

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 8 May 2019

**Application for Listed Building Consent 19/00573/LBC
At 146 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BL
Internal and external alterations to enable change of use
from retail to whisky-themed visitor experience with
ancillary retail, bars, offices, training and event space,
including roof-top extension.**

Item number	7.1(b)
Report number	
Wards	B11 - City Centre

Summary

The proposals have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses and are acceptable.

Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#) LDPP, LEN04, LEN06, NSG, NSLBCA, CRPNEW,

Report

Application for Listed Building Consent 19/00573/LBC At 146 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BL Internal and external alterations to enable change of use from retail to whisky-themed visitor experience with ancillary retail, bars, offices, training and event space, including roof- top extension.

Recommendations

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

Background

2.1 Site description

The application relates to the former Fraser's department store, occupying two adjoining buildings at the north-west corner of Princes Street at its confluence with Hope Street, Lothian Road and Shandwick Place. The building is within the World Heritage Site.

Nos. 144-147 Princes Street is the six storey and basement, inter-war classical style, former Binns department store by J R MacKay, dating from 1935. The building is constructed in ashlar sandstone with a canted corner featuring a cantilevered clock at second floor level and bronze-finished steel-framed casement windows. The ground floor shopfront is modern with a polished black marble fascia. The building is category B listed (reference 43328, listed on 28 March 1996).

The vacant department store incorporates a former bank of similar style and height at No. 3 Hope Street with a return to Hope Street Lane by Sydney H Miller, dating from 1930. The windows are bronze-finished steel-framed casement and the roof is pend and platform with a copper external pitch. The building is category B listed (reference 43307, listed on 28 March 1996).

The current building replaced older constructions which were developed from the original late 18th century tenements of the First New Town. In 1873, these tenements were altered significantly and converted into a hotel with shops at street level. This hotel subsequently became Maule's department store which was taken over by Binns in 1935. At this point a significant section of the frontage was demolished and rebuilt by J R McKay.

The interior was modernised throughout in the mid-1970s for retail use, including new stairs and lifts. In the early 1980s, the north-east corner of the building, formerly the warehouse, was entirely demolished and to incorporate escalators.

Elements of the bank telling hall, including columns and a coffered ceiling, survive within No. 3 Hope Street and there are remnants of 1930s and earlier cornicing throughout the building above later suspended ceilings.

The surrounding area is in mixed, predominantly commercial, use including shops, offices, hotels, restaurants and bars.

This application site is located within the New Town Conservation Area.

2.2 Site History

Associated application for planning permission under consideration (application reference 19/00574/FUL).

22 August 2002 - planning permission granted to install cooling plant/pipework on roof of building (application reference 02/01100/LBC).

9 July 2002 - listed building consent granted to install cooling plant/pipework on roof of building (application reference 02/01100/LBC).

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The application is for external and internal alterations to form a whisky-themed visitor experience with ancillary uses comprising retail on the ground floor, a training academy, office and double-height event space on the fourth floor, staff offices and back of house spaces on the fifth floor and two bars at sixth floor level. The main exhibit spaces will be on the first, second, third and basement floors.

The proposed alterations are summarised as follows:

External Alterations

- remove the existing roof plant and associated enclosures, gantries and louvred perimeter screen, remove the inner roof pitch on the Hope Street/Hope Street Lane elevations and one chimney;
- erect a partially set back sixth floor comprising a contemporary style, bronze-finished, metal-clad framing bar with glazed frontages leading to an open stone-paved terrace facing Princes Street and Hope Street; a bronze finished mesh-clad plant room behind this structure; a copper-clad hipped roof behind the existing outer copper roof pitches; and a flat sedum roof with a zinc pitched edge over the remaining area of the roof covering a second bar and associated facilities;
- form a contemporary style, copper-framed dormer window in the existing copper roof pitch to the Hope Street Lane elevation;

- remove the modern shopfront glazing and framing, fabric canopies and entrance doors from the Princes Street/Hope Street shopfront, retaining the surviving original bronze frames and restore the ground floor frontage to its original form and detailing in matching materials, including the recessed entrance doors and bronze-faced canopy above the main entrance on Princes Street;
- replace the modern entrance doors to the former bank building on Hope Street with a bronze door to match the original scale and design;
- replace the existing blockwork screen to the plant shaft on Hope Street Lane with a perforated bronze finished metal screen with a metal roller shutter door to a new goods entrance at ground floor level;
- remove the modern staff doors in the stairwell bay adjoining the plant shaft on Hope Street Lane and install a timber-boarded panel with staff doors;
- remove all the existing single glazing from the existing bronze-finished steel framed windows and install slimline double glazing in the existing frames; and
- replace the existing timber doors and infill panels on the decorative section of the Hope Street Lane elevation with bronze panelled doors to match the original pattern.

Internal Alterations

- remove the existing escalators and two passenger lifts and install a new central stair and lift in the same location rising vertically providing access to all floors including the new rooftop extension;
- restore the original bank telling hall to its original condition, including the decorative column capitals and ceiling bosses, as the welcome space for visitors;
- retain and restore the surviving parts of the stone bank vault in the basement of the former bank building; and
- form a double height space for event use between the fourth and fifth floors.

Supporting Documents

The following key documents have been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the Planning and Building Standards Online Services:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Heritage Statement;
- Conservation Plan; and

- Visual Impact Assessment.

3.2 Determining Issues

Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states - In considering whether to grant consent, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. 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.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states - special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

In determining applications for listed building consent, the Development Plan is not a statutory test. However the policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP) inform the assessment of the proposals and are a material consideration.

3.3 Assessment

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

- a) the proposals preserve the character of the listed buildings;
- b) the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c) any impacts on equalities or human rights are acceptable; and
- d) public comments have been addressed.

a) Character of Listed Building

External Alterations

The external appearance of the former Art Deco department store frontage and bank building is to remain as existing to a large extent and exterior works are to be undertaken to restore the Princes Street and Hope Street facades to their original primacy date, involving the repair and reinstatement of original features.

Alterations to the building were carried out in the late twentieth century that have had a 'negative' or 'neutral' impact on the building, as identified in the Conservation Plan, including new services and plant. These elements will be removed and replaced with more appropriate interventions.

The most significant of these interventions is the proposed rooftop extension comprising a series of individual structures tailored to complement the original roof elements and proposed functions. The existing roof is covered with plant equipment, including condensers, associated pipework, access gantries and a metal louvred screen along the parapet edge on Princes Street. The removal of these insensitive features and addition of high-quality, contemporary style rooftop extensions in appropriate traditional materials will rationalise and enhance the appearance of the roof. The most significant section of the roof - the copper outer pitch to Hope Street and Hope Street Lane - will be retained and the roof fabric to be removed is utilitarian and of no special historic or architectural merit. The chimney to be removed is later and in an inner position on the roof, so the removal of the structure will have no impact on the composition of the principal elevations.

The proposed bronze-framed rooftop bar facing Princes Street is a striking piece of contemporary architecture, the openings of which align with the bays of the principal facades. The structure will be set back from the building edges to reduce its visual impact and the proposed perimeter planter, required for public safety, will replace the existing unsightly louvred screen.

The other proposed rooftop structures employ a limited palette of robust, low maintenance cladding and roofing materials which relate to and complement the existing elevations and roof.

The proposed hipped roof structure over the bank building will match the copper finish of the historic external pitch to Hope Street and the new roof will sit behind the existing ridge to reduce the visual impact on the original roof. This roof originally extended further along the north elevation and part of this section was removed previously, so the new roof structure will provide a more unified north elevation. The proposed contemporary style dormer window in the remaining original section of copper roof on the Hope Street Lane elevation is an acceptable intervention to provide a viewing window for the new bar within this space without disrupting the principal elevation on Hope Street.

The remainder of the rear and inner side roof pitches will be of zinc-clad which is an appropriate material in this context and the sedum top surface requires a very low pitch which assists in keeping the roof height to a minimum.

The proposed plant housing structure is semi-sunk and finished in bronze-finished mesh to blend in with the new bar extension on the Princes Street elevation.

The Visual Impact Assessment which analysis the existing and proposed roofscape from key verified viewpoints demonstrates that the impact of the new roof extensions will be minimal. This intervention is also offset by significant conservation gain elsewhere in the building. Any other proposed rooftop extensions in Princes Street will be assessed on their own merit and in context.

The key conservation gain is the removal of the modern shopfront glazing and framing and fabric canopies and restoration of the original bronze-framed shopfront, including the removal of the later corner entry doors and reinstatement of main entrance doors in the original position along with an entrance canopy to replicate the original design and materials. The details have been based on existing detailing and historic evidence in the form of drawings and photographs. The restored shopfront will be complemented by new black-finished steel security gates, the design of which is based on photographic evidence of the original balustrades within the millinery department of Binn's department store, and decorative mosaic-tiled entranceways.

A further conservation gain is the replacement of the modern entrance doors to the former bank building on Hope Street and Hope Street Lane bronze doors to match the original scale and pattern.

Another positive intervention is the removal of the utilitarian blockwork screen to the plant shaft on Hope Street Lane and replacement with a bronze-finished metal screen which will match the existing and new copper roof pitches on the north elevation.

Elsewhere, the scheme involves the repair/restoration of other significant elements of the listed building, including the Binns' cantilevered clock on the Princes Street/Hope Street corner and the original steel windows.

Internal Alterations

The proposed internal alterations have been designed to be sympathetic to the original design of the building and its current configuration in order to limit the amount of alteration to the building whilst providing a viable new use. The majority of alterations are confined to areas which are less historically significant or in substantially altered areas, such as the 1980's north-east corner.

All elements of 'negative' significance, including escalators and lifts, the metal stair between the ground and basement floors, draught lobbies, modern partitions and exposed and suspended services will be removed and either replaced with more appropriate interventions or the affected areas will be restored to the original historic detailing. Modern linings will be removed from columns and walls and missing sections of cornicing will be reinstated. The original decorative plaster in the four corners of Maule's office survive and the original floor plan of this room will be acknowledged physically in a modern display.

Other elements of conservation gain include the restoration of the surviving parts of the stone bank vault as a store and exhibition space.

The only significant floorplate breach is to form the double height event space spanning the fourth and fifth floors and this will only affect plainly detailed fabric. The most extensive partitioning will be at fifth floor level to form back of house and support spaces. This floor has the least important architectural features, where any exist.

No significant architectural spaces will be partitioned and any new walls will avoid cutting across any original cornicework.

Historic Environment Scotland are supportive of the scheme on the basis that it will provide a meaningful re-use of this important listed building without causing any significant harm to its special interest.

The proposals therefore have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and the special features of historic and architectural interest that it possesses.

b) Character and Appearance of Conservation Area

LDP Policy Env 6 permits development within a conservation area which preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the conservation area and is consistent with the relevant conservation area character appraisal.

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the key characteristics of the First New Town as:

- *Georgian and early Victorian rectilinear development of grand formal streets lined by fine terraced building expressing neo-classical order, regularity, symmetry, rigid geometry, and a hierarchical arrangement of buildings and spaces with controlled vistas and planned views; and*
- *the important feature of terminated vistas within the grid layouts and the long-distance views across and out of the conservation area.*

The external alterations proposed will not alter the essential hierarchical urban plan form of the First New Town nor interfere with its important vistas and views. The scale, form, design and materials of the proposed rooftop extensions are in keeping with the geometric forms of the historic and later roof structures within the First New Town.

The character and appearance of the west end of Princes Street will be enhanced by bringing this important category B listed building back into a sustainable and viable use. The associated extensions and external alterations are sensitive to the historic environment and involve a significant degree of conservation gain.

The proposals will therefore preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, in compliance with LDP Policy Env 6.

c) Equalities and Human Rights

The development respects the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 by including accessible access throughout the building.

d) Public Comments

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland welcomes the constructive re-use of the building and sympathetic approach adopted and is mainly concerned about the visual impact of the rooftop extension and potential of the new window on the north elevation to detract from the roofline as viewed from the south or east. These concerns have been addressed in section 3.3 a).

The supporting comments relate mainly to the associated application for planning permission (reference 19/00574/FUL).

Conclusion

The proposals have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses and are acceptable.

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

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Conditions:-

1. A detailed specification, including trade names where appropriate, of all the proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site; Note: samples of the materials may be required.

Reasons:-

1. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. The works 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:

There are no financial implications to the Council.

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:

This application was assessed in terms of equalities and human rights. The impacts are identified in the Assessment section of the main report.

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 22 February 2019. A total of four representations were received, comprising one general comment from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and three supporting comments.

A full assessment of the representations can be found in the main report in the Assessment Section.

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

The site is located within the City Centre as defined in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan.

Date registered

8 February 2019

Drawing numbers/Scheme

01 - 59,

Scheme 1

David R. Leslie

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

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Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:

Relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.

LDP Policy Env 4 (Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions) identifies the circumstances in which alterations and extensions to listed buildings will be permitted.

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

Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines

Non-statutory guidelines 'LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS' provides guidance on repairing, altering or extending listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that the area is typified by the formal plan layout, spacious stone built terraces, broad streets and an overall classical elegance. The buildings are of a generally consistent three storey and basement scale, with some four storey corner and central pavilions.

Appendix 1

Application for Listed Building Consent 19/00573/LBC At 146 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BL Internal and external alterations to enable change of use from retail to whisky-themed visitor experience with ancillary retail, bars, offices, training and event space, including roof- top extension.

Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland

The proposal under consideration concerns the conversion and alteration of 146 Princes Street into a whisky-themed visitor experience with ancillary services. This corner building, listed at Category B, was constructed in two main phases - The Royal Bank of Scotland (Hope Street) in the 1920s and a new frontage for Binns Department Store (Hope Street and Princes Street) in the 1930s.

The accompanying Conservation Plan provides an in-depth narrative on the history of the building and assesses its significance, as a whole and its component parts. We agree with its assessment of significance.

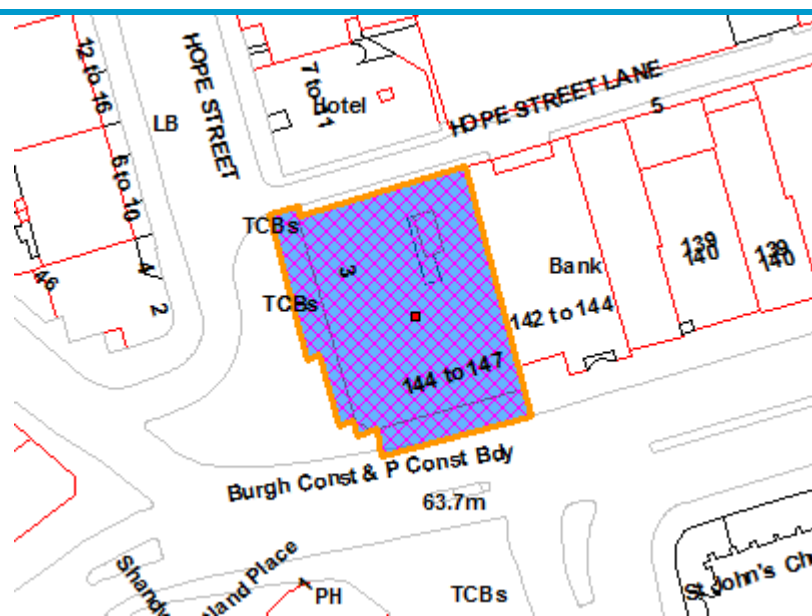
We can also see how the detailed proposals have taken into consideration the significance of the building. A scheme of this ambition, which would see the comprehensive adaptation of the listed building, will inevitably result in a range of impacts, both positive and adverse in nature. In this case, we do not anticipate any significant impacts on the special interest of the listed building. We welcome that a more conservation-based approach would be taken to the handling of the former bank telling hall, which we consider to be the most important internal space. We also consider the shopfront proposals will bring about conservation gain - with the removal of the modern Dutch canopies and reinstatement of a single traditional canopy over the Princes Street entrance (to closely match the original design), reinstatement of the Hope Street entrance and removal of the later corner entrance.

The more significant changes, arguably, are focused on the rooftop alterations and extension, which will impact on certain views towards the listed building. Where the extension would be most visible, i.e. from the east along Princes Street, we consider these views to be less important. In contrast, where we consider the views to be more important, i.e. in close-up views of the building from the south and west, the extension will be less visible, and is unlikely to represent a major visual departure from the existing arrangement, which includes louvers atop the southern parapet.

In summary, we are supportive of this scheme as it would provide a meaningful reuse of an important listed building without causing any significant harm to its special interest.

Planning authorities are expected to treat our comments as a material consideration, and this advice should be taken into account in your decision making. Our view is that the proposals do not raise historic environment issues of national significance and therefore we do not object. However, our decision not to object should not be taken as our support for the proposals. This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy on listed building/conservation area consent, together with related policy guidance.

Location Plan



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