

**Conservation Area Consent
at
Royal Infirmary
1 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9EE**

**Development Quality Sub-Committee
of the Planning Committee**

Proposal: Complete demolition of non-listed buildings and boundary walls + railings, and the removal of certain trees within Masterplan Boundary

Applicant: Southside Capital Ltd.

Reference No: 02/01663/CON

1 Purpose of report

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

Conditions

1. The development 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 ensure the appropriate interim treatment of the site pending ongoing demolitions and redevelopment, in the interests of the amenity of the Conservation Area and the Setting of retained listed buildings.

2 Main report

Site description

The site extends to approximately 8 hectares and is currently occupied by a broad mixture of hospital buildings, ranging from single storey to six storeys, several of which are listed.

Lauriston Place forms the northern boundary of the site, with an existing residential tenement block, owned by Lister Housing Association, projecting into the site. Chalmers Street forms the western boundary with St Thomas of Aquinas School and a short stay car park opposite. The Lauriston Building with its distinctive chimney occupies the south east corner of Chalmers Street and Lauriston Place and does not form part of the site. The Meadows wrap around the east and south of the site.

Full descriptions of the listed buildings within the site are contained in the relevant reports relating to each listed building. In addition, there are accretions to the listed buildings, which occupy a large proportion of the site. The modern centre for Reproductive Biology is a squat, square tower block, five storeys in height located at the south west extremity of the site at the foot of Chalmers Street. Abutting the Queen Mary Nursing Home is a continuous stone terrace of houses along the east side of Chalmers Street. There are also modern buildings in the centre of the site, towards the Lauriston Place frontage, the dermatology and venereal diseases building which is a five to six storey pavilion building in a traditional style, and the two to three storey boiler and laundry building. There is also the small-scale volunteer's cafe, which was built as an isolation ward, between the Red Home and the Sidney Mitchell buildings.

The character to the surrounding area is that of a transition zone. To the north, lies George Heriot's School with views beyond to the medieval Old Town. To the south lies an area of open parkland, with inner suburbs of Victorian tenemental streets beyond. To the east lies a designed Georgian Square, partially rebuilt in

the 1960s. To the west is an inner suburb of Victorian tenemental streets.

The site is in the Marchmont and Meadows Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site.

Site history

Whilst there is an extensive history of alterations to the fabric of the hospital itself, there is no history relevant to the determination of this application.

Development

The application involves the demolition of all unlisted buildings and accretions to listed buildings on the site.

The associated application, reference 02/01662/FUL, for the redevelopment of the site is considered under a separate report.

Consultations

No consultations were carried out specific to the demolition of the un-listed buildings within the site.

Representations

The application was advertised in June and November 2002 and was also the subject of several presentations by the developers.

Whilst there was a substantial body of objection to the redevelopment proposals, and to the alterations and demolitions of listed buildings, only The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust objected specifically to the demolition of any unlisted buildings within the site. Their specific concern related to the Chalmers Street buildings and walls and railings.

Policy

LOTHIAN STRUCTURE PLAN 1994

Policy ENV3A seeks to protect the character and appearance of high quality urban areas such as the World Heritage Site and Conservation Areas and requires Local Plans to include policies to maintain living and working activities, avoid alien and intrusive land uses and buildings and avoid excessive building densities and heights.

PLANNING BRIEF

In May 1998 the Planning Committee approved a planning brief for the site. In August 2000 an addendum, to take account of changing legislation and policy was approved.

The brief sought to ensure the re-integration of the site with the wider city, retain and re-use listed buildings in balance with best planning of the site, promote high

quality development with a mix of uses and housing tenures, develop an identifiable urban form of individual character which does not generate excessive traffic.

Uses should be primarily residential, with opportunities for academic or health uses hotel accommodation, small-scale commercial leisure uses offices and parking. A masterplan approach is encouraged.

CENTRAL EDINBURGH LOCAL PLAN

The site is in 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.

Relevant Policies:

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.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

DETERMINING ISSUES

The determining issues are:

- do the proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area? there being a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission of this is not the case;
- 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 these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether the loss of the unlisted buildings is acceptable in principle

There are no buildings that are of any architectural merit on the site. Indeed, the unlisted accretions that have been added to the site over the years have resulted in much of the spatial integrity of the original hospital layout being lost and their removal is supported. The Chalmers Street buildings, whilst of domestic scale and originally attractive, have been substantially altered over the years and their structure and architectural integrity is in doubt. Further, the character of Chalmers

Street, with the erection of the new St Thomas OF Aquin's School opposite, which also required the demolition of domestic designed buildings has changed. It is considered that a different approach is justified.

The walls and railings within and around the site are covered by the listing of the main hospital building and are dealt with under a separate application.

There are few trees within the site, it is the intention to comprehensively landscape the site to integrate with the Meadows and this approach is supported.

Normally, the demolition of buildings in a Conservation Area, without a contract for their redevelopment having been let first, would not be acceptable. In this instance, however, given the scale and complexity of the site and the desire to remove the unlisted accretions in particular, this is not considered necessary. Rather, a condition requires a phasing and landscaping proposal to be agreed to ensure the site condition is maintained to a high standard throughout the build programme.

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

Alan Henderson

Alan Henderson
Head of Planning and Strategy

Contact/tel Barbara Cummins on 0131 529 3996 (FAX 529 3717)

Ward affected 32 -Tollcross

Local Plan Central Edinburgh Local Plan

**Statutory Development
Plan Provision** Mixed Activities Zone

File

Date registered 10 May 2002

**Drawing numbers/
Scheme** Demolitions