

Development Management Sub Committee

Report returning to Committee - Wednesday 21 March 2018

Application for Planning Permission in Principle 17/02227/PPP

At 2 Dewar Place, Edinburgh, EH3 8ED

PPP for hotel(s) (Class 7), office (Class 4), retail (Class 1), restaurant(s) (Class 3), pedestrian deck, bridge link + accesses from Western Approach Road, Dewar Place + Canning Street; detailed approval for siting, maximum height & limits of deviation of proposed buildings, partial demolition,+ refurbishment of façade of former electricity station (as amended).

Item number	5.1(a)
Report number	
Wards	B11 - City Centre

Recommendations

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

Background information

At its meeting on 7 March 2018, Committee was minded to continue consideration of this matter for:

- 1) A site visit.
- 2) Discussions with the developer to amend the height of the development.
- 3) Further information on the possible widening of the pavement and the position of the taxi rank/pick up drop off point.

- 4) Further information on the massing of building.
- 5) To explore options for better access including proposals for the corner of building 01.
- 6) To explore access options for all members of the public to the podium.
- 7) The possible reduction of the height of the development and consideration of scale and massing and the relationship to the WHS.
- 8) External treatment of the ventilation units on the generating station.
- 9) Proposals to minimise roof clutter on the development.

Main report

Description of Proposal

This report addresses the amended upper floor proposals and the additional information provided by the applicant in relation to visual impact, access, and public realm works following the request from the Development Management Sub-Committee to consider these points further.

Assessment

This report sets out the response by the applicant to each of the points raised by the Development Management Sub-Committee's:

- 1) A site visit.

A committee site visit has been arranged for 19 March 2018.

- 2) Discussions with the developer to amend the height of the development.

The applicant has submitted an alternative plan for the upper floor of buildings 01 and 02 and revised supporting visual information.

Assessment - As outlined in the original report this application was revised during the application process to address concerns about the overall height. The Scheme 2 heights, as considered by the Development Management Sub-Committee on 7 March 2018, reduced the overall height of building at site 01 by 2.8m to 94.05m AOD. The height of building 02 was reduced to 94.15m AOD, as result of loss of original top storey level. A set back on all sides was introduced to building 02 at top floor level.

Further to the Development Management Sub-Committee meeting of 7 March 2018 the applicant has reconsidered the design of the upper floor and revised the extent of accommodation at the upper floor. The applicant has provided a revised visual assessment which demonstrates that the impact of the building has been reduced.

The building height on building 01 is 94.05m AOD and 94.15m AOD in building 02. The existing building height on the opposite side of the West Approach Road is generally 94.1m AOD in Exchange Crescent with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre rising to 97.3m AOD. The original development brief contains building heights extending to 97.5m AOD. Whilst the highest point of the proposed building is unchanged the development sits aligned or below the heights of the buildings to the south and therefore its impact on the long views from the west on Corstorphine Road is limited. The view from Edinburgh Castle demonstrates how the new build elements sit comfortably with the adjoining buildings heights and have a neutral impact on this long view.

The existing view from Walker Street illustrates how the existing Exchange Tower has a negative impact on the setting of the listed buildings within this part of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. The proposed development would be visible from this viewpoint. The Scheme 2 revisions significantly reduced the visibility of the new buildings from this viewpoint. The applicant has further considered the massing at the upper level to address the committees concerns about this visual impact. The revised plans and visual assessment demonstrate that the impact from this viewpoint is further reduced.

It is considered that the further reduction in massing, in conjunction with the recommended conditions requiring the detailed consideration of the upper floor at the AMC stage, will result in a development which reflects the heights and form of the surrounding townscape and has an overall neutral or positive impact on the wider townscape.

3) Further information on the possible widening of the pavement and the position of the taxi rank/pick up drop off point.

The applicant has provided additional indicative information in relation to footway widening and taxi operations on Torphichen Street.

The existing road on Torphichen Street comprises a three lane wide one-way street. This supporting information shows how the existing street could be reconfigured to provide an enhanced pedestrian space on both sides of the street with two lanes retained for vehicular movement. The footway widening outside the listed building could be in excess of 5m in width with the capacity to accommodate pedestrian and cycle movement. The illustrative plans shown how the bus stop could be incorporated on the realigned footway and provide ample space for taxi drop off and pick up outside the hotel. The information also illustrates a reconfigured vehicular junction to Canning Street to provide a better pedestrian crossing as an extension of the new east/west pedestrian/cycle route through the site. A new pedestrian crossing is shown on Torphichen Street to the west of Canning Street. The final configuration of these improvements will be considered under condition 2e).

4) Further information on the massing of building.

This is assessed as part of the consideration of item 2, above.

5) To explore options for better access including proposals for the corner of building 01.

The proposal incorporates a new east/west pedestrian/cycle route through the site. This route is generally 3m in width but is constrained by the corner of the existing generating building which is located 1.8m off the existing boundary wall to the neighbouring office building. The generating building is a relatively new purpose built facility and there is no capacity to remove a section of the existing operational building to widen the new public access.

The applicant submitted supporting information to demonstrate how the proposed pedestrian/cycle route could be enhanced and widened if this wall and the adjoining surface car parking were to be removed. This land lies outwith the control of the applicant. While this width of new route is not ideal, the narrowing only extends over a short section of the route and on balance is considered to be preferred to not delivering a public route.

6) To explore access options for all members of the public to the podium.

The proposal presented to committee on 7 March 2018 set out the requirement for one DDA accessible lift. The applicants' supporting information includes the provision of two lifts to provide access from Torphichen Street to the new podium, leading on to the new bridge and through to Conference Square.

The applicant has also submitted a drawing which illustrates the length of ramp and landings required to deal with the change in level across the site. The location of any potential ramp is constrained by the location of the existing structure containing the generating station. The supporting information demonstrates that the provision of these extensive ramps would result in unattractive route and series of spaces for all users. It is also noted that there is a DDA compliant route over the new bridge to the deck from Conference Square.

It is recommended that the informative be amended to include the provision of two DDA accessible lifts off Torphichen Street.

7) The possible reduction of the height of the development and consideration of scale and massing and the relationship to the WHS.

This is assessed as part of the consideration of item 2, above.

8) External treatment of the ventilation units on the generating station.

The design of these elements would be considered through the submission of additional details at the AMC stage. For the purpose of clarification it is recommended that condition 2c be amend to include additional text specific to these works. The recommended amended condition 2c shall read "Design and external appearance of all buildings, including external features, ventilation units to the generating station, visual containment of all rooftop plant and other structures".

9) Proposals to minimise roof clutter on the development

The applicant has submitted supporting information demonstrating that plant will primarily be located with the main building envelope. To ensure that any roof plant is carefully considered at the AMC stage it is recommended that condition 2c be amend to include additional text specific to these works. The recommended amended condition 2c shall read "Design and external appearance of all buildings, including external features, ventilation units to the generating station, visual containment of all rooftop plant and other structures".

Recommendation

The proposed development would allow for the regeneration of this currently underutilised and constrained city centre site. The proposal is consider acceptable for the reasons set out in the report of 7 March 2018. The further revised proposals and additional supporting information accord with the Development Plan.

It is recommended that this application be Minded to Grant - Legal Agreement, subject to the original conditions and informatives contained within the report of 7 March 2018 and the amended condition, informative and drawings listed below.

Amended condition:

2c) Design and external appearance of all buildings, including external features, ventilation units to the generating station, visual containment of all rooftop plant and other structures.

Amended informative:

6. iii) The installation of two lifts, or other appropriate form of DDA compliant vertical access facility, providing access to the podium level at building 01, in compliance with the requirements of condition number 3 of this consent, together with a schedule detailing the agreed hours of operation of the proposed lift and the contingency plans for when the lift is out of operation. The respective lift or other appropriate access facility to be installed prior to the occupation of any part of the building at site 01 and maintained in operational use thereafter for use by the public.

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.

Amended approved drawings:

01a- 03a, 04c-10c, 11d, 14c, 15b, 16c-19c, 20b, 21c, 22- 24, 26c, 27, 28a, 29a, 30b, 31,

Links

Policies and guidance for this application

LDPP, LDEL02, LDES01, LDES02, LDES03, LDES04, LDES05, LDES06, LDES07, LDES08, LDES11, LEMP01, LEMP10, LEN01, LEN02, LEN03, LEN04, LEN05, LEN06, LEN07, LEN16, LEN20, LEN21, LEN22, LRET01, LRET02, LRET07, LTRA01, LTRA02, LTRA08, LDEL01, NSG, NSGD02, NSESBB, NSGSTR, NSDCAH, NSLBCA, NSMDV, CRPNEW, CRPWEN,

A copy of the original Committee report can be found in the list of documents at

<https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OQ4YYAEWL6O00>

Or Council Papers online

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