

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 22 January 2020

**Application for Listed Building Consent 19/01892/LBC
at 22 Hill Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3JZ.**

**Alterations to convert to four short stay visitor
accommodation units over ground / lower ground floor,
first, second and third floors.**

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 do not adversely affect any features of special architectural and historic interest. The proposals preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals meet the requirement of section 14 and 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Links

[Policies and guidance for this application](#)

LDPP, LEN04, LEN06, NSG, NSLBCA, HES, HESEXF, HESINT, HESUSE, OTH, CRPNEW,

Report

Application for Listed Building Consent 19/01892/LBC at 22 Hill Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3JZ. Alterations to convert to four short stay visitor accommodation units over ground / lower ground floor, first, second and third floors.

Recommendations

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

Background

2.1 Site description

The application site relates to a three storey and attic level late eighteenth century classical style building located on the south side of Hill Street. The premises are currently vacant but were previously utilised for office accommodation.

The surrounding area is characterised by buildings of similar form and design and has a mixed commercial/residential character which encompasses office uses, residential properties, serviced apartments and bed and breakfast premises.

The site is located within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

The premises are a category A listed building (Listing date: March 1966, Listing reference: 43304)

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

2.2 Site History

28 June 2000- Planning permission granted to extend offices (application number: 00/00917/FUL)

12 July 2000 - Listed building consent granted to alter and extend offices (application number: 00/00917/LBC)

17 February 2017 - Listed building consent withdrawn to undertake internal alterations to premises (application number: 17/00679/LBC)

26 October 2017 - Planning application refused at committee for change of use from offices to hostel dormitories with sanitary facilities (as amended)(application number: 17/00678/FUL)

17 June 2019 - Application submitted for planning permission for change of use from business to four short stay visitor accommodation units over ground/lower ground floor, first, second and third floors (Application number: 19/01936/FUL)

Main report

3.1 Description of the Proposal

The application is for listed building consent for alterations to convert the existing office accommodation to four short stay visitor units over ground/lower ground floor, first, second and third floors.

The proposed alterations are as follows:

External alterations

- The proposed installation of three (15-20-cm) vents to the rear elevation of the property.

Internal alterations

- Ground floor- The insertion of a jib doorway between the rear room and the front principal room and associated stairs. Formation of kitchen units to rear of front room.
- First floor- The subdivision of the rear room to form a bathroom and the enlargement of an existing doorway between rear and front rooms. Formation of kitchen to rear of front room. An existing doorway between the stairwell and the back room will also be closed up.
- Second floor- The subdivision of the rear room to form a bathroom and the formation of a double door between front and rear rooms.
- Third floor- The subdivision of the existing large attic space.

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 proposal will have a detrimental impact on the unique architectural and historical character of the listed building;
- b) the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area and
- c) any issues raised in representations have been addressed.

a) Architectural and Historical Character of the Listed Building

LDP policy Env 3 (Listed Buildings - Setting) states that development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted only if not detrimental to the architectural character, appearance or historic interest of the building or to its setting.

LDP Policy Env 4 (Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions) states that proposals to alter a listed building will be permitted where those alterations are justified; will not result in unnecessary damage to historic structures or result in a diminution of the buildings interest; and any additions would be in keeping with other parts of the building.

Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note on the use and adaptability of listed buildings is applicable. It states that *for a building to remain in use over the long term, change will be necessary. This reflects changes over time in how we use our buildings and what we expect from them. The listed buildings in Scotland reflect a wide range of our history and culture, they contribute to our well-being culturally, socially and economically. We can't have these benefits without caring for these buildings. We need to make sure they have a long term future if we want to benefit from them in the long term.*

A buildings long-term future is at risk when it becomes hard to alter and adapt it when needed. Proposals that keep buildings in use, or bring them back into use, should be supported as long as they do the least possible harm. Once a building is empty or underused its long term future is immediately at risk.

No. 22 Hill Street has previously been utilised as office accommodation and self contained office suites. The applicant states that the office suites have been difficult to rent out and the unit has been marketed but has been vacant for over 3 years. A suitable use for the property must now be found if its future is to be guaranteed.

Other uses for the property have already been sought. A previous application at the site (17/00678/FUL) for a change of use from offices to hostel dormitories was recommended for approval but was refused at the Development Management Sub Committee.

Historic Environment Scotland's guidance note on the Use and Adaptability of Listed Buildings also explains that the process of converting a building will have some impact on a buildings special interest, regardless of how well it is handled.

Historic Environment Scotland's Guidance Note on Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Interiors states that *The 'plan form' is the arrangement and division of internal spaces into rooms and circulation spaces such as halls, stairs and corridors, and is a key component of the character and special interest of any building. The interrelationship of rooms and circulation space is a reflection of the building's design, function, status and period. Where rooms are arranged to create particular spatial effects or views, the position of features such as doors, windows, fireplaces and cupboards can be significant*

Alteration to a historic building should protect its character. In general, the principal spaces in a building are more sensitive to change as these are the spaces that normally make the most significant contribution to its character

The Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Area guidance (LBCA) states *the original plan form of a building should always be respected. All major works of alteration should be limited to areas of secondary importance. There will be a particular requirement not to sub-divide, either vertically or horizontally, principal rooms and entrance/stair halls. Where the interior is of particular architectural or historical importance, subdivision will not be permitted. The degree of change to the plan form which may be acceptable will normally be dependent on previous alterations and use*

This building has previously been subject to quite a high degree of intervention presumably when the property was converted into office accommodation.

The alterations proposed to the ground floor are relatively limited and relate largely to the formation of a door between the front and rear rooms. The consent has been conditioned to ensure that this door will be a hidden, or jib door, to minimise its presence. The proposed kitchen will be in the front room but no features of architectural merit will be harmed; the kitchen will be framed out over an element of existing dado and the room is large enough to not be overwhelmed by the introduction of kitchen facilities.

The rear room on the first floor will be subdivided in order to form a bathroom. The agent has confirmed that no elements of the existing dado panelling will have to be removed and this will not significantly impact upon the buildings historical interest overall. The existing entrance door between the front and rear rooms will also be enlarged. The kitchen will be sited within the front room and has been designed as to not harm the existing dado panelling. It will not significantly harm any architectural features of the property nor materially disturb how the room is read.

On the second floor the rear room will also be subdivided and the principal room on this level will be utilised as a kitchen. This room has no features of significant architectural or historical interest. This kitchen will be set back from the front windows and no architectural details shall be harmed.

The third floor attic level will also be subdivided. No architectural features shall be harmed.

Historic Environment Scotland's guidance note on External Fixtures states that new external fixtures must be sited to minimise impact on the architectural integrity and fabric of the building. Secondary elevations, outbuildings and roof valleys or flats that are out of sight from principal views can often accommodate new fixtures without significant impact.

The proposal does not involve any alteration to the principal elevation of the building. The only proposed external changes are to the rear and involve the installation of three relatively small (15-20 cm diameter) vents.

The installation of these vents will not materially impact upon the special interest of the listed building.

Historic Environment Scotland was consulted as part of the assessment of the application and confirmed that it had no comments to make.

The proposal preserves the architectural and historical character of the listed building and its setting and complies with LDP policies Env 3 and Env 4 and the HES Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance notes on the Use and Adaptability of Listed Buildings, Interiors and External Fixtures.

b)) Conservation Area

LDP policy Env 6 (Conservation Areas - Development) states that development within a conservation area will be permitted which preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation area and which is consistent with the relevant character appraisal.

The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the important role of the varied commercial/residential character of the New Town in contributing to the character of the conservation area stating:

Moving north from Princes Street retail use decreases. Rose Street and George Street have considerable shop frontages, particularly in their central and western ends but retail use has not achieved the saturation level of Princes Street. Further north, Thistle Street and Queen Street only house a very modest amount of retail use. The cross streets in the area also reflect these changes. Throughout the area property has often been rebuilt or extended or converted for office or institutional use. Residential use only remains significant in the western and northern fringes of the First New Town.

Hill Street lies between the busy commercial thoroughfares of Queen Street, George Street, Frederick Street and North Castle Street which are predominantly characterised by ground floor bars, restaurants, shops, offices and upper floor flatted residential properties. Hill Street does have a lower level of commercial activity than the neighbouring streets as it does not contain any bars, restaurants or shops. However, as highlighted in section a), the surrounding area as a whole has a mixed character and the proposed use is appropriate for this location.

The building will retain its original historical form and the proposal will not impact on the appearance of the streetscape.

The proposal is compatible with the character of the conservation area and complies with LDP policy Env 6.

c) Public Comments

Material Representation- Objection

- Loss of the original floor plan- This is addressed in section 3.3 (a) above
- Loss of architectural features- This is addressed in section 3.3 (a) above

Conclusion

The proposals have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and do not adversely affect any features of special architectural and historic interest. The proposals preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals meet the requirement of section 14 and 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

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

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Conditions:-

1. The proposed double doors leading from the proposed bedroom to the proposed kitchen/livingroom on the ground floor shall be of hidden/jib door design. Further details of this proposed hidden/jib door shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council as Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site.

Reasons:-

1. To protect the special interest of the listed building.

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 meets 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

One letter of representation was received. The issues are addressed in section 3.3 of this report.

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

Date registered 17 June 2019

Drawing numbers/Scheme 01,02b,03b,04,

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.

Relevant Government Guidance on Historic Environment.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External Fixtures sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to altering the external fixtures of listed buildings.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Interiors sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to alterations to the interiors of listed buildings.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to enable the use, the reuse and adaptation of listed buildings.

Other Relevant policy guidance

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 19/01892/LBC at 22 Hill Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3JZ Alterations to convert to four short stay visitor accommodation units over ground / lower ground floor, first, second and third floors.

Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland

We have considered the information received and do not have any comments to make on the proposals. Our decision not to provide comments 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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