

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 28 August 2019

**Application for Listed Building Consent 19/02319/LBC
At 329 High Street, Edinburgh,
Alterations to front and rear elevations to form new door
and altered window openings, alterations at roof level to
form new and realigned roof lights and plant enclosure and
internal alterations (as amended).**

Item number

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, CRPOLD,

Report

Application for Listed Building Consent 19/02319/LBC At 329 High Street, Edinburgh, Alterations to front and rear elevations to form new door and altered window openings, alterations at roof level to form new and realigned roof lights and plant enclosure and internal alterations (as amended).

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 west wing of the City Chambers on the north side of the High Street, backing onto Roxburgh's Court. The City Chambers by John Adam and John Fergus, dates from 1754-61 with significant alterations and additions by David Cousin in the 1850s and Robert Morham in 1898-1904.

The east and west wings to the High street were built by Ebenezer MacRae in the 1930s and involved the demolition of flanking tenements. These wings are four storey, attic and basement, sandstone structures. The west wing is currently vacant and was last in office use.

The City Chambers is category A listed (listed on 14 December 1970, reference LB17597) and within the World Heritage Site.

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

2.2 Site History

6 February 1995 - listed building consent granted for alterations to entrance area (application reference 94/00074/CEC).

16 February 1995 - planning permission granted to form access ramp and steps. application reference 94/00056/CEC).

5 May 2017 - planning permission granted to alter internal floor plan to create separation of building at no. 329 High Street from rest of City Chambers and form new circulation and protected lobbies within existing corridors and office areas (application reference 17/01217/LBC).

Main report

3.1 Description Of The Proposal

The application is for external and internal alterations to convert the building from offices to retail and café/restaurant uses at ground, basement and mezzanine level, with 24 serviced apartments above.

The proposed external alterations are summarised as follows:

- remove the cills of two existing ground floor windows on the front (south) elevation - the window with side lights and a fanlight to the west of the main entrance and the single window adjacent to Writers' Court entrance and install timber-framed glazed double doors with solid panelled bases;
- lower the cill and raise the lintol height of the existing basement window on the rear (north) elevation facing Warriston's Close and install a new glazed screen and increase the lintol height of the adjacent door;
- lower the cills of the existing basement windows on the rear elevation facing Roxburgh's Court, install louvres in the upper sections and re-install the existing sash and case windows at the lower level;
- remove a section of the slate mansard roof on the west side of the building, install new plant within this area and erect plastic powder-coated louvred screens;
- remove/modify the existing rooflights on the north and south elevations and install new matching rooflights;
- fix new external lights to either side of the west entrance and between second and first floor levels on the High Street facade;
- install a dry riser inlet box to the west of the main entrance.
- The proposed internal alterations are summarised as follows:
 - remove existing partitions in the basement to create an open space with a new stair between basement, ground and ground floor mezzanine level and erect new partitions to form a plant room and back of house facilities;
 - remove existing partitions at ground floor and ground floor mezzanine level to form a reception area and open spaces;
 - re-arrange the existing partitions at first floor to third floor levels to form apartments;
 - extend the lift shaft to third floor attic level to access a new mezzanine floor.

Scheme 1

The original scheme proposed fully glazed doors in the altered window openings on the High Street elevation and signage above the entrance doors.

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 Statement.

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 building
- b) the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; and
- c) public comments have been addressed.

a) Character of Listed Building

The east and west wings of the City Chambers are interesting inter-war interpretations of the original circa 1750 building and its 19th alterations with classical Neo-Georgian style composition rear elevations.

The proposed external alterations will have no significant impact on the overall architectural composition.

The proposed new doorways on the front elevation onto the High Street are to provide DDA compliant access and fire escape from the proposed retail and café/restaurant units. Historic Environment Scotland has no objection to these new doorways in principle, subject to careful detailing of the stonework, but request that the doors are traditionally detailed rather than fully glazed. The proposed doors have been modified in the revised scheme to an appropriate traditional style with solid panelled bases matching the original cill height. A condition has been attached to ensure that the detailing of the doors and stonework is appropriate.

Ventilation is required at basement level and the least visually intrusive way to achieve this is through ventilation louvres in the windows to Roxburgh's Court. These windows are relatively high level as existing and the proposed lowering of the cills to allow re-use of the existing windows will preserve an appropriate ratio of solid to void. The colour of the louvres has been conditioned to ensure that it is a close match to the existing stonework.

The proposed conversion of the existing squat window opening facing Warriston's Close to a door and extension of the existing door height are acceptable alterations to maximise views down the close and over the city beyond. The proposed fully glazed screen and door are appropriate contemporary style interventions in this relatively inconspicuous part of the building.

The removal of a section of the slate mansard roof on the west side of the building is an appropriate means of accommodating new plant within this area, given that the alteration will not be conspicuous from public viewpoints in its location between two large chimney stacks. The proposed louvred screens will conceal any plant that is not hidden by the existing roof structure.

The proposed reorganisation of rooflights on all elevations is acceptable on the basis that the new rooflights are similar in number, scale and style as the existing. As requested by Historic Environment Scotland, any individual rooflights have been centred on the windows below to as near an extent as possible without unnecessary disruption to the original roof fabric.

The other proposed external alterations are minor, including lighting installations. The proposed lights are minimal in number and scale and a condition has been applied to ensure that the fittings are appropriate.

Internally, the original floor plan is functional and has been altered. There are no significant architectural spaces or features, with the exception of the main stair and stairwell which will remain intact. Original doors will be re-used where possible and any interesting original internal finishes, e.g. panelling and doors, will be recorded.

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 Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the key characteristics of the Old Town as including:

- *the survival of the little altered medieval 'herringbone' street pattern of narrow close, wynds and courts leading off the spine formed by the Royal Mile;*
- *important early public buildings such as the Canongate Tolbooth and St Giles Cathedral; and*
- *the quality and massing of stonework.*

The proposed external alterations will not affect the medieval street pattern nor the essential architectural composition or integrity of the building.

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

c) Public Comments

No comments have been received.

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

Condition:-

1. A historic building survey (photographic and written) of any original internal architectural features shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.
2. Details of new doors hereby approved on the High Street elevation, including the alterations to the flanking stonework, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.
3. The louvres hereby approved on the Roxburgh Court elevation shall be coloured to match the surrounding stonework.
4. Details of the external light fittings hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work is commenced on site.

Reasons:-

1. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
4. 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:

The application has been assessed 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 24 May 2019. No comments were received.

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

14 May 2019

Drawing numbers/Scheme

01-08, 09A, 10A, 11-14, 15A, 16, 17, 18A, 19A + 20-23,

Scheme 2

David R. Leslie

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

Contact: Clare Macdonald, Senior Planning Officer

E-mail: clare.macdonald@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel: 0131 529 6121

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 Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises the survival of the original medieval street pattern; the wealth of important landmark buildings; the survival of an outstanding collection of archaeological remains, medieval buildings, and 17th-century town houses; the consistent and harmonious height and mass of buildings; the importance of stone as a construction material for both buildings and the public realm; the vitality and variety of different uses; and the continuing presence of a residential community

Appendix 1

Application for Listed Building Consent 19/02319/LBC At 329 High Street, Edinburgh, Alterations to front and rear elevations to form new door and altered window openings, alterations at roof level to form new and realigned roof lights and plant enclosure and internal alterations (as amended).

Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland

The works are proposed for the western wing of the Category A listed City Chambers. Both the western and eastern wings were added by City Architect, E.J. MacRae in the early 1930s. The added wings are an interesting inter-war interpretation of both the original c1750 building and its C19th alterations, with the western wing replicating the general form and design of the original City Chambers' western wing.

The rear elevation of the western wing is a classical Neo-Georgian composition, matched on the rear of the eastern wing. Whilst, the interiors of these wings are rarely of great architectural interest, we would recommend any internal finishes e.g. panelling, doors etc. are retained or at least recorded.

As before, the main issues for HES will be the proposed new doorways on the High Street and the proposed roof alterations on the front and rear elevations.

New doors

We have no objection to new doorways being opened onto the High Street, subject to the careful detailing of stonework. We would suggest, however, that the new doors are detailed traditionally, either panelled, with upper panels glazed if required, or ideally, glazed internal doors fronted by solid timber storm doors, to match the adjacent Mary King's Close High St entrance. These could be conditioned.

Care should be taken with the positioning of uplighters (shown on drawings on the architrave of the adjacent door).

Rooflights

We would also have no objection to the reorganisation of rooflights on the front elevation to the High Street, and the side hipped roofs. We welcome the change to use rooflights on the rear elevation, rather than horizontal box dormers, which would have been harmful. As before, MacRae's facades are polite and Neo-Georgian, obviously designed to be visible, and with a surprisingly fine architectural treatment, including a pediment and partial balustrade parapet centred on the openings below. Although rooflights will

have less impact, we would still recommend that individual rooflights are symmetrically centred on the windows below.

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.

Archaeology

This A-listed former council office was designed by E J Macrae and constructed in the early 1930s and formed part of the larger City Chambers. It replaced earlier 17th/18th century tenements, the remains of the western most still survive over Roxburgh's Close and for the western side of this building. The Eastern side of the building is formed by an earlier 18th century wing of the City Chambers. The building is also situated at the heart of Edinburgh's medieval Old Town's UNESCO World Heritage site occurring opposite the 12th century St Giles Cathedral. The site therefore occupies the site of several medieval burgage plots date back to the foundation of the burgh in the 12th century, with evidence from beneath St Giles suggesting possible earlier Anglo-Saxon development in this area.

Accordingly, this building and site is regarded as being of archaeological and historic significance and important contributor to the character of this section of the UNESCO World Heritage site. Accordingly, this application must be considered under terms Scottish Government's Our Place in Time (OPIT), Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement (HESPS) 2016 and Archaeology Strategy and CEC's Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) Policies ENV4, ENV8 & 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.

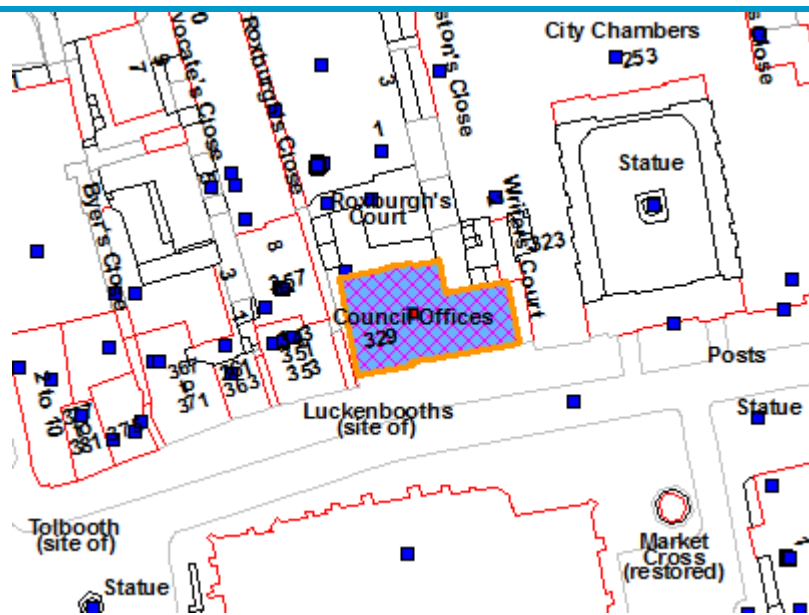
The proposals will require internal alterations and excavations. Such works, in particular those affecting the western and eastern gables formed by earlier historic buildings, could reveal provide important evidence regarding these earlier buildings and the development of the site. Similarly ground/ground floor breaking works such as for new services and construction of new lift shafts may disturb earlier archaeological remains dating back to the medieval period. It is therefore considered that this scheme with have some low but potentially significant localised archaeological impacts.

It is recommended therefore that a programme archaeological work combining historic building survey (phased elevations, photographic and written survey) and excavation are undertaken prior to and during development to provide a permanent record of any historic fabric exposed and affected and to fully excavate and record any buried remains affected. It is recommended that that the following condition is attached to any granted permissions to ensure that this programme of archaeological works is undertaken prior to construction.

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (historic building survey, excavation, analysis & reporting, publication) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.'

The work would 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



© Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey License number 100023420

END