

# Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 31 July 2019

**Application for Listed Building Consent 18/10258/LBC  
At Royal Blind School, 2B Craigmillar Park, Edinburgh  
Refurbishment and conversion of existing listed school for  
residential use. Refurbishment and extension of gate lodge  
building.**

**Item number**

**Report number**

**Wards**

B15 - Southside/Newington

## Summary

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With the exception of replacing the existing timber windows on the gate lodge, the works will not have an adverse impact on the character of the listed buildings. They will not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The replacement of the windows on the gate lodge do not have regard to the desirability of preserving the building as one possessing special interest. A mixed decision is therefore appropriate.

## Links

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[Policies and guidance for this application](#)

LDPP, LEN02, LEN04, LEN06, NSG, NSLBCA, OTH, CRPCMP,

# Report

## **Application for Listed Building Consent 18/10258/LBC At Royal Blind School, 2B Craigmillar Park, Edinburgh Refurbishment and conversion of existing listed school for residential use. Refurbishment and extension of gate lodge building.**

### **Recommendations**

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- 1.1 It is recommended that this application be mixed decision to part-approve and part-refuse this application subject to the details below.

### **Background**

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#### **2.1 Site description**

The application site is the former Royal Blind School that specialised in the care and education of visually impaired children. It also includes the former building of the Scottish Braille Printing Press. The site is accessed via a junction road on the west side of Craigmillar Park with a gate lodge at its entrance. The junction road runs parallel to an existing railway line to the north of the site and faces onto the rear gardens of properties on Mentone Gardens/Mentone Terrace. The main school building sits on the highest point of the site and fronts onto West Saville Road with trees screening the site. A pedestrian access to the west of the site leads onto Saville Terrace.

The main school building is of 19th century stone construction. It is three storeys in height with an attic level. The building has a number of later 20th century alterations, including two large additions on its north and west elevations. The existing uPVC windows on the building were in-situ prior to the building being listed.

There are areas of open space to the front and side of the school building. Existing areas of hard surfacing relate to the previous play areas and parking arrangements.

The surrounding area is principally a Victorian residential suburb with detached and semi-detached villas and terraces.

The main school building, gate lodge and boundary walls are category C listed (date of listing: 25/03/1997, reference LB44443). The listing description of the building acknowledges that the interior of the building has been significantly remodelled with very few features remaining as a result of the site's use as a residential school.

This application site is located within the Craigmillar Park Conservation Area.

## **2.2 Site History**

3 December 2018 - Application for planning permission submitted for the refurbishment and conversion of existing listed school for residential use (21 units). Refurbishment and extension of existing gate lodge building. Demolition of non-listed structures and formation of new residential dwellings (30 units) (application number 18/10180/FUL).

13 December 2018 - Application for conservation area consent submitted for the substantial demolition in a conservation area (application number 18/10355/CON).

## **Main report**

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### **3.1 Description Of The Proposal**

The proposal seeks to convert the main school into 21 flats (Block H). It will involve in the removal of all 20th century additions to the existing building and to reinstate its north and west elevations with stone to match. Slates on the roof are to be repaired and replaced where required.

The existing uPVC windows on the building are to be replaced with new uPVC windows.

It also proposed to refurbish and extend the existing gate lodge. Alterations to the existing gate lodge will include the repair and replacement of the existing roof slates and timber windows. A 5.5 metres by 6 metres flat roof extension is proposed on the west elevation of the existing gate lodge. The extension will have a natural buff stone and zinc finish.

#### Scheme One

The original scheme was significantly revised with a full scale re-design of the site. The main school building will have no additions to its elevations and it will be reinstated with more open space. The clerestory window on the proposed extension on the gate lodge has been omitted.

### **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 demolition of the listed building is acceptable;
- b) the proposals will harm the architectural or historic interest of the listed building;
- c) the proposals will adversely affect the special character or appearance of the conservation area; and
- d) any issues raised in representations have been addressed.

#### a) Listed Building Demolition

The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) outlines how the Council should undertake the collective duty of care whenever a decision in the planning system will affect the historic environment. There are three key areas which define how the historic environment should be understood, recognised and managed to support participation and positive outcomes, including "Managing Change" under policies HEP2, HEP3 and HEP4.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Demolition, sets out the tests that apply to demolish a listed building.

LDP Policy Env 2 Listed Buildings - Demolition covers matters such as the condition, cost of repairing and maintaining, the adequacy of attempts to retain/adapt the building including its marketing and the merits of an alternative proposal.

The proposed demolition of a listed building relates to the existing outbuilding to the west of the gate lodge. The outbuilding is a small standalone structure that was used for storage. The outbuilding is traditional in character and appearance. The removal of the outbuilding would still allow the gate lodge to be architecturally and historically appreciated without impacting on its character. In addition, the removal of the outbuilding would allow the gate lodge to be adapted to enhance its beneficial use as a dwellinghouse. Therefore, it would not be necessary or proportionate to explore the costs of repair or alternative options to retain the outbuilding.

The demolition of unlisted buildings within a conservation area is addressed under application 18/10355/CON.

The proposed demolition of the outbuilding preserves the special interest of the listed building and conforms with policy Env 2 and HES guidance.

#### b) Setting and Listed Buildings

LDP Policy Env 3 - Listed Buildings - Setting states that new development adversely affecting the setting of listed buildings will not be permitted. The following Historic Environment Scotland's guidance note Managing Change in the Historic Environment sets out the principles that apply to altering historic buildings:

- Demolition
- Extensions
- External Fixtures
- External Walls
- Roofs
- Windows
- Interiors
- Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings

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

### Main School

The existing 20th century additions to the main school are incongruous by virtue of their scale, form and design. The removal of these additions will greatly improve the character and setting of the listed building.

The north and west elevations of the main school are to be reinstated with stone to match and this is acceptable. Slates on the main roof are to be repaired and replaced where required. A condition requiring sample details of the stone finish and the replacement slates are required. This is to safeguard the character of the listed building.

A number of comments received were aimed at the repeated use of uPVC windows on the main school building. The building was listed in 1997. Historic Environment Scotland listing description acknowledges the presence of uPVC pivot windows on the school building. The original timber windows were removed a significant time ago and there are no powers to reinstate what was there prior to the building being listed. The proposal to replace the existing windows with new uPVC windows has a neutral impact on the building's historic fabric and will not diminish its special architectural and historical interest.

The interior of the school has been significantly remodelled in connection to its previous use as a residential school with very few surviving features. The conversion of the building to flats will not impact on important features of architectural and historical interests.

The non-statutory 'Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas' states the following:

*'The removal or alteration of any historic staircase, including handrails and balusters, is not normally acceptable. The stair is often the most significant piece of design within a building and can be important dating evidence.'*

The proposal is to remove a central staircase on the ground floor of the existing school. This staircase originally formed an important and formal component of the buildings historic floor plan. However, the design and layout of the staircase has been altered and remodelled to facilitate the extension to the rear of the school. Whilst the ground floor balustrade show decorative detailing, the extent of later interventions to the staircase layout and balustrade design is overwhelming as you progress upward. Given the degree of intervention that has already taken place, it would not be proportionate to retain this small section of the staircase as the overall benefit of adapting the building into 21 flats significantly outweighs the loss of the existing staircase.

The proposed alterations to convert the building into flats will preserve the architectural character of the building and improve its setting.

### Gate Lodge

The proposed internal alterations will not undermine features of important architectural or historical interests.

A portion of the west wall of the existing gate lodge will be removed to facilitate the proposed extension. However, its loss will be compensated by allowing the beneficial use of the gate lodge as a dwellinghouse. Whilst flat roof additions are generally not characteristic of traditional buildings, the extension will be subservient in scale and the use of high quality materials will provide an appropriate contrast and degree of physical separation between the existing building and the new addition. The extension will not adversely undermine the character of the gate lodge and it will not impact on the nearby listed church and war memorial.

Historic Environment Scotland's guidance note Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Windows, sets out the principles that apply to altering historic buildings.

The Council's non-statutory guidance on 'Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas' advises that original windows are important features of any building and should not be removed or altered. The complete replacement of original windows will only be approved where they have clearly deteriorated beyond repair. Proposals must be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that they are beyond repair.

In the event that replacement windows can be justified, they should be designed to replicate the original details, including materials, design and opening method. Slim profile double glazing with a cavity (the space between the two sheets of glass) of a maximum of 6mm can be fitted into existing windows, provided early glass is not present. Double glazing with a cavity of more than 6mm is not acceptable.

### Findings

The scheme was revised to omit the proposed uPVC windows on the existing gate lodge. The drawings show the existing timber windows to be 'repaired or replaced' where necessary. The Design and Access Statement states that the existing windows are in poor condition.

No sufficient supporting evidence was submitted to demonstrate that the windows are beyond repair. An inspection of the windows indicated that windows are original and form part of the gate lodge's historic fabric as one possessing special interest. The state and conditions of the windows do not appear to be beyond repair. In these circumstances, the proposal is not an act of preservation but an unjustified intervention that will adversely undermine the special interest of the listed building. These elements of the proposal are not supported.

No detail on the proposed window replacement on the existing lodge were provided.

The replacement of the existing timber windows are not required to facilitate the adaption of the gate lodge to a dwellinghouse. Issues of repair costs, energy efficiency, noise attenuation and sustainability (thermal performance) do not outweigh the importance of retaining important historic fabric which is sustainable action in itself. Listed buildings are afforded statutory protection. Repair and refurbishment is feasible in this case.

### c) Conservation Area

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

The site is located within the Craigmillar Conservation Area. The character appraisal states the following:

*The Craigmillar Park Conservation Area is principally a Victorian residential suburb developed as part of Edinburgh's southward expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*

*Most of the buildings have changed little since they were constructed, solidly built of stone and slate, with many rich features characteristic of Victorian buildings, including low stone walls, making the buildings within gardens readily visible. The area is characterised by the consistent and unspoiled quality of the Victorian buildings and the important relationship of the buildings, trees, gardens and open spaces.*

The character appraisal also identifies the main school building being a prominent building within the conservation area.

The existing later 20th century additions within the site are incongruous by virtue of their scale, form and design. They do not make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The removal of these additions to facilitate the redevelopment of the site under planning application 18/10180/FUL would result in conservation gains by allowing more open views to the site and this will enhance the setting of the school building.

Whilst the proposal seeks to replace the non-traditional use of uPVC windows, there is nothing to prevent the existing uPVC windows from being retained in-situ. The new uPVC windows will have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The extension to the existing gate lodge is contemporary in design and the use of high quality materials will provide an appropriate contrast and degree of physical separation between the existing and new addition. The extension will not adversely harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposals preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### d) Matters Raised in Representation

##### Relevant - Support

- The revised scheme is an improvement but the principle of flat roofs and uPVC windows are not supported - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a) and (b).

##### *Original Scheme*

##### Relevant - Objection

- Impact on the character and setting of the listed building - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a) and (b).
- Loss of the principal stair rising front the ground floor is in very good condition - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a).
- Inappropriate use of uPVC windows - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a) and (b).
- Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a) and (b).
- Inappropriate extension to the gate lodge - Addressed in Section 3.3 (a) and (b).

##### Relevant -Support

- Enhances the character of the listed building.
- Enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

##### Non- Relevant - Objection

Matters relating to neighbouring amenity, traffic impact, sustainability, value of properties, car parking layout, design of new build have been addressed under planning application 18/10180/FUL. The non-relevant issues raised have no bearing in the assessment of a listed building special architectural or historical interests.

It is recommended that this application be mixed decision to part-approve and part-refuse this application subject to the details below.

### **3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives**

#### **Conditions:-**

1. This permission relates to all the proposed works with the exception to replacing the existing sash and case windows on the main gate lodge building.

2. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, samples of the replacement roof slates on the main school building and on the gate lodge shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before commencing works on the site.
3. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, details of the stone to reinstate the school building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before commencing works on the site.
1. In order to recognise which elements of the proposals are recommended for approval.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.

#### **Reason for Refusal:-**

1. This refusal relates to the replacement of the existing sash and case windows on the main gate lodge building.
2. The removal of the existing windows in the gate lodge involves the loss of historic fabric and does not have regard to the desirability of preserving the special interest of the listed building. The works will harm the character of the listed building and insufficient justification has been given for the replacement of the windows. As such, the proposed replacement is contrary to Government guidance Managing Change: Windows and Policy Env 4 of the LDP.

#### **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**

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##### **4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:**

There are no financial implications to the Council.

#### **Risk, Policy, compliance and governance impact**

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5.1 Provided planning applications are determined in accordance with statutory legislation, the level of risk is low.

#### **Equalities impact**

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##### **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**

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### **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**

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### **8.1 Pre-Application Process**

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

### **8.2 Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments**

The original scheme was first advertised on 25 January 2019 and the proposal attracted 10 representations; 6 objected and 3 supported the proposal.

The second scheme was re-advertised on 3 May 2019 and the proposal attracted 3 letters of support.

The representations received are addressed in the assessment section in the report.

## **Background reading/external references**

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- 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** 15 January 2019

**Drawing numbers/Scheme** 01-25.,

Scheme 2

### **David R. Leslie**

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PLACE

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## **Links - Policies**

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### **Relevant Policies:**

#### **Relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.**

LDP Policy Env 2 (Listed Buildings - Demolition) identifies the circumstances in which the demolition of listed buildings will be permitted.

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.

## **Other Relevant policy guidance**

The Craigmillar Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises the predominance of high quality stone-built Victorian architecture of limited height which provides homogeneity through building lines, heights, massing and the use of traditional materials, and the predominant residential use.

# Appendix 1

**Application for Listed Building Consent 18/10258/LBC  
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residential use. Refurbishment and extension of gate lodge  
building.**

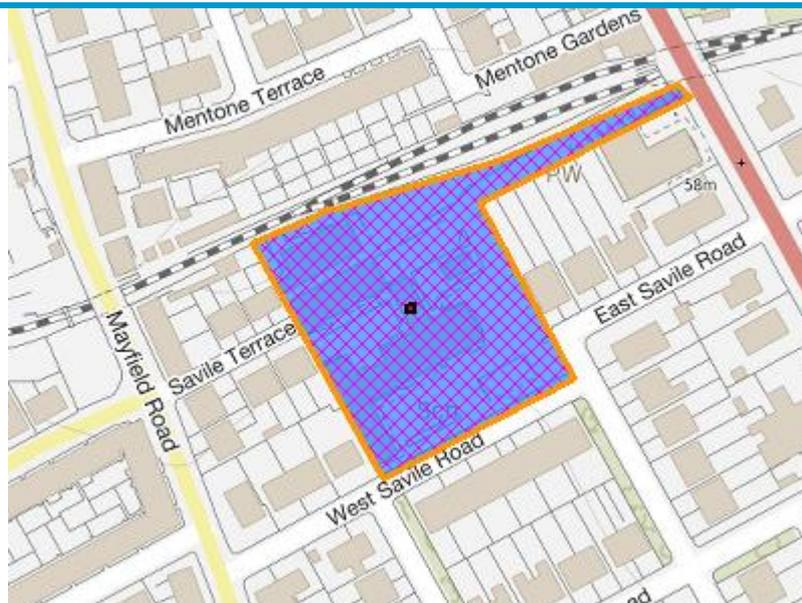
## Consultations

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No consultations undertaken.

## Location Plan

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