

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 5 December 2018

**Application for Planning Permission 18/03695/FUL
At 20 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh,
Alteration and extension to offices, removal of non-original
dormers to front elevation (as amended).**

Item number	7.1(a)
Report number	
Wards	B11 - City Centre

Summary

The proposals comply with the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and the non-statutory guidance stated and will not adversely impact on the setting of the listed building, on the character and appearance of the conservation area, on amenity or upon highway safety. There are no other material considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

Links

Policies and guidance for this application	LEN03, LEN04, LEN06, LDES04, LDES05, LDES12, NSGD02, NSLBCA, LTRA02,
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Report

Application for Planning Permission 18/03695/FUL At 20 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, Alteration and extension to offices, removal of non-original dormers to front elevation (as amended).

Recommendations

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

Background

2.1 Site description

The site constitutes four town houses, currently vacant and formerly in office use, on the west side of the street fronting Charlotte Square, plus a rear courtyard and car parking area accessed off Randolph Place Lane. The site forms part of the original First New Town Plan 1766. The buildings were designed by Robert Adam in 1791 and were listed category A on 3 March 1966 ref: LB28504. They were built largely between 1803 and 1807 with later 20th century attics.

There are residential apartments and offices to the south and offices to the north. To the west across the courtyard car park is a modern block of offices known as Randolph House, accessed off Randolph Lane.

The development is within the Edinburgh World Heritage Site - First New Town.

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

2.2 Site History

The pre-1990 history of the four townhouses can be seen in the applicant's Design Statement. The post 1990 history is as follows:

27 August 1991 - No.19-20: Listed building granted for alterations. (Planning reference 91/1437/LBC).

22 May 1992 -No.19-20: - Listed building consent granted in retrospect for internal alterations (as amended). (Planning reference 91/2524/LBC).

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The proposals, as amended, are to refurbish the buildings for office use and construct a glass box in the rear courtyard to provide an auditorium, a raised courtyard garden with extra office space below it, and a rectangular pavilion/function room with green roof which will complement the office space. Two parking spaces will be lost as a result but bicycle storage provision will be increased.

The auditorium - 10m x 6m (60m²) will replace the existing pyramidal glazed extension to the rear of No.23 at lower ground level and will span over two levels with a glazed atria link access from the townhouses being at lower ground and ground floor levels. On the south boundary, a louvred metal fence will be installed in the gap between the auditorium and the office block to the west (Randolph House). It will have a sandstone base.

The pavilion to the rear of No.20-21 will measure 18m x 6m (108m²), have a green sedum roof and a green wall on the west side. The large elements of glazing and mirrored rainscreen cladding allow tenants to have a stronger connection with the green amenity space whilst protecting privacy.

The courtyard ground surface will be light sandstone paving.

The vertical outshoots at the back of the buildings will be extended laterally in rubble stone to allow for tea prep areas and toilets for each floor. A lift will be installed in the small rear room of each townhouse in the former toilet and secondary areas.

The dormers on the front elevations will be removed and the roof re-instated with conservation style rooflights. To the rear, the mix of dormers will be removed and a linear, slated mansard fillet with two tripartite mansard windows installed per feu, will be built between each boundary skewput to house the lift lobbies and toilets.

The windows are to be replaced with slimline double glazed astragaled units.

Scheme 1

Originally, the front first floor windows were to have their cills raised back to above the band course to match the others in the terrace.

The proposed raised front window cills are deleted. Demolition of the wall between the front vestibule of Nos.20-21 are deleted. Opening up of the 1st floor dummy window has been omitted. There has been a reduction in the wall slapping width between Nos.20 and 21 at first floor, with retention of nibs to each side of each opening.

Supporting Document

A Design Statement has been submitted by the applicant which is available to view on the Planning and Building Standards on-line services.

3.2 Determining Issues

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 states - Where, in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

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

Do the proposals 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 design of the external alterations have an adverse impact on the character of the listed building or the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- b) there are any amenity issues;
- c) there are any transport issues;
- d) the representations have been addressed; and
- e) there are any equality or human rights issues.

a) Impact on Listed Building and Conservation Area

Development within the conservation area is considered against policy Env 6 of the LDP and seeks to ensure that development preserves and enhances the area. In addition policy Des 1 requires proposals to contribute towards a sense of place and draw on an overall design concept.

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal states “*The grid hierarchy of grand streets, lesser streets, lanes and mews throughout the conservation area*” form part of the essential spatial character; and in terms of building forms “*The consistent massing of buildings retaining the original building proportions.*” As regards architectural character, the following forms part of the essential character: “*Original design forms...and the standard palette of materials including blonde ashlar sandstone, timber windows and pitched slated roofs.*”

The new auditorium to the rear of No. 23 replaces an existing glazed pyramidal roofed room and this will be a similar sized structure. This extension will provide a mix of traditional stone and glazing. The areas of glazing will provide a visual separation between the rear of the townhouse and the new build.

The new pavilion will be clad in buff ashlar sandstone, mirror glazed curtain walling and a living wall system on the rear (west) elevation. The materials are of a quality finish and appropriate to the enclosed courtyard context at the rear of the building. Despite a mainly glazed appearance, it will have a sandstone base which will ground it visually in relation to the listed buildings. The proposed pavilion will be set within the enclosed courtyard and will have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. The modern intervention will make a positive contribution to this space.

Outshots

The outshots are later, but early additions to the back of the buildings. Increasing these laterally and sympathetically in rubble stone will not detrimentally impact on the character of the buildings. They will be seen as typical rear bay/ tower elements which traditionally house the likes of servants’ sculleries and toilets. The top part of the extension will be seen in restricted views from Randolph Plane and Melville Street, but otherwise will be obscured from view within the conservation area.

Roof Alterations

The rear elevation has traditionally been less of a public elevation and has had tower elements and dormers added to the roof over time. On the adjacent part of the terrace to the north, mansard fillets have been added. The replacement of the dormers on the rear roof with similar mansard fillets achieves the toilet and lift lobby spaces required. It is the most effective way of encapsulating the required spaces without building several awkward looking individual dormers in close proximity to each other.

The proposals represent a significant alteration to the fabric of the rear roof but one which complements its character and reflects changes made to the roof of the north range of townhouses. The mansard will be seen in limited views and will otherwise match the massing and appearance of the rear of this terrace. By providing the facilities within the rear outshots and the roof alteration this allows the listed building to be retained internally as considered within the concurrent listed building application. The removal of the dormers of the front elevation and replacement with conservation rooflights restores the profile of the important historic roof with the conservation area.

Windows

Due to potential presence of original glass, a condition is recommended that requires a full window survey to be carried out before any slimline double glazing is fitted to ensure any historically important fabric is retained.

The external proposals, in terms of design and materials are acceptable and will not adversely impact on the setting of the listed building or upon the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with the Local Development Plan.

b) Amenity

Policy Des 5 of the LDP refers to amenity. The widened outshoots will be no nearer to the offices across the rear courtyard than existing. In terms of overshadowing, the courtyard pavilion is positioned centrally to allow sufficient daylight to all surrounding windows.

The proposed lifts are positioned centrally to each building and away from any mutual wall. It is not considered that there will be any issues from the installation of lifts within the premises.

The proposals comply with Policy Des 5 of the LDP.

c) Transport

Policy Tra 2 requires development to have sufficient parking to meet the demands of the relevant building use. In this case, the 19 space car parking courtyard to the rear, shared with the other offices at the back of the site, is to be reduced to 17 spaces. The reduction in the number of existing spaces is welcomed.

As part of the reconfiguration of the car parking area, a new cycle parking area is proposed within this space. The location of this cycle parking is acceptable. Any visitor cycle parking to the front of the building would be difficult to secure due to the historic nature of the site. Cycle parking is available within the wider area.

The proposals result in an extra 255 sq m gross floor area of offices added to the existing 1413 sq m of the townhouses. The site is in within zone 1 of the tram line, therefore a tram contribution of £17,000 will be required and secured through an appropriate legal agreement.

d) Public Comments

Material Comments

- Support the scheme but have concerns about the noise and vibration of the proposed lift in number 23 – this is addressed in 3.3b) above.

Non-Material

- Impact of works on adjacent renovations.

e) Equalities and Human Rights

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

Conclusion

The proposed remodelling of the buildings to retain the use as modern offices will enhance the listed buildings. The extensions are well placed and will be built in quality materials to complement the location.

The proposals comply with the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and the non-statutory guidance and will have a positive impact on the setting of the listed building, on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

There are no other material considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

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

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Conditions:-

1. Details of a window survey plus slimline double glazing cross-sections/ elevations at not less than 1:20 scale shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.
2. A detailed specification, including trade names where appropriate, of all the proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site; Note: samples of the materials may be required.
3. Details of the landscaping specification of the sedum roofs and green wall of the raised courtyard and pavilion shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.

Reasons:-

1. In order to safeguard the character of the conservation area.
2. In order to ensure that a high standard of landscaping is achieved, appropriate to the location of the site.
3. In order to safeguard the character of the conservation area.

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. Consent shall not be issued until a suitable legal agreement has been concluded in relation to tram contributions.

The legal agreement should be concluded within 6 months of the date of this notice. If not concluded within that 6 month period, a report will be put to committee with a likely recommendation that the application be refused.

A tram contribution of £17,000 is required.

Financial impact

4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:

The application is subject to a legal agreement for developer contributions.

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:

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

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 27 July 2018. Two letters have been received, one supporting and one commenting.

The above comments are addressed in the Assessment to this report at paragraph 3.3d).

Background reading/external references

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

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision**

The site is allocated as City Centre in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) where mixed uses are acceptable subject to complying with other policies in the LDP.

Date registered

12 July 2018

Drawing numbers/Scheme

01 - 08; 09A-10A; 11- 15; 16A; 17-23,

Scheme 2

David R. Leslie

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

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Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

LDP 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.

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

LDP Policy Env 6 (Conservation Areas - Development) sets out criteria for assessing development in a conservation area.

LDP Policy Des 4 (Development Design - Impact on Setting) sets criteria for assessing the impact of development design against its setting.

LDP Policy Des 5 (Development Design - Amenity) sets criteria for assessing amenity.

LDP Policy Des 12 (Alterations and Extensions) sets criteria for assessing alterations and extensions to existing buildings.

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, parking, streets 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.

LDP Policy Tra 2 (Private Car Parking) requires private car parking provision to comply with the parking levels set out in Council guidance, and sets criteria for assessing lower provision.

Appendix 1

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Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland

Planning revised comments:

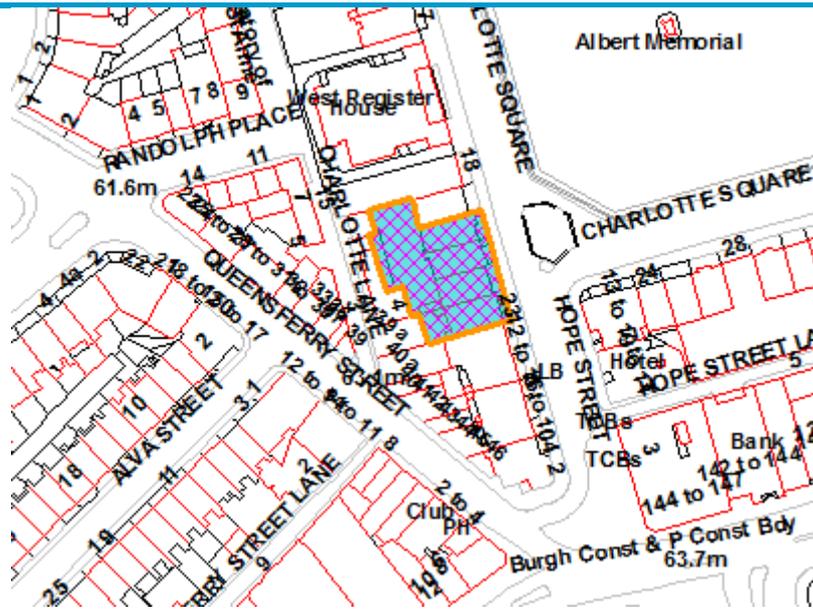
The application properties, 4 terraced houses, form part of the west side of Charlotte Square, designed by Robert Adam, 1791. The properties form part of a neo-classical palace block formed of 6 individual houses, one of a pair that flank former St George's church. We recognise the applicant's intention to create high quality Grade A office accommodation within the Charlotte Square properties and welcome the proposed conservation elements, including the removal of later dormers.

The proposed mansard replacement of the historic roof profile to the rear of Nos 20, 21 & 22 Charlotte Square would, in our view diminish the setting of the rear of the terrace. The original profiles are important and are visible over Queensferry Street. We would ask that alternatives design solutions be considered that could enable greater retention of the 3 townhouses' existing roof profiles.

Roads Authority issues:

The site is within Zone 1 of the City Centre. The proposals represents an increase of 255 sq.m gross office floorspace over that existing. A tram contribution of £17,000 will be required to serve the use.

Location Plan



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