

Listed Building Consent Application
at
Royal Infirmary
1 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9EE

Development Quality Sub-Committee
of the Planning Committee

Proposal: Demolition of Florence Nightingale Nurses Home
Applicant: Southside Capital Ltd.
Reference No: 02/01668/LBC

1 Purpose of report

To recommend that the application be **GRANTED** subject to;

Conditions

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than five years from the date of this consent.
2. The application shall be referred to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.
3. No demolitions shall take place until a detailed phasing programme, including a rolling programme of site clearance and landscaping, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Head of Planning and Strategy. Thereafter, the development of the site shall adhere to this programme, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Head of Planning and Strategy.

Reasons

1. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
 2. In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.
 3. In order to safeguard the interests of architectural heritage.
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2 Main report

Site description

The application property is the six to seven storey, U-plan, Art Deco style former Florence Nightingale Nurses Home by Thomas W Turnbull, dating from 1935. The building, which is of steel frame construction infilled in pre-cast concrete blocks with metal framed windows, is category B listed (Tollcross Ward) and situated within the Marchmont and Meadows Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

This building forms a sub-group with the Simpsons Memorial Maternity Pavilion (SMMP) in the south-west sector of the RIE site. Both structures are of monumental composition stepping up in height from the Meadows. These buildings occupy the site of the former Merchant Maiden Hospital by William Burn, erected between 1816 and 1819 and since demolished.

Site history

The RIE site has been in hospital use since the construction of George Watson's Hospital in 1740 and has been developed largely without statutory planning control. Health Boards and other specified health service bodies were removed from Crown Exemption in 1991.

There is no planning history relevant to the determination of this application.

Development

The application is for the demolition of the former Florence Nightingale Nurses Home to accommodate two new residential buildings.

New Central 3 (the residential block to the east) will be constructed on the site of the former FNNH. The building, which is of grid-frame construction infilled with glazed and solid sheeting, is split into two five storey and seven storey sections with a glazed atrium in between.

New Central 4 (the residential block to the west) will be constructed on the site of the former FNNH and Queen Mary Nursing Home on Chalmers Street. The building, which is clad in brick, cedar and aluminium, comprises a courtyard block ranging from four storeys on the southern side to seven storeys at its highest point.

This application is one of nine separate applications for listed building consent for alterations to or demolition of listed structures on the RIE site. The associated application for planning permission is for the redevelopment of the site as a new urban quarter entitled "Quartermile" comprising residential uses in the south and east sections of the site with commercial and retail uses concentrated in the centre. Extensive landscaping is proposed to create green space around the retained historic buildings and contemporary style new structures.

Supporting Information

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, Condition Survey and model.

The former provides comprehensive descriptions of the historic and architectural development of each listed building, accompanied by plans and photographs, and justifications for the proposed alterations to or demolition of the structures. The Statement concludes that the present buildings on the RIE site present an incongruous mix of differing qualities and styles as a result of over two hundred years of development.

The Condition Survey details the structural form, defects and loading capacity of each listed building in written and photographic form.

The architects have also produced a detailed 3-dimensional model depicting the entire development and immediate surroundings.

Consultations

No consultations undertaken.

Representations

The application was advertised on 24 May 2002. Five letters of representation were received.

The AHSS accepts that development land must be created somewhere within the RIE complex and recognises that the cost of dealing with the problems of design and construction associated with this building outweigh its merits.

The other contributors, including the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, object to the proposed demolition on the following grounds:

- the building is an important part of the historical development of the RIE;
- the structure could be converted to residential accommodation.

Policy

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

Section 25 - Status of Development Plans

"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".

National Planning Guidance

NPPG 18: Planning and the Historic Environment (April 1999) promotes the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and reflects the existing statutory framework and existing guidance set out in the "Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Area, 1998".

The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (1998)

Para. 2.10 "Government policy with regard to the demolition of listed buildings is that no worthwhile building should be lost to our environment unless it has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted by all concerned to find practical ways of keeping it".

Lothian Structure Plan (approved 4 July 1997)

Policy ENV3A states that the overall character and appearance of Lothian's high quality urban areas, particularly the form of Edinburgh's distinct Old and New Town of the World Heritage Site and the city's landscape and historical features, should be protected and where possible enhanced.

Policy ENV5 states that local plans shall contain policies to maintain and enhance the character of conservation areas and to protect all listed buildings and their settings.

Central Edinburgh Local Plan (adopted 29 May 1997)

The site is located within the Mixed Activities Zone and is identified as a Major Development Opportunity with preferred land uses being housing, academic or other institutions, hotel or commercial uses, small scale employment uses and public short stay parking.

Planning Brief (approved by the Planning Committee, May 1998)

The brief, which includes an addendum approved in August 2000, seeks to ensure the re-integration of the site with the wider city. The listed buildings on the site should be retained and re-used in balance with the best planning of the site, which should incorporate a mix of uses and housing tenures and promote high quality development with an identifiable urban form of individual character.

The brief states that, while there is a presumption against the demolition of listed buildings, it is recognised that the Simpsons Memorial Maternity Pavilion and Florence Nightingale Nurses Home present particular problems due to their experimental form of construction. The demolition of these structures will therefore be considered, but only where such proposals can be fully justified.

Relevant Policies:

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

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

DETERMINING ISSUES

The determining issues are:

- Do the proposals preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses? If they do not, there is a presumption against the granting of consent;
- 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?

ASSESSMENT

To address the determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether the proposals have an adverse impact on the character of the listed building.

The Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion and Florence Nightingale Nurses Home form part of the western expansion of the RIE constituting a distinctive group in terms of their monumental Art Deco forms enveloped in pre-cast concrete, a technique which was considered experimental at the time. However, both buildings suffer from serious structural faults associated with this experimental construction and a significant asbestos issue has been identified.

In July 1995, a report by Kirkman and Bradford Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers determining the general condition of the external walls of the SMMP and FNNH concluded that the pre-cast concrete blocks were breaking down and the ties back into the main structure were failing. Several panels in the FNNH are spalling due to carbonisation, rusting of reinforcements and other defects. Since the Kirkman and Bradford report, further defects and progressive degradation of the concrete block and wall ties have occurred. Remedial work to resolve these issues would involve re-cladding in an alternative material and as a key element of the FNNH's statutory listing is the pioneering use of pre-cast concrete blocks, it can be argued that the building's historic and architectural significance would be diminished.

In terms of re-use, redevelopment of the buildings as residential apartments is, in theory, the most economically viable. However, indicative construction costs in 2000 totalled at £12 million, excluding land acquisitions costs, professional fees and VAT. This estimate included #1.66 million for the wholesale removal of asbestos, which would have considerable health and safety implications if the building were re-used. The commercial viability of the former FNNH is therefore considered prohibitive.

The contribution of the FNNH to the surrounding environment is limited due to its incongruous appearance from the Meadows, in terms of lack of articulation at roof level. The earlier Medical Hospital and Sydney Mitchell and Wilson buildings are vertical in emphasis with broken up massing and pinnacles reaching skywards, whereas the FNNH's roofscape comprises flat, horizontal continuous runs.

The proposed replacement buildings make a positive contribution to the RIE site in terms of their high quality, contemporary architecture. While uncompromisingly modern in design, New Central 3 continues the architectural rhythm of the Medical Hospital and Jubilee pavilions overlooking the Meadows. Its basic geometric form and transparent external treatment neither visually compete with nor obscure the highly articulated forms of the adjacent historic buildings. New Central 4 establishes a new building line on Chalmers Street and the structure's solidity of form demarcates part of the western boundary of the Quartermile development.

Conclusion

NPPG18 notes that the historic environment serves as a framework for the evolution and development of the built environment and that historic places are a product of a process of refinement and change over generation to meet the needs of existing populations. Pressure for change can present difficult issues and planning has a role to play in reconciling the need to protect the heritage with the need to accommodate and promote suitable opportunities for change.

Lothian Structure Plan policy ENV3A and Central Edinburgh Local Plan policy CD2 reflect the position in law, as set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, which places a duty upon the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting (Section 59). In this case, the wider context of the proposed Quartermile development outweighs the specific loss of a single listed building, the architectural and historic significance of which is limited. The overall strategy is to retain and restore the most significant and structurally sound listed buildings on the site. The demolition of the former FNNH will facilitate the construction of residential accommodation that will generate the necessary income to enable restoration of the most important structures on the site.

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

It is recommended that the Committee approves this application, subject to the conditions stated.

Alan Henderson

Alan Henderson
Head of Planning and Strategy

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Ward affected Tollcross

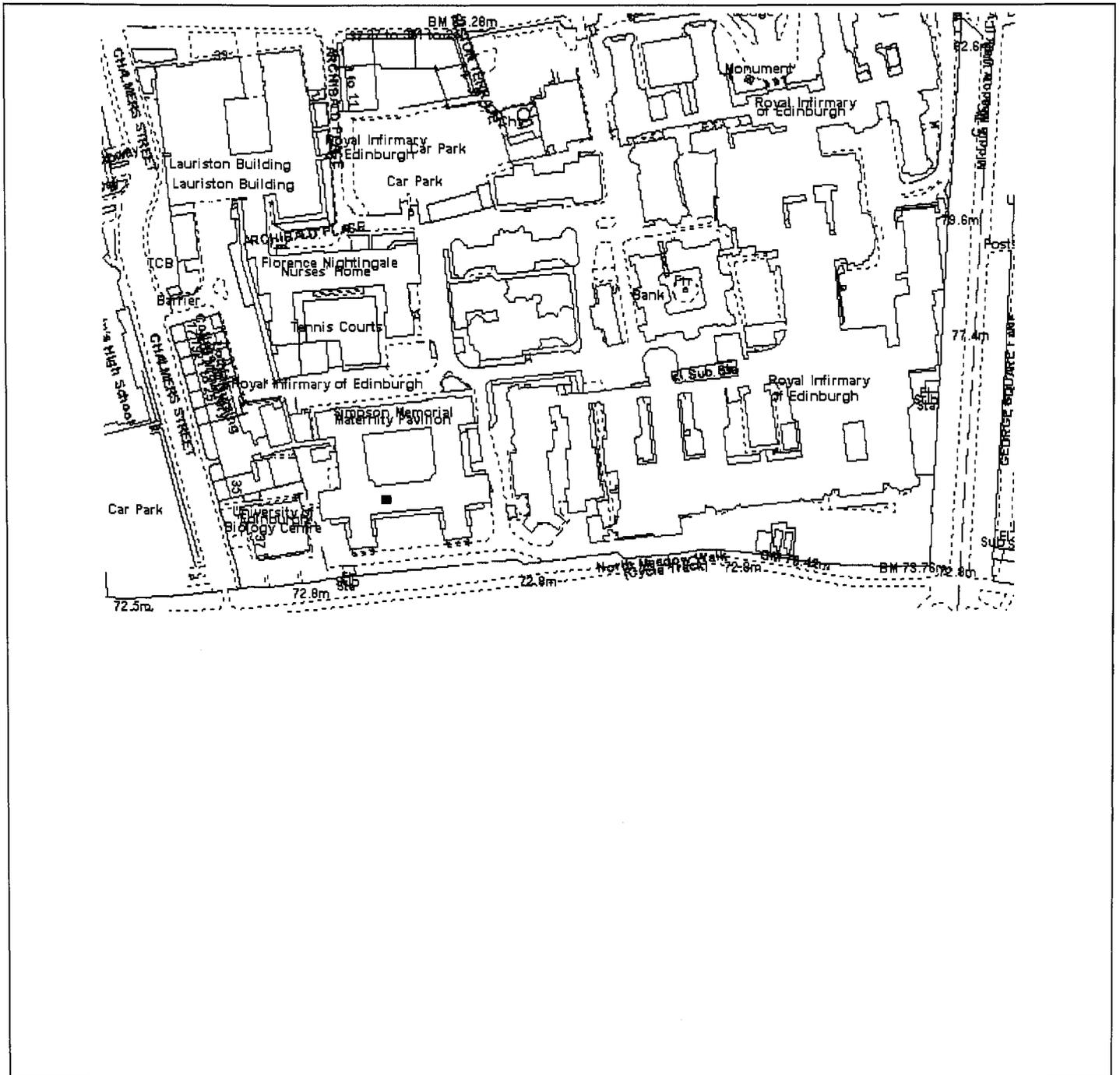
Local Plan Central Edinburgh Local Plan

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision** Mixed Activities Zone

File AF

Date registered 10 May 2002

**Drawing numbers/
Scheme** 7, 135-45 + 147-50
S1



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PLANNING APPLICATION

Address	Royal Infirmary		
Proposal	Demolition of Florence Nightingale Nurses Home		
Application number:	02/01668/LBC	WARD	32- Tollcross
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL			
THE CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT- PLANNING & STRATEGY			