

Full Planning Application 06/02788/FUL
at
44 Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1JB

Development Quality Sub-Committee
of the Planning Committee

1 Purpose of report

To consider application 06/02788/FUL, submitted by National Museums Of Scotland. The application is for: **Redevelopment of existing museum building including new entrances, stairs, lifts and internal reorganisation**

It is recommended that this application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions below.

2 The Site and the Proposal

Site description

This application is for the Royal Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street. It is a symmetrical Venetian Renaissance Museum building with a 2-storey and basement arcaded main block to its centre and flanked by 3-storey and basement pavilions to outer right and left. The original museum was designed by Captain Francis Fowke (Royal Engineers), 1861-2 and 1885-9, with later alterations and additions, including a neo-Classical Southeast extension by WT Oldrieve, 1910-14, a further South extension of 1934-7 and contemporary West block by Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth, 1998.

The interior of the Royal Museum derives its architectural inspiration from Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, the centrepiece of the 1851 Great Exhibition. It has a 3-storey main hall with glazed roof and galleries supported on decorative cast-iron columns and cantilevered staircases to the East and

West. The submitted 'Conservation Plan' for the Royal Museum outlines in considerable detail both internal and external features their significance and current condition. The proposals form the first phase of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) 15 year Master plan for the whole scale redevelopment of the museum and its environs.

This is a category 'A' listed building (listed on 14.12.1970, L.B Ref: 27748).

This property is located within the Old Town Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site.

Site History

98/00052/GDT - Raise no objection Subject to Conditions for 'Alteration works to museum' (01.10.1998)

03/02153/ADV - Permission granted for 'external signage' (02.06.2004)

04/02535/GDT - Raise no objection subject to conditions for 'Installation of new standby generator for Museums of Scotland' (17.09.2004)

04/02753/ADV - Permission granted for 'lamppost banners mounted on existing lampposts (16.09.2004)

05/00311/GDT - Raise no objection subject to conditions for 'Fire Improvements to Royal Museum of Scotland (as amended)' (08.07.2005)

Description of the Proposal

Externally an 11m long 'entry slot' will be created either side of the Royal Museum's main entrance steps and the forecourts associated with each new entrance will be re-landscaped to allow level access for all. The new entrances are to be lined with metal cladding with intermediate metal supports and will lead directly into the basement area which will be opened up to form a new arrivals hall. To the left of the building a fire escape opening will be created through existing windows at basement level and will have a solid stone face to match existing.

The south and northeast entrance will be replaced with new metal clad canopies and glazed doors to complement the main contemporary entrance portal on Chambers Street.

To the west elevation, the new fire escape staircase and lift shaft will be rendered with vertical strip windows and will read as a contemporary addition to the listed building. The remaining rear elevation will be rationalised with natural render to match the new stair and lift shaft.

A photomontage of the alterations was submitted to aid the visualisation of the design concept and completed scheme. Supporting information covering the requirement and justification for the proposals and the philosophy behind the design solution were also submitted.

3 Officer's Assessment and Recommendations

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 preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses? If not, there is a presumption against the granting of permission. 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, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

ASSESSMENT

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

- a) The proposals have an adverse impact on the building or its setting;
 - b) The proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and world heritage site;
 - c) The design is satisfactory given the setting of the site;
 - d) The proposals are detrimental to residential amenity or road safety.
-
- a) The proposed openings in the Chambers Street elevation will read as contemporary additions within the Victorian facade. Their design is clean and contemporary in order to minimise the impact on the original fabric of this historic building. The frame is constructed of bronze metal and chunky intermediate metal supports to retain the scale and mass of the main facade. The proposed

fire escape will have a stone face to match existing and will be fully integrated into the basement façade and is a minimal intervention on the listed building. The steep entrance steps will be partially re-landscaped to allow level access into the museum for disabled users. To the west elevation the new fire escape staircase and lift shaft will be rendered with vertical strip windows and will read as contemporary additions to the building.

The external proposals are contemporary additions that will read as clearly modern interventions and will have limited impact on the overall character of the listed building.

A comprehensive 'Conservation Plan' and 'Design statement' for the museum has been submitted, detailing the historic importance of the museum and its setting. The plan analyses the changes that have been made to the museum and their effects, and puts forward policies for the conservation, repair, and restoration of its historic character and features. The external proposals are considered to be high quality and sympathetic alterations to the listed building.

The proposals will have no adverse impact on the building or its setting.

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

"Centred on the Royal Mile, the city's main historic thoroughfare, the Old Town evolved from two separate burghs. Although few medieval buildings remain, the original plot widths and the 'fishbone' street pattern of narrow closes and wynds remain extensively visible, although overlain by major Victorian rebuilding and street improvements. The administrative, ceremonial, legal and religious functions of the modern city remain focused within the Old Town. The key elements of the area's character are therefore its density of building and mixture of uses with high tenements and important historic buildings arranged on a historic street pattern."

The forecourts associated with each new entrance will be re-landscaped to allow level access into the museum. This will be done in stone paving to match existing and complement the clean lines of the contemporary entrance. The buildings entrance portals are constructed of similar materials to maintain continuity within the site. They will read as clearly modern interventions using high quality materials and will not be incongruous within the conservation area and World Heritage Site.

The proposals will enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and World Heritage Site.

c) The design of the proposed main entrance portal to Chambers Street and the secondary entrances to the south and northeast of the museum, are overtly modern and will be constructed using high quality modern materials, such as glass, bronze, and stainless steel. The front entrance will be 11m wide to provide a larger circulation area for people arriving at the museum and also enables access for wheelchair users. The new entrances meet the

requirements of inclusive access, whilst providing a high quality design solution using contemporary materials and add visual interest to the street scene.

The design is satisfactory given the setting of the site.

d) The proposals will have no adverse impact on residential amenity or road safety. The proposed street level access and level forecourt will provide better access for disabled persons.

In conclusion, the proposals represent a design solution which will significantly enhance access and circulation to the museum and will respect the character of listed building, the conservation area and the World Heritage Site.

The proposals comply with the development plan and non-statutory guidelines, and will enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and the World Heritage Site or preserve the building and its setting, and have no detrimental impact on residential amenity or road safety.

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

It is recommended that the Committee approves this application, subject to the conditions regarding noise, ventilation, materials, archaeological and RCAHMS surveys.

Alan Henderson

Alan Henderson
Head of Planning and Strategy

Contact/tel	Grainne Lennon on 0131 529 3543
Ward affected	32 - Tollcross
Local Plan	Central Edinburgh
Statutory Development Plan Provision	Mixed Activities
Date registered	13 July 2006
Drawing numbers/ Scheme	01-62 Scheme 1

Advice to Committee Members and Ward Councillors

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

If you require further information about this application you should contact the following Principal Planner, Nancy Jamieson on 529 3916. Email: nancy.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk.

If this application is not identified on the agenda for presentation, and you wish to request a presentation of this application at the Committee meeting, you must contact Committee Services by 9.00a.m. on the Tuesday preceding the meeting on extension 4229/4239. Alternatively, you may e-mail gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk or carol.richardson@edinburgh.gov.uk

Application Type Full Planning Application
Application Address: 44 Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1JB

Proposal: Redevelopment of existing museum building including new entrances, stairs, lifts and internal reorganisation

Reference No: 06/02788/FUL

Consultations, Representations and Planning Policy

Consultations

Edinburgh transport

No objections

Edinburgh Access Panel

No objections

Services for Communities (Environmental Assessment)

No objections to this proposed development subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The design, installation and operation of any plant, machinery or equipment shall be such that any associated noise complies with NR25 when measured within any nearby living apartment.*
- 2. All kitchen ventilation extracts shall be designed so that cooking effluvia are ducted to roof level, and no cooking odours escape or are exhausted into any neighbouring premises, all to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning.*

Historic Scotland

The current proposals follow on from several helpful pre-application meetings between your Council, the applicants, their agents and Historic Scotland. Historic Scotland is most supportive of the proposals and the careful thought and design work that has gone into this submission. It is considered that the resulting schemes reorganisation of storage, new basement spaces created, and the renewal and creation of circulation routes will provide a much-welcomed revitalisation of the museum.

Discussions on site centred on two main elements viz; the new Chambers Street entrances and the rear stair. Comments on other elements follow;

New ground level openings on Chambers Street

Historic Scotland has previously questioned the creation of a large single opening, and welcome the moves to provide apparent structural support centred on the piers above. The images on the original Masterplan document show two recessed rusticated stone pillars, replicating the rustication on the façade. Although the support of the building above would be best achieved with flush rusticated piers to match the existing rustication I understand that this approach is not amenable to the applicants as it doesn't provide a single 'letter-box' opening. The proposed single opening with a pre-patinated bronze-coloured copper alloy surround with 300mm recessed? piers do provide a contemporary insertion within the basement/lower ground elevation, and if the former approach is unwelcome we would be willing to support this, although perhaps the width of the piers could yet be increased. The proposed new vent to the transformer unit, between the Museum and the extension, has powder coated metal louvers. These should match the bronze finish for the opening.

The new fire escape doors have been fashioned to resemble the existing heavily rusticated base to the building. Historic Scotland has considered whether it would be better to retain and refashion the current windows (one altered) as a last reminder of the fenestration at this level, but are led to understand that the dimensions of fire escape would, in any case, require the loss of their central pilasters. Historic Scotland is thus persuaded by the applicant's creation of a stone faced double-door enforcing the strong base to the building above. Having said this, the success of the proposals will rely on the impeccable detailing of the entrance, and its authentic appearance when closed. The utilisation of the re-used stonework from the new entrance area will help in this respect.

Loss of the rear staircase

The staircase to the rear is part of the works planned by the Principal Architect for Scotland for the HM Office of Works, William T. Oldrieve FRIBA (1853-1922) circa 1910-1914, although it appears to have been built as late as 1932, and the design may have been altered in this time. The stair is a fine Neo-classical design in polished stone with a brass hand railed iron balustrade with Greek-key decoration and Beaux Arts detailing.

Although as part of the wider scheme Historic Scotland has expressed acceptance of the loss of the rear staircase, the retention of the stair enclosure is important, including the polished stone door surrounds (to the current restaurant) and skirting. It is also noted that the proposed drawings have created atrium space overlooked by railed areas on the first and second floors. It is important to re-use some of the straight sections of stair balustrade to overlook this space, which will still retain elements of Oldreives designs.

Elsewhere;

Grand Gallery

Since the last meeting the alteration to the balustrade in the Grand Gallery seems to have been found not necessary, due to the resetting of the café tables, although this is not yet shown on the drawings. Although it is realised that the travertine faced fish ponds within the Grand Gallery only date from the mid C20th, they do have a significant resonance with the public, and their retention in some form would be welcomed. Further details of the glass lifts and escalator pits should be sought.

Basement

Historic Scotland regrets that the significant amounts of surviving stone paving appears to not be re-usable due to its condition. If this can be revisited its partial reuse or salvaging would be welcome. Historic Scotland welcomes the reinstatement of the 'racetrack' and the restoration and re-use of existing arched openings within the massive stone masonry. However, it is concerned with the appearance of the proposed circular central pier supports within the shop/café, which may appear too flimsy to support the mass of masonry above. Further sectional and elevation details would be appreciated.

Special Exhibitions Gallery

The flooring over of the wells within the gallery is not overly contentious, but some of the cast-iron balustrade, along with the Charles Darwin Plaque, could be salvaged for re-use.

New Loading Bay

From the site meeting it appeared that the new rear loading bay would be redesigned to incorporate a stone finish, similar to the Chambers Street fire doors. We would welcome any details as and when they become available, and repeat our earlier concerns over the quality of the metal folding doors.

Plant

New plant on the rear roofscape will need to be carefully handled, and views from the south should be provided.

Edinburgh Archaeologist

Construction of the A-listed Royal Museum on Chambers Street on the southern side of Chambers Street was started in 1861, with the main museum complex completed by 1889. Addition buildings, constructed principally to the rear continued through out the 20th c, culminating with the Museum of Scotland wing in the 1990's. Chambers Street itself was constructed by Robert Adam (original name College Street) c.1789 as part his redevelopment of this section of the Old Town, as such it cut directly across numerous medieval plots running up to Flodden Wall. An upstanding section of this wall still survives today incorporated within the ground floor of the museum. Gordon of Rothiemay's 1647 map of Edinburgh shows the site as largely open with two streets of 'town houses' at either end with gardens across the centre.

As such both the Royal Museum itself is not only a nationally significant building in its own right, but the building and the site itself also form an integral part of Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site, an area recognised as being of international archaeological and cultural importance. Accordingly this application should be considered under following planning polices issued by the Secretary of State for Scotland; National Planning Policy Guidance 18: Planning and the Historic environment (NPPG 18), 1999, and National Planning Policy Guidance 5: Planning and Archaeology (NPPG 5) and its the accompanying Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN 42), 1994. The aim should be to preserve archaeological remains in situ as a first option, but alternatively where this is not possible, archaeological excavation or an appropriate level of recording may be an acceptable alternative.

The proposed development will see considerable work undertaken to the fabric of the existing nationally significant (A-listed) Victorian museum. However it is considered that the impact of the proposed development would not justify the refusal of consent on archaeological grounds, provided that a programme of archaeological historic building recording is undertaken as part of the development/demolition process. This will require a photographic, illustrative and written survey, linked to an appropriate level of documentary research, undertaken by suitably qualified professional archaeologists. The aim of this work will be to preserve by record elements of this building which will be lost/altered during this redevelopment.

Further, this proposed development will require significant ground breaking works including; the foundations for new walls, construction of new lift shafts, new services and general reduction of ground slab by c.1m across the site. Any archaeological remains that may survive in situ within this area could not only provide important information regarding the origins and development of this section of the UNESCO World Heritage Site but also further sections of the nationally important Flodden Wall (part of which survives upstanding within the site). Nevertheless based on the available evidence it is considered that the impact of the proposed development on any surviving in situ buried remains would not be considered sufficient to justify refusal of consent on archaeological grounds. However it is essential that a suitable programme of archaeological works be undertaken a professional archaeological company in order to excavate and record any archaeological remains disturbed by development, where preservation in situ is not possible.

Finally, as mentioned above the basement levels of the museum are known to contain an upstanding section of Edinburgh's late-medieval town wall, The Flodden Wall. This nationally significant monument (all other surviving sections have been scheduled by the Scottish Executive) must not only be preserved in situ but a mitigation strategy must be submitted to CECAS prior to development commencing that details the measures to be put in place to ensure its protection throughout the development process and beyond.

It is therefore recommended that the above programmes of work (Preservation, Excavation & Historic Building Survey) be secured using a condition based upon the model condition stated in PAN 42: Planning and Archaeology, para 34, as follows,

'No development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.'

The work must be carried out by a professional archaeological organisation, either working to a brief prepared by CECAS or through a written scheme of investigation submitted to and agreed by CECAS for the site. Responsibility for the execution and resourcing of the programmes of archaeological work and for the archiving and appropriate level of publication of the results lies with the applicant.

Representations

This application was advertised on 28.07.06. A letter of support was received from the Cockburn Association on the schemes sensitive proposals.

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

Planning Policy

Mixed Activities Zone as identified in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan.

Relevant Policies:

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

Policy CD4 (CONSERVATION AREAS) requires that developments in a conservation area retain all features which contribute to the area's character and appearance.

Policy CD5 (CONSERVATION AREAS - REDEVELOPMENT) sets out the criteria against which new development in conservation areas will be assessed, and seeks to preserve or enhance their character and appearance.

Policy CD17 (MATERIALS) sets out requirements for materials in new developments and seeks a greater use of stone, roofing slate and other traditional materials in appropriate cases.

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

Policy CD20 (WINDOW ALTERATIONS) sets out different levels of control for window alterations for listed buildings, non listed buildings in conservation areas and non listed buildings in defined areas of window control.

Non-statutory guidelines 'ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS' provide general guidance for assessing proposals for both internal and external alterations.

Non-statutory guidelines on 'REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS' supplement local plan conservation and design policies, providing additional guidance on window and door alterations.

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

Policy CS1 (MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT) supports further major institutional development consistent with the environment and other objectives of the Local Plan.

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

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Conditions/Reasons associated with the Recommendation

Recommendation

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

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than five years from the date of this consent.
2. A detailed specification, including trade names where appropriate, of all the proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy before work is commenced on site; Note: samples of the materials may be required.
3. The design and installation of any plant, machinery or equipment shall be such that any associated noise complies with NR25 when measured within any nearby living apartment, and no structure borne vibration is perceptible within any nearby living apartment.
4. The ventilation shall be designed so that cooking effluvia are ducted to the roof, and no cooking odours escape or are exhausted into any neighbouring premises, all to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning & Strategy.
5. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning & Strategy, having first been agreed by the City Archaeologist.
6. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland shall be given access to the site, at any reasonable time in a period of at least

three months from the date of this consent, for the purposes of recording the building, structure or other item of interest.

Reasons

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to protect the amenity of the occupiers of the development.
4. In order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents and other occupiers.
5. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.
6. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.

INFORMATIVES

It should be noted that:

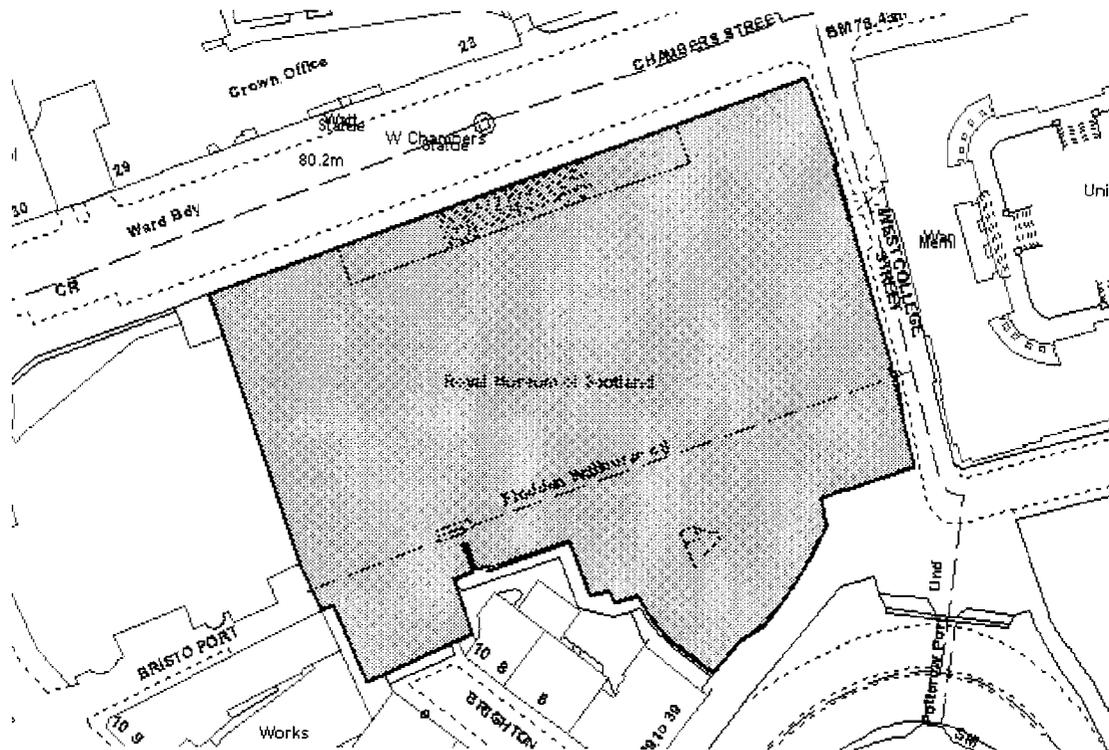
1. This consent is for planning permission only. Work must not begin until other necessary consents, eg listed building consent, have been obtained.

End

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Location Plan

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