

Item 3.1 – Minutes

Development Management Sub-Committee of the Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday 31 August 2017

Present:

Councillors Ritchie (Convener), Burgess (substituting for Councillor Booth), Ian Campbell, Child, Griffiths, Graczyk, Key (substituting for Councillor Dixon), Mitchell, Mowat, Osler and Staniforth.

1. 5 - 7 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5BL (New Parliament House)

The Chief Planning Officer had identified an application for planning permission for the change of use, alterations to and restoration of the Former Royal High School Building/Pavilions (Original Thomas Hamilton-designed school buildings). Demolition of ancillary buildings including former gymnasium block/lodge, new build development, new/improved vehicular, service/pedestrian accesses. Landscaping/parking/public realm and other works to create a world class hotel of international standing with associated Uses (Including publicly accessible bars (public house) and restaurants class 3, to be dealt with by means of a hearing (application no 17/00588/FUL).

(a) Report by the Chief Planning Officer

The application was for a change of use to a 127 bedroom hotel with separate food and drink and leisure uses at ground level on the site of the former Royal High School. The site contains a number of buildings that fall under a category 'A' listing, the most important of which is the original building known as the Hamilton Building. The proposal incorporates the Hamilton Building and added two new five storey hotel bedroom wings.

The Site falls within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site and is located in the City Centre and in the New Town Conservation Area. The application site is included within the Princes Street Development Brief Block 10. Calton Hill is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is included within the Inventory of Designed Gardens and Historic Gardens and a designated Special Landscape Area.

A hotel, restaurant, café or public house are suitable city centre uses are supported in the city centre. There is a projected need for additional hotel bedrooms within the city and it is agreed that the development of the proposed 127 bedroom hotel could assist in addressing the demand for high quality hotels accommodation in Edinburgh. However the potential benefits needs to be considered within the context of impact on the environment and heritage, and the pipeline capacity to meet projected hotel demand.

The demolition of the Luncheon Building and the Classroom Block were accepted on the basis that these buildings are not of special interest in their own right. The proposed

demolition of the entrance lodge and gymnasium are not justified as the proposal does not adopt a conservation-based approach which would safeguard the architectural character, appearance or historic interest of the Hamilton Building.

The former Royal High School is an architectural masterpiece and one of the most significant buildings in Scotland. The proposed wings would have a significant adverse impact on the composition, integrity and special character of the listed building. The quantum of development was excessive and the design does not achieve the world class architectural response required of this site. The resulting harm caused by the proposed extensions significantly outweighed the economic benefit and benefit of bringing the building back into long-term use. The proposal would also have detrimental impacts on the setting of the category 'A' listed St Andrew's House. The development would damage the unique views of this highly visible and highly sensitive site by introducing an additional quantum of development on a hillside of unique individual structures, damaging the composition of the buildings, monuments and the landscape.

The benefits to the City's economy and to tourism through bringing an 'at risk' building back into a sustainable long-term use are not outweighed by the very significant harm to the built heritage and landscape of the city. The development would cause permanent and irreversible damage. The adverse impacts on the character and setting of listed buildings, the New Town and Old Town Conservation Areas, the designed landscape of Calton Hill and the OUV of the World Heritage site would not be mitigated by the sophisticated design of the proposed extensions. The scale of development proposed is too great to be accommodated within this highly sensitive site, without significant, long-term adverse impacts.

The proposal was contrary to the Development Plan, Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) the Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note on demolition, Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note on extensions, Historic Environment Scotland's document 'Managing change in the Historic Environment - Setting' and the non-statutory Princes Street Block 10 Development Brief.

It was recommended that planning permission was refused.

If the Planning Authority was minded to grant the application the decision would be notified to Scottish Ministers as a result of the objection received from Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

(b) Alison Johnstone MSP

Alison Johnstone thanked the Committee for the opportunity to represent the views of constituents across Lothian on this issue and advised that the applicants had a lack of appreciation of the building's importance and of planning policies.

The assertion that the proposal protects and promotes this precious exemplar of Greek revival style is entirely at odds with the learned views of the professional planners and it is at odds with the views of Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage, and Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and many, many more. It appears that the developer has failed to grasp the unique requirements of this incredibly special site.

The agreed planning view is that the proposal fails to achieve the world class architectural response required for the site.

The facts before the committee make it clear that refusal of this proposal is the correct

decision. These facts have led 3205 of the 3405 people who wrote to the Council about this proposal to object to it. This proposal contravenes every planning policy, from ENV 1 to DES 5. The fact that these proposals have resulted in so many responses, in individuals and organisations contacting their representatives, to ask us to intervene, to prevent irreversible damage to Edinburgh's heritage, demonstrates the level of concern.

Visitors and residents are really struck by this hillside of unique individual structures and it's setting on Calton Hill, a site of Special Scientific Interest in its own right. It is indisputable that this hillside of unique structures will be overwhelmed by these terraced, several storey extensions.

There are 20 fewer bedrooms, and the western extension is reduced in height. But extensions to listed buildings should be subservient. These extensions are anything but. The adjustments the developers have made are insufficient given the many problems with this proposal. Was the original proposal, stunning in the right location, but wholly inappropriate in this one, intended to kick start negotiations? I can see that this proposal is a little less obtrusive, but then again, the original proposal was so disregarding of its location that the western extension sat right on the pavement, necessitating the demolition of the A-listed gate pillars and iron railings in front of the western extension.

The only hope for the developer today is to convince the committee that the economic impact of this proposal means that planning policies should be put to one side. You will of course question this economic case. Edinburgh has never had a bigger or better summer season, its Arts festival, architecture, culture and setting are more attractive than ever. I have been involved in tourism and in politics for some 30 years now and I can assure you that my inbox is not full of letters from people asking for luxury hotels. The representative from Edinburgh Airport may do so this afternoon. But please bear in mind, that unlike yourselves and myself, unlike the Community Councils and the residents groups who represent the many, many people who live, work and study in this city, the airport is a private company, one that, according to a motion lodged in the Scottish Parliament, is ultimately owned by companies based in Grand Cayman and Luxembourg.

From 2007 I had the privilege to serve as a Councillor for 5 years, an experience which I found richly rewarding and extremely educational. During that time the city appointed a Place Maker, a contentious appointment as budgets are always stretched and the post carried a large salary. The idea was that this city, with its World Heritage designation, shouldn't just react to proposals for gap sites and speculation as and when, but that it should have a vision about the kind of city it aspires to be. I don't need to remind the Committee that you are an extremely powerful body. Each and every member of this committee is a place maker. You are custodians of world leading, globally significant heritage. You are the body who will decide on the long term future of what is rightly described as "one of the most significant buildings in Scotland."

On behalf of the many objectors, individuals and organisations, I ask the committee to accept the officers' expert recommendation and refuse this proposal.

(c) New Town/Broughton Community Council (NTBCC)

Richard Price on behalf of the Community Council commended the Council Planning Department on their comprehensive, thoughtful and thorough reports and advised that the

Community Council shared many of the observations and conclusions of their very rigorous and complete assessment of this amended application.

He advised that NTBCC remains supportive of finding a new, viable and sustainable use for the building, given its significance, deteriorating condition and current lack of use. They support the principle (but perhaps not the execution) of the City of Edinburgh Council's efforts in developing a long term, viable and sustainable use for this important building and fervently hope that the current impasse is brought to a speedy conclusion.

Mr Price advised that the Community Council had the following concerns:

i) Setting of Listed Building

It is indicated that the eastern section of the site (excluding the area immediately fronting Regent Road) had "significant potential" for development opportunities, the area nestling between the Thomas Hamilton building and Calton Hill to the north had "limited" potential, "very dependent on scale, cumulative impact and quality" and the western terrace and area fronting the Thomas Hamilton building had "no potential". The extensions to the listed building, by their height, scale and massing would dominate and overwhelm the listed building, challenging

ii) The World Heritage Site

The Local Plan makes specific provision in Policy ENV1 to protect the qualities which justified the inscription of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site and to reject proposals that would have a detrimental impact on setting of the site. Largely because of the scale of the flanking buildings and their intrusion into open space between existing buildings the development will damage the qualities of the World Heritage Site and will damage its setting and cannot be supported.

iii) Proposed Demolition of Buildings

NTBCC have always accepted that demolition of some of the later building additions to the site may be necessary. We have always stated that we could support demolition of the single storey luncheon hall and classroom block which either are relatively inconspicuous due to the location / height or it could be argued already detract from the main Hamilton building . However we are clear that any replacement structures must continue to be subordinate to the main Royal High School and not interfere with the setting of that building. These new proposals are not in any way subordinate to the Hamilton Building; in fact they dominate it, destroy its setting and fundamentally undermine its special character. NTBCC do not support the demolition of the listed entrance lodge to make way for the western hotel accommodation block. We recognise that whilst this building was not part of the original layout, its demolition is very much regretted and in our view, the demolition does not meet any of the required tests.

iv) Impact on Conservation Area

NTBCC's view is that the hotel proposals neither preserve nor enhance the special character of the New Town Conservation Area; we would assert that they diminish it, contrary to policy ENV 6. Moreover, the design fails to draw upon

positive characteristics of the surrounding area, (contrary to Policy DES 4) – Development Design Impact on Setting).

v) Scale of Development

NTBCC remain firmly of the opinion that the quantum of development required by a hotel of this nature cannot be accommodated on the site in a manner that achieves an acceptable setting in this location irrespective of the architectural style proposed. The proposed new development on the western terrace remains far too prominent and visible within the site context, the setting, landscape, architectural composition of the listed building and key views, It is neither respectful of nor compatible with the listed building (contrary to LDP policy DES 4 and 11) and, as such, is both unviable and unacceptable. NTBCC believes that the quantum of development that the site can accommodate without detrimental impact on the buildings, their setting, the wider conservation area and World Heritage Site is significantly less than the scale of development proposed.

NTBCC strongly support the Planning officer's recommendation for refusal of this application and urge the Development Management Committee to concur with their officials' view and record an emphatic and unanimous rejection of this proposal.

d) Regent, Royal, Carlton Terraces and Mews Association (RRCTAMA)

Carol Nimmo, Chair of the local Residents' Association advised that as the local residents' association and next-door neighbours to the old Royal High School (RHS) they had a vested interest in the building and every single detail of the proposal would affect them including:

- the 24/7 servicing of a major hotel across a public pavement and through a 4ft doorway,
- the inevitable noise and light pollution, and
- a huge dark rusty metal and glass wall overshadowing us on our west side and on a larger scale,
- the domination and loss of the Thomas Hamilton building
- the ruination of the iconic, classic views of the school, Calton Hill and the famous Edinburgh Cityscape.

This hotel planning application must be rejected. All the relevant public bodies, local interest and community groups oppose this proposal too, giving sound academic and professional reasons for doing so. Many well-known literary, musical, arts and architectural personalities have commented likewise and we know we have the public on our side. From the very authoritative IPSOS Mori research that forms part of the planning documents, it was shown that 81% of Edinburgh residents prefer the music school proposal and just 10% liked the hotel scheme. This is the only research that, directly and scientifically, compares attitudes to both schemes.

3,204 people also took the trouble to write a personal planning objection to this scheme. This, incredibly, is almost double the number for the first hotel proposal unheard of in planning terms.

RRCTAMA ask you to decisively reject the hotel proposal once and for all.

e) Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

Steven Robb of HES advised that the former Royal High School is one of Scotland's most important buildings and one of the finest Greek Revival buildings in the world. Its design was used to enforce similarities between Calton Hill and the Acropolis whilst differentiating Edinburgh from London.

HES had agreed that if a sensitive scheme for the main Hamilton building and its setting came forward it could see the loss of some of the ancillary listed buildings. They also agreed there was scope to redevelop parts of the eastern portion of the site, between the school and Regent Terrace.

However, the open playground to the west, acknowledged by the applicants themselves as being 'highly sensitive to change', could not accommodate a large building without significant harm to the historic environment.

HES do not object to a hotel use on the site, or the internal conversion of the listed building itself. The main issue is the scale and impact of the extensions to the listed building.

HES had objected for the following reasons.

There would be a significant adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. It is rare for one building or site to potentially have such a harmful impact – but the importance and prominence of this building – combined with the introduction of an urban form to the building's planned landscape setting – would have such an impact.

The demolition of listed buildings, including the gatelodge, and to the significant adverse impact on the special interest of the listed building and its integral landscape setting against Calton Hill.

The proposals conflict with HES guidance on how to extend a listed building. The sheer size, location and height of the flanking hotel extensions, which greatly exceed the main listed building in footprint (twice its size), and rise high above it on either side, would enclose and overwhelm the building, destroying its current primacy and focus on the site.

The listed building would become subordinate to its extensions (rather than the opposite that is normally sought with listed buildings).

In conclusion, HES remain committed to achieving the repair and reuse of the Hamilton building, however, it is considered it is not possible to deliver a hotel of this scale on this site without an unacceptably high level of harm to one of Scotland's few buildings of international significance.

In addition, HES strongly consider there are potentially less harmful options that could safeguard the future of the building and preserve its important setting.

f) Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH)

Adam Wilkinson on behalf of EWH advised that they had objected to the current proposals on the basis that they would have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

The key factors taken into consideration were:

Policy ENV 1 which states "Development which would harm the qualities which justified the inscription of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh and/or the Forth Bridge as World Heritage

Sites or would have a detrimental impact on a Site's setting will not be permitted”

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, which identifies four broad qualities of, the integration of the New Town / classical architecture with the landscape, the finest Neo-Classical revival buildings in Europe, planned alignments leading to spectacular views and panoramas, a remarkably consistent and coherent entity.

The World Heritage Site nomination document, which breaks the statement of Outstanding Universal Value down into more detail against which impact can be assessed, Edinburgh's 19th century self-image as Athens of the North, the linear group from Waterloo Place running east, the Romantic classical concept of architecture and landscape (marked in the geometry and planning of its elevations)

In conclusion is that taken together, the impact of the revised hotel proposals on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site is wholly negative and would urge you to wholeheartedly reject this application.

g) Cockburn Association

Professor Cliff Hague on behalf of the Cockburn Association advised that the association agreed with the points made by the previous speakers, but wished to comment on the economic argument that had been made.

Economic impact statements follow a set methodology, set out by the Treasury and Scottish Planning Policy. The hotel would displace business from other hotel in the city, the construction costs would be higher than the estimates which would impact on the hotels viability.

The employment, occupancy and room rates at are on the high side, luxury hotels are by their nature are a high risk business. The economy is still volatile and there is no guarantee of success of the proposal.

In conclusion, he asked that the Sub-Committee stick to approved policies and refuse the application.

h) Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland – (AHSS)

Dr Alastair Disley on behalf of the AHSS advised that the former Royal High School building is one of Scotland's finest, both through its design and its setting, as part of the designed landscape of Calton Hill. The gym block and lodge are smaller, set back, and hidden by foliage for much of the year. All the buildings around Calton Hill share a common material (stone) and architectural language (classicism). Each building has space to breathe and to exist as a distinct individual piece in a larger composition.

The site is small and difficult, a narrow strip of land sloping to the south, but Hamilton's solution is a triumph, with the later additions deliberately smaller and set back. This image is from the Council's guidance to the architects of this scheme last year, and clearly shows that the western end of the site should not be developed.

The proposals here fill most of the space around the Hamilton block, which can no longer breathe or exist on its own. The two new wings are not symmetrical and do not relate to any of the buildings around them in materials or form. The Hamilton block, with the wider landscape, is permanently compromised.

The poor quality of the design is self-evident. The Heritage Impact Assessment is written by a

consultant for the developer, and suggests the potential impact of the proposals on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS). In this case, they claim the impact of the new development is “minor beneficial”.

In these proposals, the gatehouse is demolished, to be replaced by an alley facing north into a hillside, dark, overshadowed, but the main entrance to a luxury hotel. The developers again claim that compared to the previous slide, the impact is “minor beneficial”.

At present, the old gym carefully links the grandeur of the main Hamilton block with the elegant Regent Terrace houses beyond. The new block is much further forwards. The developers claim that the impact is “negligible beneficial”.

Looking closer at the new entrance in this optimistically bright rendering, the symmetry and design of the old building is lost behind the unrelated modern extensions. The design of the Hamilton block as a school is largely without corridors, you must walk through one room to access the next which is less suitable for a hotel use. If this is the minimum development necessary to make an economically viable hotel, then we respectfully suggest that a hotel is not an appropriate use for the building and its site.

Thomas Hamilton’s building is highly symbolic, sitting in this two hundred year old designed landscape with symbols of Scotland’s great history and its present government at both Westminster and Holyrood. The alterations we make to this unique site will have powerful symbolic impact on Edinburgh and Scotland for generations. AHSS urge you to reject this application.

i) Edinburgh Airport

Gordon Dewar advised that he supported of the proposal to redevelop the Old Royal High School and create new 5/6 star quality hotel capacity with a leading world hospitality brand.

He highlighted the following points:

i) Architectural merits

As a layman in this area I have no expertise to comment on the architectural qualities. However, my many discussions with residents and business people in and around Edinburgh suggest that the designs are supported by the great majority where the retention of the central School building and the scale and design of the new accommodation wings are generally viewed as attractive and a sensitive approach to this important area of the City Centre.

ii) High Quality Hotel Capacity and Brand value

All in the tourist industry acknowledge that Edinburgh is very short of top end hotel rooms that would attract high value tourism and business visitors to the City. This lack of high quality capacity is a limiting factor for Edinburgh’s visitor economy and the very many jobs that it supports and could support further. As well as the capacity, the arrival of a world brand operator in what is a relatively small City (compared with Paris, London, New York) would be a key message to other operators and investors in the City that Edinburgh is a forward looking, successful, international City that they could invest in. While this submission is in a private capacity I can confidently state that the tourism industry and tourism agencies of government would all support the principle of developing more high-

end hotel capacity in Edinburgh as a core element of developing Scotland's tourism infrastructure and capacity.

iii) New services and Brands drive additional benefits

The arrival of a world-renowned brand into the Edinburgh market has the potential to stimulate demand and interest beyond the pure capacity benefit where it can offer a new level of service. For example, the arrival of Harvey Nichols in Edinburgh was an important stimulus for the whole redevelopment of St Andrew's Square including new build and enhanced public realm where the world-famous retail brand lifted ambitions and confidence in the east end. In my role as CEO Edinburgh Airport, showing the investment of other world renowned brands and businesses and having brand recognition in Edinburgh supply is very much a part of convincing airlines to invest in new routes to Edinburgh. This has a massive beneficial effect for Edinburgh and Scotland where the airport supports 23,000 jobs and £1bn GVA and where the ability to sell the quality of the City has allowed Edinburgh to increase from 1 long-haul route in 2012 to 11 long haul-routes in 2017 and to increase passengers from 9m to 13m over the same period with almost all of that growth from international routes and the majority inbound.

iv) Employment benefits

Clearly the development would give rise to construction jobs and subsequently operational jobs at the hotel as well as many supply chain jobs covering many industries including transport, food and beverage production, retail, etc. The added value of top end hotel development is the ratio of jobs created per bed and the high degree of staff training and development investment that accompanies the high customer service standards associated with these brands. Contrary to much ill-informed comment, the visitor economy generates wide range of career and job opportunities covering professional sectors, operational management and marketing as well as frontline hospitality jobs. While it is inevitable that some positions will be seasonal to match demand the great majority will be permanent jobs that offer career paths for the long term. This is the fastest growing sector in our economy in terms of value and job creation and this top end development would add some of the highest value growth to this ongoing success story in Scotland. Indeed, it could be argued that this investment could open the opportunity for more luxury brands to follow.

v) East End of Princes Street

This area of the City is in many ways has been forgotten for decades. Despite its central location, stunning views and proximity to some of Edinburgh's core attractions, it has languished as an unattractive coach park with little or no life or purpose. The ongoing development of the St James Centre site and the Waverley valley highlights the areas location as a potential link between old and new town and the creation of the hotel and the associated public space proposal would transform the area and allow the public to enjoy the superb views and transit through high quality public realm.

vi) The cost of refusal

Should the application be refused there will be very significant implications for Edinburgh and its aspirations for inward investment and growth in high value visitor economy. These costs go beyond the direct costs of maintaining a dilapidated building and the pressures that puts on the public purse. If the Planning Committee of the Council refuses the application by its own competition winning contractor appointed by the Council, this will signal to other investors that Edinburgh does not have clarity of purpose or strategy. It would thus be viewed as a high-risk investment option where many millions are required to even pursue planning applications on this scale and the chances of success may be viewed as low when the Council has refused its own projects never mind third party projects. Even if this were not a Council sponsored development, the failure by one of the top world brands to be welcomed into the City would be signalling to other potential developers that they would not be welcome either. That is a message that Edinburgh cannot afford to give.

I strongly support the proposals to develop the Old Royal High School as a high-quality hotel and urge the Planning Committee to approve this to gain the enormous economic benefits, the regeneration of the East End of the City and to preserve the reputation of the City as a place with a great vision for its future and a great place to invest and operate in.

j) Councillor Karen Doran

Councillor Doran advised that the arguments for and against the proposals were well known. The applicant has attacked a great deal of correspondence from constituents none of which have been in favour of the proposal. It is insensitive and would destroy the iconic status of the building.

The public acknowledge the need for the building to be used but these proposals are not the solution.

In conclusion, she asked that the application be refused.

k) Councillor Alasdair Rankin.

Councillor Rankin stated that the points made by the planning officers in their presentation were compelling and outlined why the application should be refused.

The proposals would have an adverse effect on the conservation area and the World Heritage Site.

He had not received one letter of support for the development all had been against it citing the damage it would do not only to the building but the city.

In conclusion, he asked that the application be refused.

l) Councillor Claire Miller

Councillor Miller advised that there had been over three thousand objections to the application, like her fellow ward members all the correspondence received had been opposing the development.

The local residents are not antibusiness development but are against these proposals. This building is the bridge between the old and new towns and it is important that this is now taken away by the proposed modern extensions.

This building does need a new lease of life but this is not it and asked that the application be refused.

(m) Applicants

David Orr, Chairman and Co-Founder, Urbanist Hotels advised that his is a major new investment creating very substantial economic and employment benefit. It would have as significant positive impact on Edinburgh as Harvey Nichols or the opening of new airline routes.

It is proposed to demonstrate that we have sensitively understood the context and vision of Hamilton's buildings, thereby ensuring that the legacy of Hamilton dominates and not the legacy of much later buildings that undermine it.

We are asking you to set aside any preconceptions and ask that you now listen please to the professionalism and modest integrity and credibility of our representatives. At the end, I will hope to enthuse you to see this for what it is: a rational proposal that brings benefits across the city and implore you to support the best proposal that this city has ever had for the Old Royal High School.

Gordon Gibb, Hoskins Architects advised that the practice, had undertaken work at the National Museum of Scotland and National Gallery on the Mound. The work of the practice is rooted in Edinburgh.

The Design team had undertaken independent analysis to define how much accommodation could be accommodated by the landscape and the historic townscape. This exercise was carried out in the deliberate absence of any client brief for a hotel or a required quantity of development

Our starting point was to consider the site as Hamilton conceived it. Following our team's extensive appraisal of the site and its values we believe a 'notionally' symmetrical response to developing the site not only has validity, as acknowledged by Edinburgh World Heritage Trust back in 2010, but that it is a positive response to the setting of the Hamilton building.

The planning department has been consistent in acknowledging to our team that development to the west of the Hamilton building is not precluded. We look to locate new development on the site in such a way to reopen up views of Hamilton's temple from the west, pull away from the rear retaining wall as did Hamilton and sensitively position the wings to allow views to and from the Hamilton building. This approach gained the support of Architecture and Design Scotland, the government's champion for good architecture, in 2015 and that support continued with this revised application.

The application includes analysis of the visual impact of the proposal from 64 viewpoints across the city each one requested by and agreed by CEC planning department. Each visualisation is verifiable in terms of gps location, camera focal length, direction of view etc and they are all in accordance with the Landscape Institutes guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.

What these particular images show is the change that took place in our designs from the 2015 application to today's proposal. They demonstrate in particular the significant changes to the west wing – reduced in height by over 5m, reduced in area by nearly 30% and demonstrate the successful revisions to our design – following the contours of the hill, not breaking the

skyline, stepping away and framing views of Arthur's Seat just as Tait's St Andrew's House does. Sitting comfortably in the landscape.

Andrew P K Wright, Chartered Architect & Heritage Consultant made the following points on the application:

- The reports to Committee ignore the process embarked upon in 2016 to reduce the impact of the development on the listed building and the site, and give no evidence of the results of this exercise
- The three parts of the Heritage Statement are to be read as a single narrative; they set out an entirely valid alternative conservation strategy to that being promoted so defensively in the reports and the consultation responses
- There were concerns about the selective use of images by some objectors with the intention to deceive
- Detailed analysis of the relevant policy tests and guidance had been ignored in the evaluation of the proposals
- The reports to committee are slanted to such an extent that cogent arguments put forward by the applicants have been ignored.

Gary Mappin, (Iceni Projects - town planning consultant) advised that having reviewed the two committee reports prepared by officers. The clearly negative tone and emphasis adopted is a surprise and disappointment to the applicants and is in contrast with the more balanced approach taken with the original applications in 2015. That proposal for a larger hotel scheme was refused as the hotel wings were regarded as 'simply too big.' To address these concerns, the revised hotel has been reduced significantly in size with less intervention to the fabric of the principal listed building. It is therefore surprising that it has generated a greater level of objection and that the report recommends 12 reasons for refusal, as opposed to 11 for the previous scheme.

The applicants welcomed confirmation that the principle of hotel use accords with your Local Development Plan and your 2008 Development Brief. On the basis of that brief, The Council appointed the applicants to deliver a luxury hotel of international standing that would provide exceptional culture, arts and performance programmes and work closely with stakeholders to improve the local amenities of Calton Hill and the surrounding area. That is what is before you today.

A carefully considered approach had been taken to how design, heritage and landscape considerations have been addressed in the revised scheme. Disappointingly, an entirely selective and biased review of design, heritage and landscape matters is set out in the committee reports. Wide ranging environmental impact and heritage assessment exercises were carried out by the applicants to test the high-quality design approach that is supported by Architecture & Design Scotland. The reports include criticism of a very small number of key photomontages, rather than a review of the 46 views which had been agreed with your officers as forming the basis of the overall assessment.

The amount of new build accommodation, particularly on the west side of the main Hamilton building, has been significantly reduced. The physical impact on the main Hamilton building has also been reduced, now only involving light touch links to what would be the new accommodation blocks. It is disappointing that there is little reference in the reports to the

level of significance of these changes compared to the previous applications.

The planning reports ignore the importance to Edinburgh's economy of such a hotel operator and dismiss the arts and culture strategy submitted with the application. This is unjustified and without foundation and in sharp contrast to the position taken on the previous application.

The committee reports fail to give due weight to the significant economic and other benefits that

would result. The proposed development has been designed specifically for Rosewood who would bring an unprecedented quality of hotel experience to Edinburgh. They have a worldwide customer base and, contrary to the claims of objectors, would not be reliant on the displacement of guests from existing hotels. The proposal would not only be of regional significance in economic terms, but deliver a hotel of truly international standing.

The reports state that the existing hotel development pipeline already provides alternative opportunities to deliver similar benefits. However, the 2016 report to the Council's Economic Committee referred to actually relies on the proposed hotel at the former Royal High School within the pipeline figures. The reports before you also fail to consider the terms of the report by Messrs. Colliers which explains in detail why there are no other suitable or available opportunities in the city to deliver a proposal of similar quality. Rosewood would simply not consider another opportunity in Edinburgh.

In the officers' report, the economic benefits of the hotel proposal are queried by suggesting this will detract from a claimed value created for the city by the wider heritage and landscape asset base. In doing so, the claims of a particular objector are simply adopted as evidence, with reference made to a study claiming an overall value to the city of up to £1.4 billion but this is entirely misleading as this figure actually covers a 30-year period. The reality is that the annual benefit of the hotel would be of great significance to the city economy.

At the heart of the proposals is the opening up of the building to public access for the first time in its history. This is a key focus of the proposed arts and culture strategy. There would also be considerable community safety benefits as acknowledged by Police Scotland in their consultation response. There are no detailed matters raising concerns.

The detailed planning considerations in the reports including transport, lighting, noise, community safety and in a general sense the impact on residential amenity. All of these matters have been considered fully, with the need for any further controls able to be addressed through recommended planning conditions. Despite this, the report still concludes that the overall impact on residential amenity is not acceptable which is simply not supported by the evidence.

The reports fail to attach weight to the public consultation exercise carried out by the applicants, yet this is a mandatory requirement under planning legislation. Dismissed, without foundation as having no planning status, the survey carried out of 1,000 people interviewed by an independent market research consultant does provide significant evidence of public support, with 88% of those interviewed supporting the principle of a hotel, and 93% supporting the proposed design. A sample of 6000 provided similar levels of support for the original applications. You should attach significant weight to this level of positive public opinion.

There are misleading references to an 'alternative' proposal this may not be material to the consideration of these applications before you today, but the applicants were requested by planning officials to comment on the viability of that proposal and it's important that the

research they have submitted is properly understood.

This alternative proposal is described in your officers' report as a 'generally low profile and sensitively designed' scheme. This third-party proposal involves demolition of the listed gymnasium, and significantly more physical intervention in the main Hamilton building than that proposed for the hotel development. The claimed alternative use proposed is a private institution. It's disappointing therefore that the reports suggest that the other proposal has compelling merit compared to the publicly-accessible hotel.

Although a statement that this alternative project is fully funded seems to have been accepted by officers at face value, it is also clearly acknowledged in the reports that no business plan has been submitted. It would be expected that any third-party proposal seeking to affect the outcome of another party's planning application, and intervene in a known, existing contractual position, would provide credible evidence that their proposal was actually deliverable. That has not happened.

In support of the claimed viability, the reports draw comparisons with private schools in Edinburgh, and to possible future interest by the University of Edinburgh. This seems to be an attempt to shore up the claims of the third party, but is unsupported by any relevant evidence.

The other private schools are long-standing institutions with large rolls and significant funds. The reference to possible interest by the University is disappointing and simply without foundation. Notwithstanding, the applicants have a contractual obligation to deliver a world-class hotel. The reports fail to acknowledge the only realistic alternative outcome if the proposals before you today are not taken forward. The buildings will remain unused, and continue to be a significant drain on the public-sector finances.

When the previous application came before you it was the subject of a wide ranging and well-informed discussion by the sub-committee members. This resulted in the applications being refused on a close vote 8 to 7. I'd be grateful if you would consider the observations I have made today as you consider your decision on this considerably revised proposal. If you accept the position of the applicants, the reasons for refusal fall away and you should grant planning permission and listed building consent.

David Orr, Urbanist Hotels concluded the presentation with the following information:

- Rosewood Hotel would be the best hotel Edinburgh has ever had. Rosewood is the best hotel in London, Paris, Beijing, New York, San Francisco and so on. Edinburgh has a genuinely unique opportunity to push up in to the top tier of global hotel destinations. The chance will not come back for another generation. Edinburgh is almost the only capital city in Europe without a top tier luxury hotel.
- Rosewood's quality feeds through into its human resources: all associates are paid at least a Living rather than Minimum Wage and receive over 100 hours a year of genuine classroom based training. There will be no better vocational hospitality training ground than here. Rosewood London's MD is an Invernesian.
- We chose Rosewood Hotels over Four Seasons. Rosewood's arts & culture strategy and "sense of place" philosophy is genuine, a true localised differentiator amongst luxury brands.

- The economic benefits are clear and the effects are on a national scale. Efforts to diminish their impacts seem to come from those who perhaps already do perfectly fine thank you.
- The public purse fares well by this development. Many millions of local taxes and rates will be generated at a time when financial resources are under increasing pressure
- You have seen the fabricated and real images. We have demonstrated we have understood the best way to resolve the west building. It is acceptable and that's why some chose to obscure that fact with falsified images.
- Please do not be misled by undeliverable ideas dressed as solutions. Dunard's Hill Adamson project failed to attract the funding they sought and the project was abandoned.
- We are the only deliverable option available and we are the best option.

The competition decision was right, was settled in 2010 and ratified at the end of 2013. We have worked hard since then to accommodate all opinions and we also have the expertise to lead on the solutions. The Rosewood Edinburgh ticks many more boxes than any other idea, past or present and provided the best solution for the site and for all the above reasons the application should be granted.

Decision

To refuse planning permissions for the reasons that:

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 1 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of the World Heritage Site, as it would harm the qualities which justified the inscription of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site, which in relation to the application site comprise the outstanding set-piece of neo-classical architecture, the topography, the townscape and juxtaposition of Old and New Towns; and as a result would have a detrimental impact on the Site's Outstanding Universal Value.
2. The proposal is contrary to policy Env 2 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of Listed Buildings - Demolition, as the buildings remain of architectural and historic importance and the merits of the proposed replacement buildings and the public benefits to be derived from the development would not outweigh the loss of the buildings to be demolished.
3. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 3 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of Listed Buildings - Setting, as the proposed extensions, which owing to their excessive height, scale and massing are visually dominant and detrimental to the character and appearance of the category 'A' listed, principal school building and detract from its setting and furthermore would detract from the setting of the National Monument, Nelson Monument and St. Andrew's House.
4. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 4 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions, as the proposed extensions which are visually dominant in relation to the category 'A' listed, principal school building, owing to their excessive height scale and massing, are incompatible with the character of the existing building and diminish its special interest.

5. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 7 of the Edinburgh Local Plan, in respect of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, as the proposed extensions by reason of their inappropriate height, scale and massing at this highly prominent and sensitive site on Calton Hill would be detrimental to the character of Calton Hill which is part of the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes 'The New Town Gardens' and would have an adverse impact on views to, from and within this Inventory listed site.
6. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 11 of the Edinburgh Local Plan in respect of Special Landscape Areas, as it would have a significant adverse impact on the special character and qualities of the Special Landscape Area at Calton Hill and views thereof, as a result of changes to the balance between the semi-natural hillside and the built features of the hill, as well as the appreciation of the profile of this prominent landscape formation.
7. The proposal is contrary to Edinburgh Local Development Plan policy Des 1, in respect of Design Quality and Context, owing to the excessive height scale and massing of the proposed extensions and the failure of their design to draw upon the positive characteristics of the surrounding area, or to reinforce the existing sense of place at this highly sensitive and prominent location, within the curtilage of the Category 'A' listed building, in the New Town Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.
8. The proposal is contrary to Policy Des 4 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of Development Design - Impact on Setting, as it would fail to have a positive impact on its surroundings, owing to the inappropriate height scale and massing of the proposed extensions, which are visually dominant and have a detrimental impact on the wider townscape, which includes the Old and New Town Conservation Areas and views thereof.
9. The proposal is contrary to Policy Des 11 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, in respect of Tall Buildings - Skyline and Views, as the proposed extensions which rise above the prevailing building height in the surrounding area, fail to enhance the skyline and would have an adverse impact on important views of the category 'A' listed, principal school building at this site, which is a key landmark, as well as impacting adversely on views of the landscape on Calton Hill and the listed monuments on this hill.
10. The proposed development is contrary to Policy Des 5 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan in respect of Development Design - Amenity, as it would result in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, owing to a material loss of sunlight provision to the property at number 1 Regent Terrace.
11. The proposal is contrary to Del 2 - City Centre of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan as the proposed extensions would fail to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of this area of the city centre, or to accord with the principle of the Princes Street Development Brief Block 10, in relation to respecting and enhancing key views to and from this area and does not propose a cultural or civic use.
12. The proposal is contrary to Policy Env 6 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan as it would harm the character and setting of the historic and natural assets which are integral to the New Town Conservation Area. It also fails to safeguard views to and from the Old Town Conservation Area, thereby damaging its special character.

(Reference – report by the Chief Planning Officer, submitted)

2. 5 - 7 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5BL (New Parliament House)

The Chief Planning Officer provided details on an application for listed building consent for the refurbishment (external/internal), alteration and extension of principal former Royal High School buildings (to include works to north elevation to create new door openings/new corridor links), demolition of former Lodge, Gymnasium Block, demolition of 2 curtilage buildings (former Classroom Block + Luncheon Hall), demolition of existing gates/wall (in part) to facilitate development of a world class hotel (application no 17/00587/LBC).

It was recommended that listed building consent was refused.

Decision

To refuse listed building consent for the reasons that:

1. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Env 4 in respect of Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions, as the proposals fail to respect the architectural integrity, composition and special character of the listed building.
2. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Env 3 in respect of Listed Buildings - Setting, as the proposals compromise the unique understanding and appreciation of the listed building.
3. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Env 2 in respect of Listed Buildings - Demolition, as the corresponding planning application is not acceptable and the proposals do not satisfy the requirements of HESPS.
4. The proposals are contrary to non-statutory guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas as by virtue of their size, mass and form the proposals fail to respect the architectural composition of the listed building.

(Reference – report by the Chief Planning Officer, submitted)