015 - Listed building consent granted for internal and external alterations and ancillary works. 27,29, 31 James Craig Walk Edinburgh EH1 3BA. (reference 14/05148/LBC).

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The proposal is for an upmarket hotel within the central core of the masterplan for the redevelopment of the St James Centre.

The building is designed as the centre piece within this large mixed use development and is positioned within the proposed St James Square. It is on axis with George Street and is highly visible from many landmark locations and buildings within the City.

The proposed building is curved with a horizontal emphasis due to the bands of cladding. In plan, the building is 'egg' shaped. At its widest, the building measures approximately 50m by 38m.

The proposed building will be ten storeys from its entrance level at St James Square.

The element that rises above the remainder of the St James Square is approximately 45.7m by 33m at its widest. (This dimension includes the balconies) At the same level the circle shaped form established by the Outline Planning Permission was approximately 33m in diameter. This narrowed to a cylinder form of approximately 25m width for its uppermost level whereas the proposal is approximately 37.8m by 28.7m at the roof terrace.

The proposed materials are glass and bronze coloured stainless steel.

The parapet which goes around the edge of the roof terrace is approximately 106m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). AOD is height above sea level. 106m AOD is also the height established by the Outline Planning Permission for the part of the building with accommodation. Providing access to this terrace is a stair and lift enclosure. This adds approximately a further 2m taking the total height of the building that has accommodation within it to approximately 108m AOD. From ground level at the hotel lobby, to this same level, the building measures approximately 36m. Above the stair and lift enclosure is the lift overrun.

The lift and stair enclosure and lift overrun are contained within the spiral feature at the top of the building. This feature extends to approximately 124.5m AOD which is around 52.5m high when measured from the ground level at the hotel lobby. The lift and stair enclosure are the only accommodation within the spiral feature.

The total number of bedrooms proposed across the hotel, within both this building and the adjacent building, is 173 bedrooms. The proposed building contains 63 bedrooms at Levels 6, 7 and 8.

The main entrance to the hotel is from St James Square. Above the entrance level is two storeys of function, restaurant and spa accommodation, with three levels of bedroom accommodation above. There will be bar and restaurant accommodation on the three levels above and a roof terrace on the upper level. The stair and lift enclosure that provides access to the roof level extends beyond. Car parking will be provided at basement level.

Proposals also include public realm proposals for St James Square which will be designed in keeping with the proposals for the wider public realm shown in the 14/05263/AMC application.

Supporting Statement

The following information has been submitted in support of the application:

- Explanatory Statement;
- Design Statement;
- Illustrative Masterplan;
- Daylight and Sunlight Report;
- Wind Micros Climate Assessment;
- Photomontages;
- Amendments to the Central Hotel Building Block C (June 2015);
- Proposed Cladding Material;
- Wind Mitigation Memo; and
- Proposed Central Hotel Clarifications Report.

These documents are available to view on Planning and Building Standards Online Services.

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 permission.

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?

3.3 Assessment

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

- a) The principle of the development is acceptable;

- b) The proposal has an acceptable impact on the city's skyline in respect of its impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS), the character of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings;
- c) The proposal, including its design, preserves or enhances the character of the conservation area;
- d) The proposal, including its design, preserves or enhances the setting of the listed buildings;
- e) The proposal, including its design, has any impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site;
- f) The materials and design are acceptable;
- g) The proposal preserves adequate amenity for neighbouring development;
- h) Environmental impacts are acceptable;
- i) Transport impacts are acceptable;
- j) Economic impacts are acceptable;
- k) Any impacts on equalities or human rights are acceptable; and
- l) Comments raised have been addressed.

a) Principle

The proposed building is a hotel. The principle of the development has already been established by the outline planning permission in principle 08/03661/OUT, granted in June 2009.

The principle of a hotel is therefore acceptable in this location.

b) Skyline and the impact on the OUV of the WHS, character of the New Town Conservation Area, and the setting of listed buildings

Edinburgh's skyline is critically important to the city, being a key part of its identity. The combination of the topography and the buildings upon it creates a spectacular urban landscape. Skyline is an intrinsic part of this; fundamentally contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site, a part of the distinct character of Edinburgh's New Town and Old Town Conservation Areas and the setting of a range of listed buildings. Damage to the skyline is irreversible.

The proposed development will damage the city's skyline. This section of the report will explain why.

Skyline

Skyline is the outline of land and building seen against the sky. In Edinburgh, it includes key landmark features such as the Castle, Calton Hill, the Old Town spine, Arthur's Seat and the Crags, the New Town and Corstorphine Hill. The skyline is something that can be seen throughout the city and beyond in many hundreds of vantage points. Some of these views are strikingly familiar, like the picture post card shots or images seen in tourism promotions and in films and the covers of books. Many are less well known, but still important, such as the views from streets and suburbs in the city's periphery.

Some of these views are so significant that they are protected by policy. Policy Des 11 - Tall Buildings of the Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) states that tall buildings must enhance the skyline, be appropriate in scale and have no adverse impact on important views of landmark buildings, the historic skyline, landscape features in the urban area or the landscape setting of the city including the Firth of Forth. This policy is supported by a large number of protected key views, as set out in the Edinburgh Design Guidance. In relation to the World Heritage Site, the vulnerability of its skyline and the views in and out of it was addressed by the introduction of this skyline policy.

Careful consideration was given to the form the building should take at the outline application stage. The general height of the new St James Centre, as established by the outline planning permission is 96m AOD. This height ensures the centre will sit respectfully in the city's skyline. This is the height of much of the 14/05263/AMC approval.

The site for the central building (hotel), however, was identified at the outline stage as an opportunity to allow for an exception to this general height and 106 metres AOD was established as the appropriate maximum height. Design principles set out at the outline stage allowed for feature elements providing these do not create the impression of the building being higher than the maximum height agreed. The height and width of this outline permission form were found to have an acceptable impact on Edinburgh's skyline, generally being positive in views. The planning report on that application sets out why this was so, stating: *"This feature building would provide visual punctuation within the heart of the complex and would create a rich and diverse roofscape. The report found that the geometry of George Street was reinforced by the design. It goes on to state: "... the Melville Monument, when viewed from George Street to the west, would achieve a far greater degree of symmetry, as the development would be lower and centred on the vista as opposed to the current situation [resulting from the existing centre], where the water tower appears to sit at one side of the column, resulting in an unbalanced appearance."*

The proposed hotel building will be seen in many views around the city as it rises above the prevailing building height within this part of the New Town and will sit above the height established by the remainder of the proposed St James Centre. It will unquestionably have an impact on the City's Skyline, with the uppermost part having the greatest impact.

Notwithstanding that the intention is for this building to have prominence, the proposed building form is larger than the building envelope established by the outline planning permission, 08/03661/OUT. At Level 10, in plan it is 12.8m wider on one of its axis when compared against the same level of the building as established by the outline planning permission. This is 38% wider. At level 12, the roof terrace, the building is 12.8m wider on the same axis when compared with the outline planning permission form. This is 51% wider. It is also higher, with accommodation in the form of stair and lift enclosure extending 2 metres higher than the outline planning permission height. When the spiral feature is included, it is approximately 18.5m higher than the height shown on the outline drawings.

There are two main effects resulting from the upper most storeys and the spiral feature:

- 1) the elements will become a feature that will change the nature of the skyline itself; and,
- 2) being a part of the New Town and they will effect protected key views by sitting within the sky space which surrounds individual landmark features.

Because it is bigger than the form established by the outline permission, its form needs to be assessed against Policy Des 11 - Tall buildings, and the related policies that protect the World Heritage Site, conservation areas and listed buildings.

Skyline and OUV of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site

The dramatic topography of the Old Town combined with the planned alignments of key buildings in both the Old and the New Town, results in spectacular views and panoramas and an iconic skyline. This makes a significant contribution the OUV of the World Heritage Site. The uniformity of building heights throughout the New Town means that, above the prevailing building height, the skyline is punctuated with church spires, steeples and monuments.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site is expressed in the Statement of Significance adopted by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. Within the context of this site, the distinct character of the New Town requires to be considered.

The World Heritage Site Management Plan 2011- 2016 highlights that the World Heritage Site skyline is vulnerable to unsympathetic development. A key aim of the Management Plan is to protect the setting of the World Heritage Site and city's iconic skyline. The protection of key views is closely related to the protection of the historic environment.

In views from the North, because of its width, and the visual solidity of the spiral feature, the building introduces a feature which competes with both Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill and the historic skyline.

In views from Calton Hill, it would be seen as wider at its uppermost level than the form established by the outline permission. Combined with the spiral feature, the proposed building will dominate the skyline and detract from Edinburgh Castle and other historic skyline features. It reduces the legibility of Corstorphine Hill by breaching the skyspace above it.

In views from the Castle, its Esplanade and Ramsay Gardens it competes with the adjacent historic skyline features, including the Scott Monument, the clock tower on the Balmoral Hotel, the landscape feature and monument on Calton Hill and the Firth of Forth. While adverse impacts were accepted in relation to the outline planning permission, the effects of the proposal goes beyond this and are more intensive. It would have a clumsy appearance in comparison with the more slender features of the clock tower and Scott Monument.

In views along George Street, it would be seen as wider at its uppermost level than the form established by the outline permission. Its form will compete with Dundas House and in particular, the Melville Monument which currently terminates this vista by taking up the sky space behind it.

In views from Corstorphine Hill the proposal reduces the legibility of Calton Hill and visually competes with the monuments on it and other historic skyline features such as the Castle.

Similarly, in views from Arthur's Seat the proposal competes with the landscape feature and monuments on Calton Hill.

Skyline and impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

The proposal would have similar adverse impacts upon the character and appearance of the conservation areas of the New Town and the Old Town as it has on the OUV of the World Heritage Site in respect of skyline. Section c) explores conservation area impacts in more detail.

Skyline and impact the setting of listed buildings

Where the proposed building takes up the sky space seen in views of listed buildings that are identified as landmark features of Edinburgh's skyline, it will have an adverse impact on their setting. This is the case for the Melville Monument as viewed along George Street and the tower feature of 30 Princes Street (Top Shop). Section d) explores this issue in more detail.

Summary

From the extensive view analysis undertaken in support of this application, the cumulative effect of the mass, height, form, design and materials of the proposed building will not enhance the skyline and surrounding townscape and will have an adverse impact on important views of landmark buildings, the historic skyline and landmark features in the urban area, and the landscape setting of the city. The proposed building will not successfully integrate into the existing historic skyline. It introduces a form that detracts from the spectacular views, panoramas and iconic skyline that give Edinburgh its distinct and unique character.

Essentially, it is too big at its upper levels.

If the form of the proposed development was the same or smaller than the form established by the outline permission, it would be acceptable. The proposed form of the building goes far beyond the form established by the outline consent being both wider and taller.

c) Impact on the New Town Conservation Area

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that:

In its location, height and bulk, the St James Centre is a particularly obtrusive development. It is specifically highlighted on the map in the Character Appraisal as an intrusive feature.

Describing the skyline, the Character Appraisal states: *While there are a considerable number of prominent buildings and focal points in the area, the sloping topography means that punctuation above the skyline is limited. The features that are prominent and can be seen from many parts of the area are the Old Town Ridge, Calton Hill with its monuments, and St Mary's Cathedral. Sitting alongside Calton Hill, the concrete development of the St James Centre forms an obtrusive element that can be seen from many points.*

The existing St James Centre complex has a considerable negative effect upon the conservation area. The redevelopment of the site gives the opportunity to introduce a form of development which is more sympathetic to its historical setting and the topography of the site and which could be an enhancement to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The outline planning permission identified the proposed building as a central feature, of tiered design which would respond to the varying levels of the site. The current scheme follows these principles, however, it is larger than the building envelope approved at the outline stage. As a consequence it does not satisfy its aim of responding to the scale of the surrounding buildings, but like the existing St James Centre, introduces a built form which overly dominates.

Because of this and because of its impacts on Edinburgh's skyline, the proposal does not accord with policy Env 6 - Conservation Areas - Development.

d) Impact on setting of listed buildings

The proposed development would have the potential to impact on the setting of listed buildings within the site boundary, adjacent to the site, and at greater distances. There are over 100 listed buildings identified within the study area set out in the original Environmental Statement, and it would be impractical to assess these individually as part of this report. However, this assessment shall examine the impact of the proposal on the setting of the key listed buildings in relation to the hotel proposal.

While the effects on setting of most of these listed buildings is acceptable, there are adverse impacts on the setting of the Melville Monument and 30 Princes Street.

Melville Monument (St Andrew Square)

The present complex, and in particular the water tower, which is 111m AOD, has an adverse effect on the imposing monument, which acts as a visual termination at the east end of George Street. The buildings appear to sit at the side of the monument when viewed from the west in George Street and compete with it by breaching the skyline behind. It results in a clumsy vista and detracts significantly from the setting of the column.

The outline proposals introduced a considerable built form within the confines of the vista and was assessed to create a more appropriate termination with the feature building to be centred behind the column.

The detailed designs now submitted provide a greater and taller mass of building behind the monument. This in turn reduces the visual backdrop of the skyspace of the monument and reduces its significance as a vista stop. The monument will no longer dominate this section of skyline as envisaged as by its design and as envisaged it would by the form established by the outline application. The proposed hotel would have a negative impact on the setting of this listed building.

Balmoral Hotel and 30 Princes Street - Forsyth Building (Category A Listed)

Whilst these buildings are detached from the site to a greater degree than the above buildings, they need to be considered in the context of wider setting issues. This is particularly so in elevated views from Mound Place and Ramsay Lane. Moderate adverse impacts to from views from Ramsey Gardens to the dome of General Register House and the Balmoral Hotel were identified by the environmental statement to the outline consent. These effects will be somewhat worsened by the proposed development because of its size.

There will be an adverse impact on the setting of 30 Princes Street. The proposed hotel will fill the sky behind the corner tower of the building removing the legibility of this tower element.

Other listed buildings

The category A listed neo-classical quadrangular General Register House (Princes Street) was intended to terminate the vista on the approach from the south, across the North Bridge. Although the imposing central dome has never been capable of being viewed with an open sky backdrop due to the high tenements of St James Square, the present St James Centre has resulted in the eastern half of the dome being read against part of the unsympathetic southern office elevation.

The visual information submitted illustrates that no elements of the proposed hotel will be visible within the context of the dome of General Register House.

The proposed hotel is set off from the Category A listed 24/25 James Square tenement and will have an area of public space in front of the building. This would assist in restoring historical accuracy in the context of the site and on balance, the proposal would have a minimal adverse effect on the setting of the building.

The present complex faces onto the southern, rear elevation of the listed tenemental buildings on the south side of York Place, and is particularly harsh in its appearance. Due to the land levels across the site there will be no adverse impact on the setting of the York Place tenements.

As with the tenement buildings at 24/25 St James Square, the proposal would reduce the existing open aspect of James Craig Tenement (formerly 27-31 St James Square) and Unite Building (James Craig Walk). Although a public square will be formed in front of the buildings, its extent would be considerably smaller than the present space. In addition, the flanking blocks of the central, circular building would be closer to the front of the listed buildings. However, the restoration of the original ground levels and the formation of a potentially lively and vibrant area of public realm would off-set the adverse effects of the development to a degree, and would result in a minimal adverse effect on the setting of the buildings.

The listed St Mary's Cathedral and listed St Andrew's Hall (Picardy Place) currently sit with a backdrop of the north-east elevation of the New St Andrew House office complex. The layering of the other new building proposed within the St James complex provides a buffer between the Cathedral and the new hotel. There is no adverse impact on the Cathedral from the proposed hotel.

In summary, the development would have no impact on the setting of a number of listed buildings, including General Register House and the York Place tenements. It is recognised that the setting of a limited number of buildings would be adversely affected due to the development.

The impact on the Melville Monument is the most significant. The proposed hotel will have an adverse impact on the setting of this A listed building and is contrary to policy ENV 3 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

e) Impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site

The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site is expressed in the Statement of Significance adopted by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. Within the context of this site, the distinct character of the New Town requires to be considered.

In terms of spatial structure, the proposed development is positioned within the footprints established as part of the outline planning permission. This reintroduced positive spaces with the re-establishment of historic routes through the site and created a public space at the site of the original St James Square. The proposed hotel in plan form will make a positive contribution to the wider redevelopment proposals on the site.

The World Heritage Site Management Plan 2011- 2016 highlights that the World Heritage Site skyline is vulnerable to unsympathetic development. A key aim of the Management Plan is to protect the setting of the World Heritage Site and city's iconic skyline. The protection of key views is closely related to the protection of the historic environment.

The assessment above (section 3.3 b) of this report) identifies that there will be an adverse impact on the historic city skyline which will in turn have an adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy ENV 1 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan in relation to the setting of the World Heritage Site.

f) Materials and design

The proposed material is bronze coloured stainless steel. Combined with the form which is made of horizontal bands and with its spiral feature, the building will provide a striking contrast to the surrounding neighbouring buildings.

Neighbouring buildings are typically finished in sandstone and have more traditional forms. Limestone is to be used for the main material on the remainder of the St James Centre, which was subject of the AMC approval, 14/05263/AMC. The remainder of the St James Centre echoes traditional buildings in its form.

A striking contrast can be supported provided that the building's overall appearance does not have any adverse impacts.

The concept of the form, with horizontal bands and a spiral roof feature, is a potentially acceptable design solution. However, as is set out in sections b) to e) above, the proposed form is too large.

In respect of materials, an adverse impact would be if the material were to be too shiny and reflective - making the building stand out to such a great degree that it would compete against its neighbours and against other important features of Edinburgh's skyline such as the Castle.

If Committee are minded to approve the application then a condition is recommended that requires sample panels to be built for the approval of the Planning Authority. This would set out a requirement for the curved form to be shown as well as the fixing details. The condition would sit alongside condition 12 of the 08/03361/OUT outline planning permission. The proposed condition would be accompanied by an informative that sets out the considerations that would be applied to the assessment of any sample.

In relation to the design, the Urban Design Panel was generally supportive of the proposal that it saw at its meeting in January 2015. Its report states: "*The Panel supports the architectural concept and the contribution this could make to the World Heritage Site location and the city skyline.*" It is important to note that at that pre application stage, the scheme was smaller in scale at its uppermost levels and the spiral feature was illustrated as being a more visually delicate element of the design. The Panel also stated:

"A full range of critical viewpoints must be identified as part of the visual assessment in order to fully understand the impact of the development on the city skyline and in localised street views. This is also required to inform the design development of the upper levels of the development particularly the spire feature. These were submitted as part of the application and informed the assessment above on the impact of skyline.

g) Amenity for neighbouring development

The increase in form over and above that established by the outline planning permission 08/03361/OUT would increase impact on daylight to neighbouring residential buildings. However, these impacts are not so adverse as to merit refusal of the application.

h) Environmental impacts

Wind Study

A Wind Study has been provided. This shows that there will be effects of wind, particularly at high levels of the building on a windy day. Management of the use of the external areas at high level would allow the adverse effects of the wind to be adequately controlled.

Air quality

There are air quality impacts resulting from the car park and the proposed combined heat and power facility. These matters are addressed within the primary AMC application - 14/05263/AMC.

Noise

Provided the conditions for the outline planning permission (08/03361/OUT) are met, the noise impacts are acceptable. These conditions remain in place and so the development will be obliged to follow them.

Drainage

The proposals for drainage and SUDS are accepted.

Sustainability

Sustainability was assessed under the 08/03361OUT application and found to be acceptable. The development will need to meet the requirements of the Building (Scotland) Regulations. The requirements in relation to energy use have become more onerous since the development was granted outline planning permission. The development is acceptable in relation to sustainability.

Waste

Underground bins are proposed near 23 - 26 St James Square. In comparison with above ground bins, these will enhance the area, being more discrete and unobtrusive.

Waste is considered in more detail in the 15/01742/AMC application.

i) Transport impacts

Transport matters are fully addressed in the primary AMC application - 14/05263/AMC. This application addresses the provision of parking and access across the entire masterplan site.

The associated application for approval of matters specified in condition 23(iv), (v), (vi), (viii), (xii), (xiii), (xiv) and (xv) of Permission 08/03361/OUT relates to cycle parking facilities, showers/lockers, signing of pedestrian/cycle routes, car parking bays, external lighting, hours of deliveries/collections, waste management + hours of operation. This covers the provision of these matters for the new hotel.

These applications conclude that the proposals will not introduce any traffic or road safety issues.

j) Economy

It is anticipated that the proposed hotel will be of five star standard. Given its central location it will significantly enhance the provision of Edinburgh's city centre hospitality, which currently underperforms relative to other European cities. Whilst there is concern regarding its design and impact on the city skyline, the proposed hotel, through both the creation of jobs and its attraction to high spending visitors, will provide a significant economic benefit.

The proposed uses at the top three storeys plus the roof terrace would be of benefit to the hotel and the wider city. Because this part of the building can be seen from a range of views across the city, it will provide spectacular views across wide swathes of Edinburgh. The benefits resulting from the space need to be considered against the impacts on skyline.

The applicant makes the case that the space is needed for a hotel of this quality and states that the space needed for the service core (containing lifts and stairs etc) and assembly accommodation commensurate with it, means that the space proposed at these levels is necessary.

Roof level spaces such as the Sky Bar in the Double Trees by Hilton (former Point Hotel) on Bread Street, the Tower Restaurant at the Royal Museum of Scotland, the Forth Floor Restaurant at Harvey Nichols, and the Chaophraya Restaurant (former Oloroso) on Castle Street show that workable high quality restaurant space can be delivered that is smaller in scale than the three levels (plus roof terrace) proposed with this development.

If it were to be a choice between providing this more public space at the top most levels at the size proposed and a smaller and more elegant building form that contained, say, only hotel bedrooms, the recommendation would have to be for this smaller form.

In summary, there would be significant economic benefits resulting from the hotel, but because the skyline is of such fundamental importance to the city, the OUV of the World Heritage Site, the character and appearance of the conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings, damage to it is not outweighed by the benefit resulting from the uses proposed at these topmost levels.

k) Impacts on equalities or human rights

In relation to equalities, the development will improve accessibility for disabled people. Entrances into the centre will be provided at grade throughout the development. There will be lifts, escalators and stairs to provide access internally. All people will be able to use the development and the environment created around it. This means there are no adverse impacts on equalities in relation to age, gender identity, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race or religion/belief.

In relation to human rights, the development will promote health by being accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. There will be significant job opportunities which will help reduce poverty within the city. Physical security will be promoted through creating a development that provides passive supervision to the spaces and streets around it. There are no adverse impacts in relation to legal security, education and learning, standard of living, productive and valued activities, individual, family and social life, identity, expression and respect, and participation, influence and voice.

l) Public comments

Material Objections

Principle of Development - addressed in section 3.3a).

- not best location for the hotel, will detract from city's attractiveness.

Design - addressed in section 3.3b to 3.3f).

- the design is a mistake, ugly, an enormous eyesore, potential blot on landscape and inappropriate;
- the design inspiration is overwhelmed by the proposal's scatalogical appearance;
- hotel design not remotely sympathetic to area and has no architectural merit;
- old centre would be replaced with something even more obtrusive and unattractive;
- hotel design and value of rotunda balanced against value of open public square;
- design of square could be softened and linked more intimately with side streets;
- height greater than agreed in outline permission;
- hotel design may be just zany enough to become an icon;
- hotel design should be wind-tested for stability and noise generation;
- seating on square's edges supported, though sloping design and seat lights are not;
- seats a possible trip hazard; and
- proposal contrary to local plan policies DES1, DES2, DES10, ENV1, ENV3, and ENV6.

Historic Context addressed in section 3.3b to 3.3f).

- design does not relate well to historic context, including city character;
- scale and height of design and wide-based pointed spire is wholly inappropriate to skyline, pays no respect to city topography, including Balmoral Hotel and Scott Monument, or other important key views in city;
- scheme would dominate St James quarter and key views of New Town from many important points in city centre and beyond;
- form compromises Melville Monument silhouette when viewed from George Street, overpowers Dundas House and General Register House context;
- detrimental effect on features associated with Edinburgh World Heritage status, especially skyline;
- Skyline impact will degrade Edinburgh as a historic architectural site; and
- development not in keeping with existing symmetry and concept of New Town.

Materials - addressed in section 3.3 f).

- may not weather well, material's longevity not specified;
- reflective qualities of materials should be considered; and
- careful choice and maintenance of cladding material needed, otherwise may become dark brown, compounding original conceptual error of building form.

Equalities

- very disturbed by (lack of suitable) access and parking for infirm and disabled - addressed in section 3.3k).

Other - addressed in section 3.3i).

- no cycle access from St Andrew's Square;
- cycle connectivity and access very important;
- lack of cycle parking in public areas;
- strong case for segregated cycle route; and
- emergency services access unclear.

Support

- Formation of new square supported;
- public realm better than previous applications (removal of granite pentagons and inclusion of steel detailing supported); and
- alteration of proposed St James Square entrance gradients might be of benefit.

Non material representations

- hotel design may encourage anti-social behaviour - this would be addressed through other legislation; and
- concern that local residents will be hounded out of existence by security systems and staff of redeveloped St James Centre, if developer's regime allowed to dominate entire city block.

New Town and Broughton Community Council Comments

- supportive of overall objectives for this development while having reservations about some of detailed proposals;
- design should be best achievable, not simply an improvement on existing St James Centre;

- mixed views about design: bold and ambitious; fresh, innovative approach; will provide focal point; justification for ribbon rather fanciful and disingenuous; unsympathetic to historic and visual context; concern about quality of development and weathering of materials. On balance, does not object to sculptural detail proposed for top of the hotel;
- non-emergency vehicular access to St James Square concerning, raises management concerns, already more than sufficient vehicle access provided within the wider St James development parking levels;
- concerns about limited public seating; and
- inclusion of performance space supported.

Conclusion

The principle of the development of a hotel within this location is established in the masterplan application 08/03361/OUT. However, the proposed building is greater in its form and height than the form established by the outline planning permission, 08/03361/OUT. The proposed form would have an adverse impact on the City's Skyline contrary to Policy Des 10 Tall Buildings.

The proposed hotel would adversely affect the character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area and would have a detrimental impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, contrary to policies ENV6 and ENV 1 respectively. The proposals would also have an adverse impact on the setting of key listed buildings contrary to policy ENV 3. There are no material considerations which outweigh this assessment.

It is recommended that this application be Refused for the reasons below.

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Reasons:-

1. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the historic Edinburgh Skyline and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site by virtue of its design in respect of mass, height, form, and materials contrary to Policies DES 1, DES 3, DES 10, and ENV 1 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.
2. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area by virtue of its design in respect of mass, height, form, and materials contrary to Policies ENV 6 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan, the New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the non statutory Edinburgh Design Guidance.
3. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the setting of category A listed buildings by virtue of its design in respect of mass, height, form, and materials contrary to Policies ENV 3 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan and the non statutory Edinburgh Design Guidance and Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Financial impact

4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:

The application site is subject of the St James Quarter Edinburgh (Number Two) Compulsory Purchase Order. The financial implications have been reported to the appropriate Council Committees separately.

There are no other financial implications to the Council resulting from this application.

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 meets 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 1 May 2015. Fourteen representations, including from the Cockburn Association, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and SPOKES, were received, all of which objected to the proposal.

Material Objections relate to:

- non-compliance with outline planning permission 08/03361/OUT;
- scale, height, massing;
- design;
- materials and weathering;
- impact on views and cityscape;
- historic and architectural context;
- amenity;
- lighting;
- public realm; and

- access and parking.

Non-Material Representations

- anti-social behaviour.

The New Town and Broughton Community Council are supportive of the overall objectives for the development while having reservations about some of the detailed proposals.

The council's comments are detailed in the assessment and include: mixed views on design, concern about vehicle access to St James Square and notes on use of the square.

A full assessment of the representations can be found in the assessment section of the main report.

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 application site is in an area identified as 'Central Area Proposal 1' as identified within the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

The St James Quarter Development Brief was approved in April 2007 to provide guidance in relation to the re-development of the site. The six objectives within the Brief seek to deliver a more outward-looking and less dominating form of development, a significant expansion of retail floorspace, provision of business accommodation (offices), hotel, housing, leisure and cultural uses, replacement provision of off-street, short stay car parking for public use, a new civic space...pedestrian routes that will strengthen and re-establish links with the surrounding area and development that enhances local views into and across the site and contributes positively to the historic skyline from more distant views.

Date registered 21 April 2015

Drawing numbers/Scheme 1-38,

David R. Leslie

Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards

Contact: Emma Wilson, Senior Planning Officer
E-mail:emma.wilson@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel:0131 529 3634

Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

Relevant policies of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

Policy Des 1 (Design Quality and Context) sets general criteria for assessing design quality and requires an overall design concept to be demonstrated.

Policy Des 3 (Development Design) sets criteria for assessing development design.

Policy Des 4 (Layout Design) sets criteria for assessing layout design.

Policy Des 5 (External Spaces) sets criteria for assessing landscape design and external space elements of development.

Policy Des 6 (Sustainable Design & Construction) sets criteria for assessing the sustainable design and construction elements of development.

Policy Des 7 (New Pedestrian Routes in the City Centre) relates to the creation of new pedestrian routes in the City Centre.

Policy Des 10 (Tall Buildings) sets out criteria for assessing proposals for tall buildings.

Policy Env 1 (World Heritage Site) protects the quality of the World Heritage Site and its settings.

Policy Env 3 (Listed Buildings - Setting) identifies the circumstances in which development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted.

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

Policy Env 8 (Protection of Important Remains) establishes a presumption against development that would adversely affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or archaeological remains of national importance.

Policy Ret 1 (City Centre Retail Core) sets criteria for assessing retail development in or on the edge of the City Centre Retail Core.

Policy Ret 6 (Entertainment and Leisure Developments – Preferred Locations) identifies the Central Area, Leith & Granton Waterfronts and town centres as the preferred locations for entertainment and leisure developments.

Policy Tra 1 (Major Travel Generating Development) supports major travel generating development in the Central Area, and sets criteria for assessing major travel generating development elsewhere.

Policy Ca 1 (Central Area) sets criteria for assessing development in the Central Area.

Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines

Non-Statutory guidelines Edinburgh Design Guidance supports development of the highest design quality and that integrates well with the existing city. It sets out the Council's expectations for the design of new development, including buildings and landscape, in Edinburgh.

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

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that the 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.

Appendix 1

Application for Approval of Matters Specified in Conds 15/01858/AMC

At 1 - 3 St James Centre, Edinburgh, EH1 3SS

Application for approval of matters specified in Condition 23 of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to design of the central hotel building (Block C) and associated landscaping and external lighting.

Consultations

Economic Development - response dated 05/06/2015

The following are comments from the City of Edinburgh Council's Economic Development service which relate to the planning application 14/05263/AMC for the development of 50,728m² of retail space; 12,897m² of food and drink space; 3,189m² of assembly and leisure space; a 210-bedroom hotel (partially covered by a separate application); a 52-bedroom apart-hotel; 143 residential units; 59,911m² of parking; and ancillary elements at the St James Quarter, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's economic strategy, A Strategy for Jobs 2012-17 aims to achieve sustainable economic growth through supporting the creation and safeguarding of jobs in Edinburgh. A key element of delivering jobs-driven economic growth is the provision of an adequate supply of workplaces.

The St James Quarter is recognised by Economic Development as one of the most strategically important developments in Edinburgh. It is one of the Edinburgh 12 flagship projects with the potential to support large increases in employment and economic output. Economic Development has worked with the developer over a matter of years to help bring the development to fruition.

Commentary on existing uses

The site in question is currently occupied by the St James Shopping Centre (a 41,800m² shopping mall), the King James Hotel (a 143-bedroom three star hotel), New St Andrew's House (a 22,300m² derelict office building), St Andrew's Hall (a church hall), James Craig Court (a 65-flat student housing complex) and two multi-storey car parks providing a total of 547 places.

The existing St James Quarter is widely regarded as aesthetically unappealing, with its brutalist design jarring with the Georgian character of the New Town and detracting from both the surrounding World Heritage Site and the city skyline. The vacant New St Andrew's House sits immediately opposite the exit to Edinburgh Bus Station, giving a highly negative first impression of the city, while the lack of an active frontage on Leith Street detracts from that street.

The existing St James Shopping Centre is the primary shopping mall in Edinburgh city centre. As such, there is a clear role for the St James Shopping Centre in providing the modern, flexible retail space sought by retailers, complementing the historic units on Princes Street and George Street that, while occupying prime locations, are in many cases of a size and/or layout that makes them unsuitable for some retailers (in the same way as, for example, the Bull Ring in Birmingham interfaces with the traditional shopping thoroughfare of New Street). The St James Shopping Centre is currently failing in this role. Rather than complementing the retail offering elsewhere in the retail core, the St James Shopping Centre is mainly used by lower value retailers (with the key exception of John Lewis) as a less costly alternative (the St James Shopping Centre is unusual for a UK shopping mall in that rents are lower than rents on high street units elsewhere in the retail core). The redevelopment of the St James Quarter would enable it to fulfil the role its strategic location demands. The John Lewis annex of the St James Shopping Centre would be retained and would trade throughout the demolition and construction period.

New St Andrew's House is among the largest office buildings in Edinburgh. If fully let, a building of this scale could be expected to directly support approximately 1,858 full-time equivalent jobs. The building was completed in 1975 to serve as the headquarters of the Scottish Office, which vacated it in 1995 due to asbestos within the structure. The fabric of the building has since heavily deteriorated. The design and layout of the building do not meet the specifications typically sought by modern occupiers, which include open floor-plates and high energy efficiency. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that the building could be refurbished to grade 'A' standards. The building could potentially be used to provide low-cost, flexible business space for small companies in the same manner as St Margaret's House on London Road and Argyll House on Lady Lawson Street, but it is unlikely that the rents and covenants this would command would be sufficient to make the large up-front investment needed to bring the building back to even minimal lettable condition attractive to a landlord. The design of the building is widely considered to be aesthetically unappealing and to make a poor contribution to the cityscape. It is therefore considered that the removal of New St Andrew's House for redevelopment is pragmatic in light of both the limited prospects for bringing the building back into productive use and the potential to replace the building with a more aesthetically appealing use.

The King James Hotel provides visitor accommodation in a strategic location proximate to Edinburgh's main retail and leisure offering and major public transport hubs. The hotel also offers conferencing facilities including a 250-guest function room and a restaurant and café. The main entrance and frontage of the hotel is on Leith Street, however the restaurant and café are located on the third floor of the hotel, reducing their visibility and accessibility to passers-by.

An economic impact assessment of the proposed St James Quarter redevelopment conducted by SQW in 2013 calculated that the existing St James Quarter directly supports approximately 1,054 full-time equivalent jobs and £36.9 million of gross value added per annum (2013 prices).

Commentary on proposed uses

Class 1 Shops / Class 3 Food and drink / Class 11 Assembly and leisure

The proposed development would deliver 50,728m² of retail space, 12,897m² of food and drink, and 3,189m² of leisure space. This represents a significant increase on the existing St James Shopping Centre. The retail and food and drink units are designed to meet the needs of modern retailers, some of who have hitherto been unable to find suitable accommodation within Edinburgh city centre. The delivery of this space is projected to significantly enhance the retail and hospitality offering of Edinburgh city centre, which currently underperforms relative to other European cities.

Class 4 Business

Economic Development expresses concern at the reduction of office space from the previously proposed 2,307m² to 0m² (in the context of a maximum permissible quantum of 15,000m²), particularly given the demolition of the 22,300m² New St Andrew's House. Office space is among the most efficient property classes in terms of employment density; a 2,307m² office development could be expected to directly support approximately 192 full-time equivalent jobs if full-let. An economic impact assessment of the proposed St James Quarter redevelopment conducted by SQW in 2013 indicated that the office space could be expected to support an increase in gross value added of £14 million from 2023 onwards. As reported to the Economy Committee in December 2014, there is a growing shortage of office space in Edinburgh, with the pipeline of new developments inadequate to meet projected demand. This is compounded by the loss of existing office accommodation for conversion to other uses. The provision of office space within the development would complement the existing office space available within properties such as The Cube on Leith Street, The Stamp Office and Waverleygate on Waterloo Place, and Venue Studios on Calton Road, bolstering the status of the east end as a business location. The existing office provision houses the headquarters of blue-chip companies such as Bowleven, Microsoft Scotland, and Glenmorangie, supporting high value jobs. While it is recognised that the available space on the site is constrained and the focus on the developer is on customer-facing use classes, the complete elimination of office space from the development is disappointing.

Class 7 Hotels and Hostels

The proposed development would deliver a 210-bedroom hotel and a 52-bedroom apart-hotel. This represents a net increase in bedrooms of 119 on the existing scheme. The 210-bedroom hotel will be designed to five star standard. This can be expected to help attract additional high-spending visitors to Edinburgh city centre.

Class 9 Houses

The proposed development would deliver 143 residential units. Given average household sizes in Edinburgh (2.08 as of 2013); this is projected to represent approximately 297 residents. The introduction of numerous additional residents into an area where at present there are relatively few will help animate the area outside of trading hours.

Overall impact

An economic impact assessment of the proposed St James Quarter redevelopment conducted by SQW in 2013 calculated that the redeveloped St James Quarter (excluding the since removed office elements) was expected to directly support approximately 2,556 full-time equivalent jobs and, from 2022, £92.1 million of gross value added per annum (2013 prices). This does not take into consideration multiplier effects (the impact of supply chain expenditure, etc) or displacement from elsewhere in Scotland.

In addition to the impact of the centre once operational, the development can be expected to support a large number of temporary jobs over the four year construction period.

Sundry

The public realm works associated with the St James Quarter redevelopment include a reconfiguration of the Picardy Place junction. These works will be designed to accommodate a future tram line delivering cost and time savings in the event that the tram line is extended up Leith Walk and to create new development land that has been tentatively earmarked for a new hotel.

The expanded shopping centre is projected to enhance Edinburgh's performance as a retail centre, which is currently weak on a European scale. In 2015, Edinburgh was ranked 52nd out of 57 European cities in the Cross Border Retailer Attractiveness Index compiled by JLL based on the number of global retail brands represented in the city. The city fares poorly in similar indices produced by CBRE and the Economist Intelligence Unit. The city's weak retail offering is reflected in average daily expenditure by overseas visitors to Edinburgh, which in 2014 was 18% below that of London, representing a difference of £162 million. A redeveloped shopping centre has the potential to deliver a step change in the quality of Edinburgh's retail offering, raising the city's international profile and helping attract increased visitor expenditure.

The Growth Accelerator Model developed to fund the scheme includes a commitment by the City of Edinburgh Council to bring 1,200 people with barriers to employment into training and 600 into employment over the first two years of the model. A training and recruitment centre will be provided within the rebuilt shopping centre. The development will therefore enhance the employment prospects of large numbers of people with barriers to employment in Edinburgh.

The development would include a sympathetic restoration of the 'B'-listed 18th century tenement building at 27-31 James Craig Walk.

The development would deliver new public spaces and animate presently under-utilised roads such as James Craig Walk.

An element of the affordable housing contribution associated with the development is to be delivered at Beaverbank Place in the Bonnington neighbourhood of the city. This will regenerate a derelict site outwith the city centre.

The development has the potential to complement the adjacent Registers Lanes development, which aims to animate the presently under-utilised roads between South St Andrew Street and James Craig Walk. Permeability between the two developments will be key to the success of the Registers Lanes project. Economic Development therefore considers that the St James development should not prejudice any future works to enhance connectivity between James Craig Walk and the Registers Lanes area.

Summary response to consultation

An independent economic impact assessment of the proposed redevelopment of the St James Quarter carried out in 2013 using a methodology approved by Economic Development calculated that the proposed development excluding the since-removed office elements was expected to deliver an increase in direct employment of 1,500 full-time equivalent jobs and, from 2022, an increase in gross value added of £55 million per annum (2013 prices). These figures do not take into consideration multipliers (further increases in jobs/GVA associated with supply chain expenditure and expenditure by employees) or displacement (the potential loss of jobs/GVA elsewhere in Edinburgh/Scotland). The full report is available on request.

In addition to these economic benefits, the development is anticipated to deliver a large number of additional benefits, including: releasing further development land at Picardy Place; attracting additional retail expenditure to Edinburgh; bringing people with barriers to employment into employment and training; animating presently under-used spaces; and regenerating a brownfield site on Beaverbank Place.

Economic Development expresses concern at the removal of the office elements of the development. The previously proposed 2,307m² of office space was projected to (if fully let) support 192 full-time equivalent jobs and, from 2022, an increase in GVA of £14 million per annum (2013 prices), as well as addressing the growing shortage of grade 'A' office space in Edinburgh city centre and enhancing the east end as a business location. It is recognised, however, that the site is constrained.

Economic Development expresses a desire that the St James development should not prejudice any future works to improve connectivity between James Craig Walk and the Registers Lanes area to the west.

This response is made on behalf of Economic Development.

Transport - response dated 12/06/15

I have no objection to the proposed application.

Note that the matters set out in my responses dated 10 June 2015 in relation to applications 14/05263/AMC and 15/01742/AMC are relevant.

Police Scotland - response dated 21/05/2015

Recommended that the architect meets with a Police Architectural Liason Officer to discuss Secured by Design principles and crime prevention through environmental design.

An appointment can be arranged by emailing edinburghpreventandintervent@scotland.pnn.police.uk.

SEPA - response date 06/05/2015

Thank you for consulting SEPA on the above applications in relation to the discharge of condition 23 of extant outline planning permission 08/03361/OUT.

After considering the above 3 AMC applications, it would appear that the issues raised are outwith of SEPA's remit. Therefore we have no comment to make on any of the above applications.

As we are keen to be as helpful as possible in the processing of the relevant AMC applications for this proposal, please consult us on any future AMC applications if there are any specific issues that you require SEPA's input on i.e. surface water drainage.

I trust the above is acceptable, however please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any queries.

Historic Scotland - response dated 05/05/2015

Thank you for your consultation which we received on 22 April.

You have consulted us because you believe the development may affect a number of A- listed building, including:

General Register House

Dundas House

St James Square (listed tenement)

We have considered your consultation, and consider the proposals do not raise issues of national significance such that we would object. However, we comment as follows:

The application is for reserved matters in connection with the redevelopment of the St James Centre. The contents of the application relate specifically to the design of the central hotel building (Block C), associated landscaping and external lighting.

This is our second consultation response for a reserved matters application. In the first response (14/05263/AMC), we provided comments on the adverse impact of the existing St James Centre, recognised that redevelopment has the potential to bring improvements and that the outline permission established a number of parameters that subsequent details need to be assessed against. The outline permission accepted the principle, in part by establishing maximum building heights, of introducing a centrepiece building on the skyline.

The proposals that have emerged is for a strikingly modern building that looks to add interest to the skyline. The importance of securing architectural quality has been the subject of previous discussions as a way of improving the relationship the redeveloped site has with its surroundings compared to the existing St James Centre. As this reserved matters application is not the only one being considered by your Council we recognise the impact of the hotel will also need to be seen in the context of the detailed proposals elsewhere on the site.

In looking at the proposed central hotel in more detail, the height of development means it will be seen from many A-listed buildings in the vicinity. In the majority of instances the impact is going to be more neutral as redevelopment will not be a significant departure from the current situation.

In looking elsewhere the impact will inevitably vary and be both positive, we can see the improvement in the view along North Bridge towards Register House, and also arguably negative in places. As the overall height is greater than agreed by the outline permission, the roof ribbon employed to give a sculptural flourish to the termination of the hotel adds

19m to the overall height, the impact is therefore going to be greater than originally envisaged during the master planning process. The hotel will be given extra prominence in certain street views, i.e. along George Street to Dundas House, and from Calton Hill where the hotel will be more of a dominant feature compared against previous illustrative modelling that indicated a more modest building. In saying this, we recognise the existing St James Centre is also impactful and again the dominance of any new building will depend on the exact viewpoint. As we have advised in the past, the outcome of your Council's assessment against your Skyline Study will provide a more detailed picture of the acceptability of the proposed design in important views across the city.

Having considered the impacts of development ourselves, both positive and in places potentially negative of the hotel design, we are of the view that any negative impacts will not so adverse as to raise issues of national significance such that we would object to the proposal in terms of impact on the setting of A-listed buildings.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - response dated 25/05/2015

With regards the two above recent consultations for St James Centre, we do not intend to offer comments to these applications.

New Town + Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) - response dated 22/05/2015

Reference Application No. 15/01858/AMC Application for approval of matters specified in Condition 23 of Outline Planning Permission 08/03361/OUT relating to design of the central hotel building (Block C) and associated landscaping and external lighting. 1 - 3 St James Centre Edinburgh EH1 3SS

Representation on behalf of the New Town & Broughton Community Council. The application is for reserved matters in connection with the redevelopment of the St James Centre and the contents of this application relate specifically to the design of the central hotel building (Block C), associated landscaping and external lighting.

Having considered this application and the previous 2008 Outline application, we would make the following comments :

1) NTBCC understand that the outline permission that was granted in 2009 established a number of parameters that subsequent details need to be assessed against. The outline permission accepted the principle, of introducing a centrepiece, landmark building on the skyline, mainly determined by establishing maximum building heights.

2) *The accompanying documentation states that the central hotel building presents a timely opportunity to create a truly iconic building on Edinburgh's historic skyline, which will act as a beacon for the St James development and regenerate this important area of the city, at the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage site NTBCC recognise that this development represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to correct the mistakes made in the past and that the judgement should not be that this is an improvement on what is there today but that the proposal represents the best achievable for the site.*

3) *NTBCC also understand from the documentation provided in support of this application vs. the 2008 Outline PP granted that the overall height of the centrepiece building is greater than agreed by the outline permission due to the roof ribbon on the top of the hotel building which adds approx. 20 metres to the overall height. If this understanding is correct, then the impact is therefore going to be greater than originally envisaged. This increased overall height of development will result in the central hotel being seen from many A-listed buildings within the New Town & beyond.*

4) *NTBCC has mixed views on the overall design of the ribbon. On one hand, we acknowledge that it is a bold and ambitious design and could be argued to be exciting, demonstrates ambition and is forward-looking. This is consistent with the design brief of bringing a fresh and innovative approach. The links to the past uses and heritage of the area (the softly billowing treatment of ribbon forms makes subtle reference to paper running through the printing presses which peppered the St James Quarter of Edinburgh in past times) we see as rather fanciful and disingenuous. However, the proposal will certainly provide a focal point for the St James development and create a strikingly different skyline feature for this landmark building.*

Others within the Community Council and the wider community voice concerns that the architecture is unsympathetic and at odds with the Edinburgh World Heritage site, interferes with listed views and have overall concerns over the quality of the development in all its facets and whether it will age gracefully.

On balance, NTBCC would not object to the sculptural detail proposed for the top of the building, understanding that it does attempt to bring a fresh and innovative approach to this building and the wider development.

5) *The main concern voiced by the community, however, notwithstanding that the Design Statement (section 3.1 Comparison Diagrams) stating that the building is consistent with quantum of development approved under 2008 Outline PP, is that the addition of the ribbon feature from ground level in St James Square to the top of the building has the effect, at least visually, of the square seemingly being too small for the proposed building as the ribbon feature creates the impression of too much apparent bulk to the building. NTBCC had concerns previously over the size of the proposed hotel centre piece; the latest schematics which include the ribbon feature exacerbate these concerns. We would note that the majority of the photomontages included in the supporting documentation are from the original scheme architects (Allan Murray) and these show a clean hotel structure which is more acceptable in terms of apparent mass of the building relative to the surrounding galleria etc. whereas the latest proposal from Jestico + Whiles increase our concerns regarding apparent size of the structure relative to the available space.*

We note in the Design Statement that various comparisons are shown in support of the proposed design (in Hiroshima and Holon, Israel) however, these are freestanding buildings which do not have constraints in terms of spatiality and are not observed in the context of a centre piece hotel within a tight built structure and therefore whilst interesting, are not wholly relevant to considerations regarding this proposal.

6) In terms of views of this proposal from key Edinburgh vantage points, it could be argued that in the majority of instances the impact when measured against the existing St James Quarter views is relatively neutral as the outline of the redevelopment is not sufficiently different as to be a significant departure from the current situation. The views from certain locations will show increased prominence e.g. along George Street to Dundas House, and from Calton Hill where the hotel will be more of a dominant feature compared both to the existing structures and previous illustrative modelling that indicated a more modest building with cleaner lines. However, there is not a clear consensus within the NTBCC and wider community and therefore, as we understand that Edinburgh Council will, or is in the process of, completing an assessment against your Skyline Study that should provide a more detailed picture of the acceptability of the proposed design in important views across the city. As we have stated earlier, whilst we recognise the existing St James Centre does not contribute to the city centre architecture positively, the overall assessment should not be relative to the current St James but a more absolute assessment of the dominance of the proposed building.

7) Regarding the proposals regarding accessibility and transport, we note that public access to the hotel will be available from St James Square, which is stated as being a pedestrianised space with vehicular access limited to taxis, small executive coaches and emergency vehicles only. Also we note that St James Square is stated as providing a meeting point for twenty four hour north/south and east/west pedestrian and cycle routes serving Edinburgh St James and the wider area. We are therefore somewhat surprised that limited vehicles (serving the hotel we assume) are being envisaged for this key pedestrian and cycle intersection and entrance. We understand and support the need to provide access for fire and emergency vehicles to this area but have concerns that there is sufficient need to allow certain other vehicles access to this area as it should be a busy and vibrant pedestrian route. If access is to be permitted, we would again have concerns over the management and policing of vehicle access. More than sufficient vehicle access is already being provided within the wider St James development parking levels.

8) NTBCC's final comment regarding proposed landscaping is the limited public seating being proposed for St James Square. We note that two areas have been highlighted but this could be enhanced if the space reserved for taxi and small executive coach drop-offs/pick ups were to be removed. We support the inclusion of the proposed performance space in the forecourt of the hotel public realm. This partly sheltered space will add animation and vibrancy to this area at least during the summer and should prevent replicating the barren features of some other city centre public squares.

In summary, NTBCC are supportive of the overall objectives for this development and whilst having certain reservations to some of the detailed proposals as outlined above, we do not object to the overall approach being taken. We believe that with minor amendments and further assessment, this development can be a significant benefit to the wider community.

Edinburgh World Heritage - response dated 10/06/2015

St James Centre- Reserved matters

Edinburgh World Heritage writes to offer its view as to the impact of the demolition and replacement of the St James Centre on the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site.

Background

The StJames Centre was initially included in the World Heritage Site.after much debate.as a means of securing a replacement that would be sympathetic to the values for which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage list.

In EWH's 2008 letter in relation to the outline masterplan.we noted:

"The existing development fails to respect or give reference to, the surrounding historic character.scale or urban grain. The massing of the existing St James Centre; a monolithic.horizontal slab.dominates views looking into and across the WHS. particularly from the north (and as far as Fife). In addition it intrudes upon key views within the WHS, degrading in particular the terminating vistas of Register House and Dundas House. which are important set pieces within the New Town Conservation Area.Its impact on the significance/outstanding universal values of the site is therefore detrimental."

Particular concern was expressed in relation to views:

"Unless the development markedly steps down from the 'characteristic general height'.particularly towards York Place,it would continue to be an unwelcome intrusion on the skyline,particularly the key view from the north."

"The proposed development should look to restore the skyspace around the dome of the category A-listed Register House. We recognise that although ideal. this may not be possible with the lower dome of Dundas House."

In terms of relating the detail of the development to outstanding universal value, the focus is on the attributes for which the WHS was inscribed, and its authenticity and integrity. In this context, the original fabric of the site is long gone. Authenticity is a moot point.

As for integrity, the 1960s development represents a clear intrusion in the architectural and townscape integrity of the New Town,and so the measure here is whether the development proposals restore integrity, and to what degree.

Main aspects of the proposals

The 2008 consent set the absolute maximum heights and volumes within which the detailed designs should work. The proposals push to the limits of these, seeking to maximise the economic return from the site. The replacement buildings are going to be very deep,in a way that the current buildings on the site are not. This will impact how the site is perceived.

Within the overall form of the scheme, a degree of layering has been created. reflecting a building up of mass and following the underlying topography. This reflects our earlier concerns, and can be regarded to be in the spirit of the New Town, as best understood in view from the north. In this respect. the scheme supports the integrity of the World Heritage Site. The massing of the building behind the Cathedral is broken up in an attempt to reducing visual impact. Consequently, the impact on the World Heritage Site is likely to be neutral to mildly positive.

The proposals repeat the layering of the site along Leith Street and seek to undo the dual carriageway nature of Leith Street. This is to be welcomed. However, the development continues to turn its back. to an extent, to Leith Street. The impact on integrity of the World Heritage Site is at this point neither positive nor negative.

The development seeks to create a plaza to the east of Adam's Register House. While this is an improvement on the current situation. it is also the point that the hardest question about the development as a whole is raised - yes. it is clearly an improvement on what is there now, but is it really the best it could possibly be? The opportunity at this point is for a square, defined by its surrounding buildings and architecture, of a quality equal to or surpassing the Lincoln Centre in New York. This is not what the proposals will deliver. While the scheme supports the integrity of the World Heritage Site at this point, its impact on the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site here is at best mildly positive.

Materials

*EWH has previously offered the City of Edinburgh advice on the relationship between materials and outstanding universal value. Edinburgh is built largely of sandstone, and in the New Town this is from the Craighleith quarry. The buildings are consequently the colour of the land on which they are built- this is real *genus loci*. The proposals seek to use limestone. limestone is the stone from with our sister World Heritage city of Bath of constructed. It has a different character. appearance and weathering properties, and so demands different architectural detailing and treatment to that used across the New Town. The proposed extensive use of limestone across the development is inauthentic. and will be negative in terms of outstanding universal value.*

Hotel proposal

Early iterations of the hotel proposal were extremely positive in terms of the outstanding universal value of the site, clearly understanding the way in which the skyline of the city works: as noted in our 2008 letter.

"Successful intrusions into the City's skyline have been elegant slender and generally unoccupied."

Alterations to the proposals since that early stage have resulted in the upper levels of the hotel proposal being broadened out. and the elegant spiral element in the skyline being reduced, with the overall effect of increasing bulk on the skyline. in particular in views from the east. We were surprised and disappointed- whereas earlier versions would have garnered our strong support, the version that has ended up in this proposals. We would urge further consideration of this design in order to create a positive impact on outstanding universal value.

Conclusions

Overall, the proposals must be regarded as an improvement on what is currently on the site: they will have less impact on outstanding universal value than the existing buildings and will bring many people to the city centre. Elements of the proposals support the integrity of the World Heritage Site and elements support outstanding universal value. Others do not.

While the proposals address the concerns raised in our 2008 letter, the opportunity to go a step further has not been taken- the opportunity to produce a series of truly stunning buildings within the classical context of the New Town, and set an exemplar to other cities of what can be achieved with a major redevelopment site in an historic city centre. This opportunity is unlikely to arise again for 40-50 years.

Edinburgh Urban Design Panel 28 January 2015

Executive Summary

The proposal for review is specifically for the central building within the St James Quarter. This proposal has been selected for consideration by the panel due to its high profile nature and that it will represent a significant new building within the New Town Conservation Area and Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

The Panel welcomes the opportunity to review the proposal following the outcome of the architectural competition and provide comments at this early stage of the detailed design process. The Panel supports the architectural concept and the contribution this could make to the World Heritage Site location and the city skyline.

Main Report

1 Introduction

1.1 The proposed hotel site is located off James Craig Walk with the building and square forming the central component to the St James Quarter redevelopment. The St James Quarter site is situated to the north east corner of Princes Street, enclosed by Leith Street to the east, York Place to the north and Elder Street; Multrees Walk, and James Craig Walk to the west. The site is located in New Town Conservation Area and the Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

1.2 The Panel noted that the hotel building has been the subject to an architectural competition and these proposals subject to review represent the winning entry. The maximum building height, building footprint (and thereby public realm/street spaces) and car parking levels have been approved as part of the outline consent and are not subject to review.

1.3 This is the first time that the proposals have been reviewed.

1.4 No declarations of interest were made by any Panel members in relation to this scheme.

1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with the pre meeting papers which provide an overview, context, concept, plans, sections and 3D visualisations of the scheme.

1.6 This report is the view of the Panel and is not attributable to any one individual. The report does not prejudice any of the organisations who are represented at the Panel forming a differing view about the proposals at a later stage.

Edinburgh Urban Design Panel Report - St James Central Hotel - January 2015

2 Impact on key views and skyline

2.1 The Panel were very encouraged by the winning architectural concept and level of analysis undertaken by the design team. It was considered that the design approach could positively accentuate the city skyline.

2.2 The Panel commented on the visualisations for the proposal including the view from George Street taken from the Hanover Street junction. The building will be positioned on the axis of George Street and further visual analysis to assess the impact of the proposal along the length of George Street is critical in this regard.

2.3 The Panel expressed concern to how the mass of the building, particularly the form of the spire could impact upon the Melville Monument and the symmetry of George Street, when viewed from the west. The design team accepted that it was critical to ensure that the features of the building would be seen as symmetrical in relation to New Town townscape, and this is an aspect of the design which still requires further development.

2.4 The Panel noted that the building will be largely contained by adjacent buildings and will not be seen in elevation. Other than the skyline impact the main views of the building will be oblique or incidental and will not be seen in elevation. However, there is a need to establish how the building will be perceived in key viewpoints both on the skyline and localised street views around the site, e.g. George Street and James Craig Walk. The design team confirmed that further visualisations are currently being prepared and these would be available in the next few weeks.

3 Public realm design and relationship to the building

3.1 The Panel welcomed the proposed plan form for the building, with the cantilevered form presenting an opportunity to reduce ground floor impact and increase areas devoted to public realm. The architectural concept for the building was also seen to positively contrast with the formality of the square, with the plan form presenting an opportunity for a family of spaces that open outwards from the building with active uses to the ground floor. However, the panel expressed concern that perhaps greater credence had been given to the architectural design of the building rather than the design of adjacent public realm. As a design proposition, the proposal could still result in a heavily sealed building and the panel felt that the design would benefit from softening and more considered integration with its setting and the function of public realm.

3.2 The Panel also commented on the contrast and possible tension between the proposed architectural style of the building and that of the adjacent buildings which will enclose the space.

3.3 The Panel enquired about the level of synergy between architectural teams working on the hotel and the St James project, particularly in the design approach to public realm. The design team for the hotel confirmed that both teams would look to develop an integrated design approach.

3.4 The Panel commented on the potential impact of the building in relation to wind funnelling, particularly the openness of the square on the windward side. The design team remarked that the spaces around the building are relatively small and will be largely enclosed by built form. However, wind modelling will be undertaken as part of the design development process.

3.5 The Panel commented on the potential for overshadowing created by the building, particularly to the north east. The design team confirmed that this will be subject to further testing.

3.6 The design team confirmed that further consideration was being given to the layout and form of the adjacent steps lying within the square to ensure a more effective integration with the public realm and this was welcomed by the Panel.

3.7 The Panel queried whether proposed access arrangement for visitors to the hotel, e.g. vehicular drop off to the front of the hotel would conflict with the design objectives for public realm.

3.8 The Panel welcomed the incorporation of public uses at upper level.

4 Architectural response including materials

4.1 The Panel enquired as to how the horizontality of the floor plan would be resolved with the proposed ribbon feature and its relationship with the ground floor level. The design team confirmed that the ribbon would be of a varying width, featuring a series of coils and is intended to act as an architectural device to enclose spaces through screening whilst also acting as a lightweight skyline marker.

4.2 The design team confirmed that the use of copper, zinc or bronze is currently being considered by the design team for the external cladding of the building. The Panel agreed that these could all offer finishes which would be warm in tone and contrast positively with the Edinburgh sandstone, and these aspects should be developed further. However, the Panel acknowledged that the detailing of such materials would be critical to the success of the design. The effect of patination, water run-off and robust ground floor detailing requires careful consideration as part of the design development.

4.3 The Panel remarked on the high value nature of metallic finishes, which could make them prone to theft or expensive repair in the event of damage. Whilst the Panel accepted that the building would be located in a public square with high levels of passive surveillance, any high value finishes should not be readily accessible at ground level to prevent theft and damage.

4.4 The Panel queried how the port cochere detail would work in practice and whether there would be conflict between the function of the main entrance to the hotel and that of the surrounding public realm? The design team remarked that the design approach could take a number of permutations but its function would be largely dependent on the management of the space.

4.5 At this early stage in the design development the Panel advocated that micro climate testing should be carried out and further work on clarifying the environmental strategy for the hotel.

5 Recommendations

5.1 In developing the design, the Panel supports the following aspects and therefore advocates that these should remain in the proposals:

? The aspiration of the client and design team to introduce quality contemporary architecture to the World Heritage Site location, and the positive contribution this proposal could make to the city skyline

? The proposed plan form of the building and the opportunities this creates for public realm

5.2 In developing the proposals the Panel suggests the following matters should be addressed:

A full range of critical viewpoints must be identified as part of the visual assessment in order to fully understand the impact of the development on the city skyline and in localised street views. This is also required to inform the design development of the upper levels of the development particularly the spire feature.

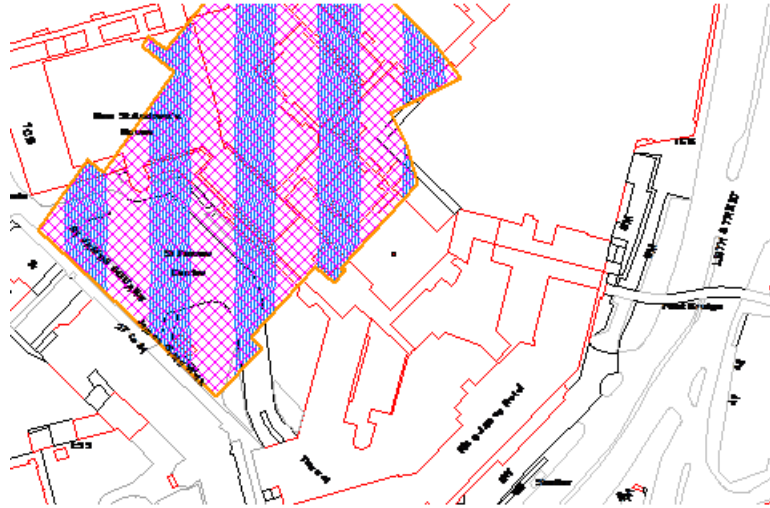
Fully consider the design interface between the proposed building and the adjacent public realm, to ensure a high quality outcome for the design and function of the square.

The aspirations in terms of material finishes are welcomed and this aspect of the design now requires detailed design development.

The use of port cochere feature to the front entrance is welcomed but vehicular access within the public realm requires further consideration, if this aspiration is to be successfully realised.

At this early stage in the design development the Panel advocated that micro climate testing should be carried out and further work on clarifying the environmental strategy for the hotel.

Location Plan



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