

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 7 March 2018

Application for Conservation Area Consent 17/02229/CON At 2 Dewar Place, Edinburgh, EH3 8ED Complete demolition in a conservation area of electricity transformers and switch room building

Item number	7.5(C)
Report number	
Wards	B11 - City Centre

Summary

The demolition of these unlisted buildings is acceptable and complies with Historic Environment Scotland Policy, as well as the terms of policy Env 5 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan. Conditions are included requiring that the existing buildings and structures are recorded on site prior to their demolition and that archaeological investigations are undertaken and any relevant findings recorded, prior to the commencement of construction works.

Links

Policies and guidance for this application	LEN05, LDPP, LEN06, LEN09, NSGD02, NSLBCA, CRPWEN,
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Report

Application for Conservation Area Consent 17/02229/CON At 2 Dewar Place, Edinburgh, EH3 8ED Complete demolition in a conservation area of electricity transformers and switch room building

Recommendations

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

Background

2.1 Site description

The proposed development site, which covers an area of 1.24 hectares in total, lies to the south west of the city centre. The site slopes upwards from north to south, towards Morrison Street, on its Dewar Place frontage.

The site fronts on to the east side of Dewar Place and is flanked to the east by the West Approach Road. The 5 to 6 storey building at Conference House lies immediately south of the site and fronts on to Morrison Street. Existing office buildings, including Exchange Tower and Conference Exchange which front on to Canning Street are located to the north of the site.

The buildings included in this conservation area consent application are located within the northern section of this site, which is partially underlain by railway tunnels. The original workshop buildings which occupied this site were demolished as part of the works granted under the 2007 planning and listed building applications for the building of a podium above the listed electricity station building, to accommodate new development above (07/02421/FUL and LBC). The transformers and switch room remaining in this area were decommissioned as part of the new substation development.

The retained frontage of the electricity company's former headquarters building is located towards the southern end of the site and has a frontage onto Dewar Place. It is category 'B' listed (listed building reference 03/007/B) (listed 23 March 2001).

The boundary of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site lies to the north west of the application site.

This application site is located within the West End Conservation Area.

2.2 Site History

19 December 2006 - Planning permission for rear extension granted (06/04671/FUL).

26 January 2007 - Listed building consent for rear extension granted (06/04671/LBC).

30 May 2007 - Listed building consent granted for removing internal structure (07/01009/LBC).

30 May 2007 and 15 July 2007 - Planning permission and listed building consent granted for demolition of substation building, restoration of Dewar Place façade and construction of a replacement substation facility, podium deck and pavilion space (07/02421/FUL and 07/02421/LBC).

25 February 2010 - The principles of the Exchange 2 Masterplan for Dewar Place were approved by the Planning Committee.

19 May 2011 - Planning permission and listed building consent granted for amendments (including revised facade design and removal of roof top restaurant) to planning permission ref: 07/02421/FUL for construction of an electricity substation development. (11/01064/FUL and 11/01064/LBC).

09 March 2015 - Planning permission granted for reconfiguration of access and erection of external staircase and safety barrier (15/00354/FUL).

18 May 2017 - Planning Permission in principle submitted for hotel(s) (Class 7), office (Class 4), retail (Class 1), restaurant(s) (Class 3), pedestrian deck, bridge link and accesses from Western Approach Road, Dewar Place and Canning Street; detailed approval for siting, maximum height and limits of deviation of proposed buildings, partial demolition and refurbishment of façade of former electricity station. This application is currently under consideration (17/02227/PPP).

18 May 2017 - Application for listed building consent submitted for demolition of rear part of original electricity generating station, partial demolition, refurbishment and integration of retained façade into proposed hotel building. This application is currently under consideration (17/02228/LBC).

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of all Scottish Power Electricity Network buildings and structures, including disused transformer equipment, on the northern part of the site subject to the planning application in principle, for a proposed mixed use development with related infrastructure, including access routes and other works (application 17/02227/PPP). The only structures which would be retained on this part of the site are the ventilation shaft over the rail network tunnels and the boundary wall.

The works are proposed in order to make way for the proposed development described on the report on application 17/02227/PPP.

3.2 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 consent.

3.3 Assessment

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

- a) Demolition is acceptable with regard to the Scottish Historic Environment Policy;
- b) Demolition is acceptable with regard to local planning policy;
- c) Equalities and Rights have been addressed; and
- d) Representations have been addressed.

a) Demolition and the Historic Environment Scotland Policy

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement states that:

The demolition of even a single building and the construction of a new building or buildings in its place could result in harm to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or part of it. In deciding whether conservation area consent should be granted, planning authorities should therefore take account of the importance of the building to the character or appearance of any part of the conservation area, and of proposals for the future of the cleared site. If the building is considered to be of any value, either in itself or as part of a group, a positive attempt should always be made by the planning authority to achieve its retention, restoration and sympathetic conversion to some other compatible use before proposals to demolish are seriously investigated. In some cases, demolition may be thought appropriate, for example, if the building is of little townscape value, if its structural condition rules out its retention at reasonable cost, or if its form or location makes its re-use extremely difficult.

The remaining ancillary buildings and plant on this site, which were installed or erected after 1946, do not constitute part of the category 'B' listed building at 2 Dewar Place and do not therefore require listed building consent for demolition.

As noted by Historic Environment Scotland, the colour and lighting scheme introduced by Scottish Power, in the mid 1990's was designed to enhance the appearance and visual interest of the electricity transformers, whilst their presence was required for operational reasons. However, this equipment is no longer required, as the remaining substation plant is all located within the lower floor level of the listed, former, electricity headquarters building. Although their role, as works of 'public art' is noted in the West End Conservation Character Appraisal, the redundant transformers and the related outbuildings, do not in themselves make a significant contribution to the character of the West End Conservation Area. In fact, the appraisal notes that:

'these electricity sub stations (of which this equipment forms part) do not provide activity and hence the streets have a feeling of emptiness.'

The unlisted buildings and structures do not make a positive contribution to the character of the West End Conservation Area and their removal, to make way for a new urban redevelopment scheme, was an integral part of the Exchange 2 Masterplan, the principles of which remain relevant to the current planning and related applications for this site.

The demolition of these unlisted buildings complies with Historic Environment Scotland Policy.

b) Demolition and local planning policy

Policy Env 5 - Conservation Areas - Demolition of Buildings of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan states:

Proposals for the demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area but which is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and after taking into account the considerations set out in Policy Env 2 above.

Proposals for the demolition of any building within a conservation area, whether listed or not, will not normally be permitted unless a detailed planning application is submitted for a replacement building which enhances or preserves the character of the area or, if acceptable, for the landscaping of the site. Conservation Area Consent will be subject to conditions or legal agreement to ensure that demolition does not begin until evidence has been given that contracts have been let for the approved replacement development.

The application for planning permission in principle (17/02227/PPP) which accompanies this application, provide details of the overall layout, massing, maximum heights, uses and pedestrian and vehicular routes through the wider PPP site. However, it does not include the detailed design proposals for this scheme, which would be subject to further applications for the approval of reserved matters.

A condition is included, requiring that the existing buildings and structures are recorded on site, prior to their demolition and that archaeological investigations are undertaken and any relevant findings recorded, in accordance with the advice of the City Archaeologist, prior to the commencement of construction works.

The demolition is acceptable in relation to policy Env 5 of the LDP, subject to the use of the above condition.

c) Equalities and Rights

There are no impacts on equalities or rights resulting from the proposed demolition.

d) Representations

Material Comments

- There are no material objections or comments in support made in relation to the proposed demolition of these buildings and structures.

Non-Material Comments

- Concerns regarding impacts of development during the construction phase of development - these matters are outwith the planning function and would be addressed under separate legislation.
- Request for condition requiring use of mitigation measures during construction phase - these matters would be controlled under separate legislation.

Conclusion

The unlisted buildings and structures do not make a positive contribution to the character of the West End Conservation Area and their removal, to make way for a new urban redevelopment scheme, was an integral part of the Exchange 2 Masterplan, the principles of which remain relevant to the current planning and related applications for this site.

The demolition of these unlisted buildings is acceptable and complies with Historic Environment Scotland Policy, as well as the terms of policy Env 5 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan. Conditions are included, requiring that the existing buildings and structures are recorded on site, prior to their demolition and that archaeological investigations are undertaken and any relevant findings recorded, prior to the commencement of construction works on site.

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

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Conditions:-

1. No demolition or development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (excavation, analysis and reporting) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. This scheme shall further include the recording and archiving of the existing electrical transformer equipment at the site, prior to its demolition.

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 programme of archaeological works and for the archiving and appropriate level of publication of the results lies with the applicant.

Reasons:-

1. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Financial impact

4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:

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 considered 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 is not subject to 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 15 August 2017.

Three representations were received from neighbouring business occupiers which covered both this application and the related application for planning permission in principle (PPP). However, the issues raised in these representations relate mainly to the redevelopment scheme proposed under the PPP application.

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**

Within the adopted Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) the site is located in the City Centre.

The application site is within the area included in the Exchange 2 Masterplan for Dewar Place (the principles of which were approved by Planning Committee on 25 February 2010).

The site is included within the West End Conservation Area.

Date registered

24 May 2017

Drawing numbers/Scheme

01a, 02a,03,

Scheme 1

David R. Leslie

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

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Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

LDP Policy Env 5 (Conservation Areas - Demolition of Buildings) sets out criteria for assessing proposals involving the demolition of buildings within a conservation area.

Relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.

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

LDP Policy Env 9 (Development of Sites of Archaeological Significance) sets out the circumstances in which development affecting sites of known or suspected archaeological significance will be permitted.

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.

The West End Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises that the area is characterised by mixed, residential commercial buildings. The central section of the conservation area is a major modern financial area consisting of modern offices. The Georgian and Victorian tenements within the area are mainly 4-6 storeys, and constructed of stone with pitched, slated roofs.

Appendix 1

Application for Conservation Area Consent 17/02229/CON At 2 Dewar Place, Edinburgh, EH3 8ED Complete demolition in a conservation area of electricity transformers and switch room building

Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland

Whilst we have no objection to redeveloping the site which is currently occupied by redundant Scottish Power electrical transformers, we would identify that due to its industrial townscape interest consideration is given to recording prior to demolition. In the mid-1990s, this part of Edinburgh's West End underwent significant re-development. Prominent within this area was this substantial Scottish Power substation which at the time performed a major role in distributing electricity to central Edinburgh and could not be relocated.

Scottish Power's response was to employ designers to explore how the visual quality of the plant could be improved. Simple interventions of landscape and colour transformed the machinery by day, and by night light celebrated it. It has become a well-known landmark within the local area, particularly visible when travelling along the West Approach Road by car.

For further information please contact our Threatened Buildings Survey Team on 0131 662 1456 or tbs@hes.scot.

City Archaeologist

Further to your consultation request I would like to make the following comments and recommendations concerning this application for planning permission for the complete demolition in a conservation area.

The site is occupied by the former late Victorian (1898) municipal electrical station for Edinburgh. This regionally important industrial heritage site (surviving façade and office buildings are both B-listed) lies adjacent to the western limits of Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage site and overlying the line of the 1840's mainline railway tunnels between Haymarket & Waverley. The earliest evidence for occupation/use of the site lies in the 12th century when it formed part of the King's Garden. It is recorded as Orchard Field in the 14th century and is likely to have remained open agricultural land until the 18th century when the area was gradually subsumed by the expansion of Edinburgh.

Accordingly, this site has been identified as occurring within an area of archaeological significance. This application must be considered therefore under terms the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) 2016, Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), PAN 02/2011 and Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) Policies ENV2, ENV 4 and ENV9. 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.

Listed Electrical Station Buildings

As stated in my response to the associated application 17/02227/PPP it is welcomed that the surviving B-listed façade and Office block for the Victorian Central Electrical Lighting Station will be largely retained and incorporated. It is essential that the developer submit a mitigation strategy that will state how this will be achieved during demolition works and subsequent development.

Buried Archaeology

Although the site has been affected by modern development, most noticeably the construction of the Electrical works. Demolition and development works could disturb significant remains relating to the development of site from the medieval period and relating to the site's 18-19th century industrial heritage.

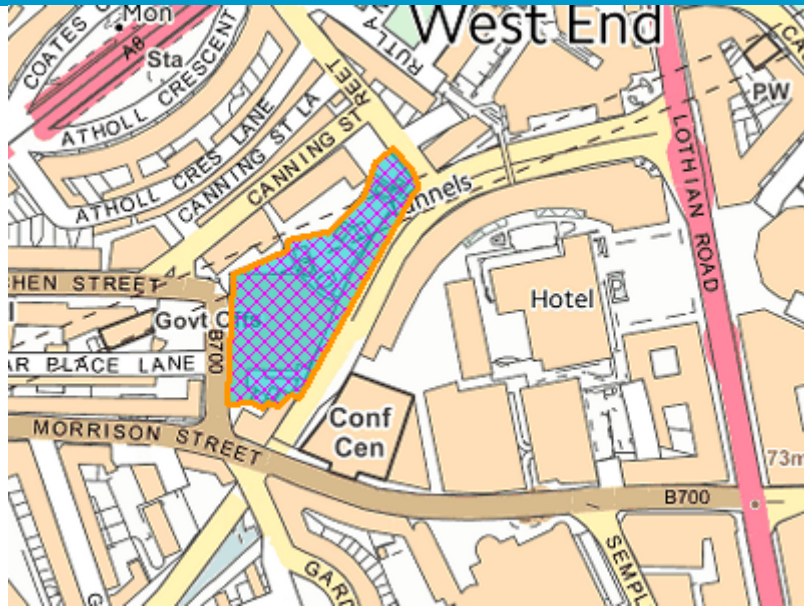
It is recommended therefore that a suitable programme of archaeological work is undertaken during demolition and development to fully record, excavate analysis and report upon any significant archaeological remains that may be disturbed by ground breaking works.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the following condition be attached consent, if granted, to ensure that this programme of archaeological works is undertaken either prior to or during construction.

'No demolition nor development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (excavation, analysis & reporting) 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 programme of archaeological works and for the archiving and appropriate level of publication of the results lies with the applicant.

Location Plan



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