

Development Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 13 January 2021

**Application for Planning Permission 20/02562/FUL
at Northfield House Hotel, 115 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh.
Demolition of existing hotel and redevelopment of the site
for purpose built student accommodation including
landscaping and all ancillary development.**

Item number

Report number

Wards B16 - Liberton/Gilmerton

Summary

The principle of student accommodation is acceptable in this location and the development will not result in an excessive concentration of students in the locality. However, the proposal is not of an appropriate scale, form or design and will not draw from positive characteristics of the surrounding area. The features worthy of retention within the site have not been identified, incorporated and enhanced through the proposals design. The development will have a damaging impact upon the TPO protected trees within the site.

Whilst adequate levels of cycle parking will be incorporated on site, the proposed cycle stores will not be located in suitable locations and will not be completely weatherproof and secure. The proposal does not comply with the Local Development Plan and there are no material planning reasons which would justify approval. There are no material planning considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

Links

**Policies and guidance for
this application**

LDPP, LDEL01, LDES01, LDES03, LDES04, LDES05,
LEN12, LEN16, LEN21, LHOU01, LHOU03, LHOU07,
LHOU08, LTRA02, LTRA03, LTRA04, NSG, NSGSTU,
NSGD02,

Report

Application for Planning Permission 20/02562/FUL at Northfield House Hotel, 115 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh. Demolition of existing hotel and redevelopment of the site for purpose built student accommodation including landscaping and all ancillary development.

Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that this application be Refused for the reasons below.

Background

2.1 Site description

The application site relates to No. 115 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh. The overall site area is 0.296ha.

The current legal use of the site is a hotel. The main building on the site is a two-storey stone built villa, which has been altered and extended over time, with the addition of a single storey side extension. It remains a relatively compact and attractive building overall. It is, however, not listed and is not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to justify listing.

Throughout the site are a number of mature and semi mature trees which are protected by a blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO). These contribute significantly to the wooded villa setting of the site. There is also a concrete car park to the front and areas of grass to the side and rear. The site slopes down quite steeply from the principal elevation on Lasswade Road to Ellen's Glen Road to the rear. The Stenhouse Burn lies to the north.

Planning permission was granted under application 14/04049/FUL for the erection of a detached dwelling house on land which was previously part of the hotel site. This building has now been constructed and lies to the north east of the main building

Liberton Hospital lies to the north and there is a two-storey housing development to the south. There are new build flats on the other side of the road ranging from two to four storeys.

Lasswade Road is a main arterial road into the city.

2.2 Site History

18 September 1991 -Planning permission granted to erect extension to hotel (application reference: 19/02351/FUL).

23 June 2000 -Planning permission granted to alter and extend hotel (application reference: 00/01652/FUL).

10 June 2015 - Planning permission refused to erect a dwelling house with detached garage and change of use of hotel grounds to domestic use. Decision overturned, approved at LRB (application reference: 14/04049/FUL).

9 September 2019 - Application for tree work granted for the removal of an ash tree leaning over building (application reference: 19/02902/TPO).

Main report

3.1 Description of the Proposal

It is proposed that the existing two storey building within the site be demolished. In its place, a large new building, four storey to the front and five storey to the rear, will be constructed. It will have a flat roof and will be externally finished in a mixture of weathered steel, buff coloured brickwork and aluminium framed windows and doors.

It will have a footprint of 724 square metres and will house 99 students in total. The development will have 90 studio rooms, 5 accessible studio rooms and two 2 bedroom apartments. All rooms will provide a cooker for the occupant as well as their own toilet and shower. There will also be two amenity spaces proposed within the building.

The majority of the site will be landscaped with hard and soft amenity spaces within the site and retaining walls proposed.

It is proposed that a total of five TPO protected trees be removed within the site and pruning will also be required.

There will be no car parking on the site. Cycle parking for 99 bikes will be provided, with cycle parking stores located externally.

Two accesses to the site will be provided, one directly off Lasswade Road and another near the junction between Lasswade Road and Ellen's Glen Road.

The following documents have been provided to support the application:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Surface Water Management Plan;
- Ecological Survey;
- Daylight and Sunlight assessment;
- Tree Survey;
- Noise Impact Assessment.

These documents are available to view on the Planning Portal.

3.2 Determining Issues

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 states - Where, in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Do the proposals comply with the development plan?

If the proposals do comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?

If the proposals do not comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

3.3 Assessment

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

- a) the principle of the proposed development on the site is acceptable;
- b) the scale, form and design of the building is appropriate;
- c) the potential impact on neighbouring amenity is acceptable;
- d) amenity for future occupiers is acceptable;
- e) the proposal will impact upon the TPO protected trees within the site;
- f) the proposal will impact upon any protected species within the site;
- g) the proposal will raise any parking, traffic or road safety issues;
- h) there are any other material considerations and
- i) any comments have been addressed.

a) Principle of development

The site lies within the urban area and the principle of development needs to be assessed under Local Development Plan (LDP) polices Hou 8 (Student Accommodation) and Hou 1 (Housing Development), along with the non-statutory Student Housing Guidance (SHG).

Student Accommodation

LDP Policy Hou 8 (Student Accommodation) supports purpose-built student accommodation where:

- a) The location is appropriate in terms of access to university and college facilities by walking, cycling or public transport, and
- b) where the proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation (including that in the private rented sector) to an extent that would be detrimental to the maintenance of balanced communities or to the established character and residential amenity of the locality.

The supporting non-statutory SHG provides additional locational and design guidance

Location

The site is within the urban area immediately adjacent to Lasswade Road meaning it is served with direct access to public transport and thereby to university and college facilities. Edinburgh University King's Buildings is located within easy cycling distance as is the Edinburgh University faculty at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Consequently, the proposal accords with the requirements of criterion (a) of Hou 8.

Concentration

Part b) of policy Hou 8 seeks to protect areas from an excessive concentration of student accommodation to maintain balanced communities or maintain the established character and residential amenity of the locality.

The application site is within a predominantly residential area and as indicated within the Edinburgh Student Housing Guidance, does not comprise a large student population. In a review of the 2011 Census data, the Liberton/Gilmerton Ward area, where the site is located, only comprises a student population of around 8.2%. There were 1,192 full time students residing within the area at this time. The proposed development to house 99 students will only result in a relatively small increase to this percentage ensuring the proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation/population.

Overall, the proposed student accommodation would not result in an excessive concentration of student housing which would be of detriment to character of the area and the site is suitably accessible to university and college facilities. The proposal accords with LDP policy Hou 8 parts a) and b).

Housing

The non-statutory Student Housing Guidance (SHG) sets out requirements for purpose-built student accommodation and criterion (c) requires sites with 0.25ha or greater developable area, which do not share a boundary with a main university or college campus, to provide a proportion of housing as part of the development. This is to be calculated at 50% of the gross new build residential floor area.

The SHG defines developable area as "the application site area, less any areas of existing highway retained within the boundary"

It is not proposed to deliver housing or a proportion of housing as part of the development. The applicant has submitted a Planning Statement and additional information which puts forward the applicant's reasoning for developing the site as exclusively student accommodation.

The overall area of this site is 0.296ha. However, the applicant contends that a percentage of the site cannot be developed due to it being occupied by dense vegetation and the TPO protected trees. The applicant therefore argues that the actual net developable area is 0.23ha (i.e. less than 0.25 Ha.)

The applicant makes reference to a previous application at 61 and 63 London Road, for the erection of a mixed-use development including student accommodation and ancillary uses, commercial unit, and associated landscaping and infrastructure which was determined at Development Management Sub Committee under application 19/01149/FUL. The Committee report for that application accepted that some of the site was undevelopable due to the presence of underlying Scottish Water pipes and therefore the developable site area in that instance was under 0.25 Ha.

This site is quite heavily covered by TPO protected trees. The majority of these trees are worthy of retention and would not be permitted to be removed in order to facilitate development. Therefore, it is accepted that in this instance, an area of the site, as noted by the applicant, is quite likely to be undevelopable.

It is also stated that the proposed development complies with LDP Policy Hou 8 and that the development of this site for housing is not essential nor is it the intention of LDP policy Hou 1 to be a housing first policy.

Additionally, the applicant has cited the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) recent decision for Gorgie Road (reference: PPA-230-2298). This is with reference to the weight which can be given to the SHG, in particular the stipulation for 50% provision of housing. This appeal was allowed on the basis that the Reporter did not consider that LDP Policy Hou 1 required all sites to be prioritised for mainstream housing, whilst it was also felt that as the SHG is non-statutory it therefore carries less weight than the policies adopted in the LDP, such as policy Hou 8.

Despite not fully complying with the SHG due to the size of the site and the non-provision of housing, the presence of the TPO protected trees within the site does impact on the site's developable area and the non-conformity with the non statutory guidance is justified in this instance.

Mix of accommodation

Criterion (d) of the Student Housing Guidance states that student accommodation should comprise a mix of type of accommodation, including cluster units, to meet varying needs of students. The application proposes 90 studio beds, 5 accessible studio beds and 2, two bedroom apartments. It therefore broadly complies with criterion (d) of the Student Housing Guidance.

Conclusion

The principle of the proposed development is in accordance with LDP policy Hou 8. Whilst the application does not accord with part c) of the non-statutory Student Housing Guidance, as no residential housing is proposed, given the recent DPEA decision and the justification provided, the breach in the non-statutory Student Housing Guidance is acceptable in this instance.

b) Scale, form and design

Policy Des 1 (Design Quality and Context) requires development proposals to create or contribute towards a sense of place. The design should be based on an overall design concept that draws upon the positive characteristics of the surrounding area.

Permission will not be granted for proposals that are inappropriate in design or for proposals that would be damaging to the character or appearance of the area.

LDP Policy Des 3 (Development Design - Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features) states that planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that existing characteristics and features worthy of retention on the site and in the surrounding area, have been identified, incorporated and enhanced through its design.

Policy Des 4 (Development Design - Impact on Setting) also requires development proposals to have a positive impact on its surroundings, including the character of the wider townscape, having regards to its height and form; scale and proportions, including the spaces between the buildings, position of buildings and other features on the site; and the materials and detailing.

The site currently contains a traditional, extended, two storey stone villa in an attractive wooded setting surrounded by large mature TPO protected trees. It is proposed that the existing original villa on the site be demolished. As this building is not listed nor residential accommodation it can be demolished without the requirement for planning permission. It is noted that the building has been extended and altered over the years but still remains an attractive building overall.

The existing building is only two storeys in height, is set back from the road and has a limited footprint given the size of the site. Overall, the existing building on the site is still sympathetic to its villa setting and does not encroach upon the numerous TPO protected trees which are located nearby. While there are quite large areas of hardstanding present for the car parking and access areas these have been incorporated into its setting and are not overly noticeable from the most public elevations of the property.

It is now proposed that a new building, four storey high at its principal elevation and five storey to the rear, be constructed in its place. The footprint of the structure will incorporate far more of the site than the existing two storey building and it will be sited closer to the road.

The external finishing materials of the proposal are a mixture of weathered steel, buff coloured brickwork and aluminium framed windows and doors. Whilst these materials are more modern than the stone and slate on the existing structure, they are considered high quality and are acceptable.

The applicant in their design statement has noted that there is a relatively modern four storey building which has been constructed further north along Lasswade road and a two and three storey building has also been recently constructed across the road from the site.

Whilst this is accepted, it is noted that these buildings have been constructed on the other side of Lasswade Road and they did not possess the secluded, wooded, villa nature of the application site. The majority of buildings located on the same side of Lasswade Road as the application site are two storey residential properties, not four or five storey buildings. It is also noted that the site is located at a much higher level than the two storey residential dwellings located directly to the rear (east) of the site. The proposed five storey building, to the rear, has the potential to tower over these dwellings, especially if the site's existing tree coverage was to be diminished.

It is anticipated that the development would likely result in the loss of many of the TPO protected trees within the site despite the applicant's tree survey. This would greatly impact upon the character and appearance of the site and would importantly also reduce the levels of screening present around the proposed building. The proposed development would be sited too close to many of the TPO protected trees and therefore it does not have regard to one of the most important features of the site.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the site is quite large, due to the levels changes present, concerns are also raised about how usable the amenity space shown will actually be in practice.

The design of the proposal is not based on an overall design concept that draws upon positive characteristics of the surrounding area. This site has a special importance being largely defined and enhanced by the TPO protected trees that are positioned within it. The development has not identified the existing characteristics and features worthy of retention on the site, namely its secluded villa setting, open space and TPO protected trees. These features will not be incorporated or enhanced through its design.

The development also does not respect the character of the wider townscape in terms of height and form and signifies overdevelopment of the site.

The proposal does not comply with policy Des 1, Des 3 and Des 4 of the adopted LDP.

c) Neighbouring amenity

Policy Des 5 (Development Design - Amenity) states that development will be permitted where the amenity of neighbouring development is not adversely affected.

Policy Hou 7- (Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas) states that developments, including changes of use, which would have a materially detrimental effect on the living conditions of nearby residents, will not be permitted.

The Edinburgh Design Guidance (EDG) states that the pattern of development in an area will help to define appropriate distances between buildings and consequential privacy distances.

The site is currently utilised as a hotel with a restaurant/bar. Concerns have been raised that development of student accommodation within the site introduces an increased risk of noise and disturbance to existing nearby residents.

A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) was submitted as part of the application. Environmental Health have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposal in terms of potential noise/odours. A condition relating to ground contamination investigation is recommended if the application was to be approved.

The majority of the proposed windows in the building are suitably set off mutual boundaries. However, three windows, to the rear of the site, will directly overlook the rear garden of the newly constructed dwelling house which abuts the site at a distance of approximately 8-9 metres. It is acknowledged that the Edinburgh Design Guidance states that there should be 9 metres between boundaries. However, it is also noted that some of these windows shall be screened by the existing tree cover within the site and that according to the plans submitted more than 18 metres will be present between the windows in the proposal and that of the dwelling house, which is in accordance with the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

Overall, on balance, the proposal will not have a material impact upon neighbouring privacy levels or compromise the future development of other sites.

The nearest property on Carnbee Dell would be located approximately 16 metres away from the proposed building. Given the position of the development relative to the sun's daily path from east to west during the day and the separation distances involved the proposal would not materially impact upon the residential properties within this street in terms of loss of sunlight/daylight.

A sunlight/daylight analysis submitted with the proposal shows that whilst the development shall overshadow part of the property recently constructed directly to the north of the site during certain times of the day, this would not be to an unacceptable level.

The proposal broadly complies with LDP Policy Des 5 in terms of neighbouring amenity and LDP Policy Hou 7.

d) Amenity for future occupiers

LDP policy Des 5 states that planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that future occupiers have acceptable levels of amenity in relation to noise, daylight, sunlight, privacy or immediate outlook.

The Student Housing Guidance states that student accommodation should comprise a mix of type of accommodation, including cluster units, to meet varying needs of students. It expects that design to be of a high quality with adequate amenity to contribute to healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

The Edinburgh Design Guidance also applies to student accommodation with regard to daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook.

The proposed development proposes a total of 97 units. 90 of the units proposed are single bed studio units, whilst 5 will be accessible studio beds and two will be two bedroom apartments. The majority will have a floor space of approximately 20 square metres, whilst the accessible bedrooms will be approximately 29 square metres and two bedroom units roughly 49 square metres. Each unit includes adequate cooking and storage facilities for each resident. Whilst some of the proposed units are dual aspect the majority of them are not.

The applicant's Average Daylight Factor (ADF) Assessment concludes that all of the bedrooms proposed within the building which would potentially be most restricted in terms of daylight will achieve in excess of the minimum average daylight factor as required. The rooms located at different locations within the building or at a higher level are less restricted in terms of overshadowing and will also be acceptable. Two large internal amenity spaces are proposed, at lower ground floor level within the building, whilst a hard and soft landscaped shared outdoor amenity space is proposed within the front, side and rear courtyard. This includes formal lawns, planting and seating. Concerns have, however, been raised about how useable the amenity area shown to the rear of the site would be in practice given the level changes that are present.

The proposed level of amenity for residents is, overall, acceptable with residents having access to shared managed outdoor space. Rooms while largely uniform in size have broadly adequate space and facilities along with the majority of them having a good outlook within established separation distances. It is noted that there are five bedrooms proposed on the ground floor (basement level to the front) which will look out onto a external courtyard area which is surrounded by a 3 metre (approximately) high retaining wall. The depth of this courtyard will be approximately 3.3 metres. The ADF provided states that adequate sunlight levels will still be achieved within these rooms. A condition should be applied to this consent, if granted, to ensure that adequate landscaping and planting of this area will ensure that a satisfactory direct outlook from these rooms is also achieved. The proposal generally complies with policy Des 5, in terms of occupant amenity, and the relevant guidance.

e) Trees

LDP policy Env 12 (Trees) states that development will not be permitted if likely to have a damaging impact upon a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

All of the trees within the site are protected by a TPO (TPO 16). The trees contribute highly to the amenity of the site and the streetscape of the surrounding area.

The applicant has submitted an arboricultural tree survey. This shows that there are three trees within the site that should be removed because they are unhealthy or potentially dangerous. Two trees within the site are proposed to be removed in order to facilitate the development. They are category B listed trees although their life span is said to be limited.

The arboricultural survey has insufficient information. In particular there is a lack of information regarding the proposed hardstanding to be utilised within the site, the retaining walls proposed, required excavations and a lack of information regarding existing and proposed levels. This means that the applicant has not adequately shown that the development will not harm the valuable, protected, trees on the site.

Some examples of specific concerns are raised below:

- A flight of steps and retaining wall is proposed at the north of the site which is within the RPA of Tree Tag 2949 which is a mature Category B Ash tree. To construct the wall and steps will require earthworks, level changes and excavations which in turn will damage tree roots.
- A large bike shelter is proposed directly under the canopy of Tree Tag 2952 which is a mature Category A beech Tree. It is also extremely close to the trunk of the tree.
- A large bike shelter is also proposed within the RPAs of 3 trees (Tags 2947, 2946 and 2944). Tree Tag 2947 is a mature Category B Noble Fir tree. Tree Tag 2946 is a mature Sycamore with an unknown category/retention class. Tree Tag 2945 is a mature Ash tree with an unknown category/retention class. These trees are regardless TPO protected.
- Many trees will likely be affected by the new hard landscaping proposed. The site is sloping and so to accommodate the new paths, it is highly likely that regrading works will be required. There could be retaining walls required in places to create level terraces. All of this is not detailed. However, the plans do indicate that approximately 19 trees will have new paths/paving constructed directly within their root protection areas.
- The new building will be at a lower level than the current building in order to accommodate the 5th storey as a semi-basement level. In order to build that, it will require substantial earthworks on the site. Without seeing the proposed levels and a disturbed Earth line, we cannot assess the extent of level changes under the protected trees.
- The extent of the facilitative pruning required appears to be unknown at this stage. This work could affect the form of the trees as well as their future vigour.

Of the 35 individual trees surveyed, there are 20 that are Category A or B; most are mature or early mature and 24 are in a good or moderate condition. So these are all worthy of retention and protection. However, 80% of the trees on the site will have some work happening within their RPAs and it is still unclear to what extent this will affect tree roots and how much pruning will be required.

It is also noted that the area to the north, which was previously part of the site, has recently had a dwelling house constructed on it. Within this area, 8 of the 11 TPO trees were removed to make way for the house development. Since it has been constructed there has been a TPO application (19/02902/TPO) approved to remove another protected tree within the site as it was leaning over the new house.

The tree survey submitted also states that four trees near the boundary between the site and the new dwelling have likely had some root loss due to recent excavation works. This is seen as likely being a result of the works to enable the new dwelling. It is therefore felt that there is a real risk that due to the close proximity of the trees to the proposed development that roots would be damaged during construction and in the future there would be additional pressure for some of the remaining trees within the site to be removed due to safety concerns.

The proposal will likely have a damaging impact upon the TPO protected trees within the site. It is not in accordance with LDP policy Env 12.

f) Protected Species

Policy Env 16 (Species Protection) ensures development will not have an adverse impact on species protected under European or UK law.

A Bat Survey was submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Council's Ecology Officer who has confirmed that one bat roost used by a solitary Soprano pipistrelle was present within the application site. Therefore, it is concluded that roosting bats are an ecological constraint for redevelopment of this site and it will be necessary to apply for a developmental licence to permit lawful disturbance to the roosting bat (if planning permission is approved).

If granted, the bat report, bat protection plan, site design and a copy of the planning approval letter must all accompany a completed bat licence application form that will be sent to Nature Scot. Appropriate roost compensation will be provided in the form of two bat boxes placed on other trees within 100m of the roost.

The application therefore complies with LDP policy Env 16 as long as a suitable condition was applied to the consent, if granted, relating to ensuring there were no works which would disturb the tree roots, as identified in the application, until a licence has been issued by SNH and a copy provided to the Planning Authority.

g) Transport

Policy Tra 2 states that planning permission will be granted for development where proposed car parking provision complies with and does not exceed the parking levels set out in Council guidance.

Policy Tra 3 states that planning permission will be granted for development where proposed cycle parking and storage provision complies with the standards set out in Council guidance.

Policy Tra 4 states that cycle parking should be provided closer to building entrances than general car parking spaces and be designed in accordance with the standards set out in council guidance.

The development is proposed as car free, with no parking proposed on site and vehicle access restricted.

100% cycle parking is proposed. These spaces are largely spread over different dedicated cycle storage locations on the site to the south west and north east boundaries.

As the proposal will be car free, the security and usability of the cycle storage proposed within the site is therefore paramount.

The Roads Authority was consulted as part of the assessment of the application and it objected to the proposal. It had no objections to the proposal having no car parking on site. However, it stated that the proposed cycle store is located at a position which lacks natural surveillance and that the proposed store is not completely weatherproof and secure.

The proposal therefore does not comply with LDP policy Tra 4.

h) Other planning matters

Developer Contributions

LDP policy Del 1 - (Developer Contributions and Infrastructure Delivery) states that proposal will be required to contribute to the following infrastructure provision where relevant and necessary to mitigate any negative additional impact (either on an individual or cumulative basis) and where commensurate to the scale of the proposed development.

The site in question falls within healthcare contribution zone 7-Gilmerton. The Developer Contributions and Infrastructure Guidance states that a contribution of £167 per student will be required. In this case, given that there will be 99 beds proposed, a developer contribution towards healthcare of a total of £16,533 should be sought through a legal agreement.

The Roads Authority also stated that the developer will be required to contribute the sum of £2,000 to progress a suitable order to re-determine sections of footway and carriageway as necessary for the development

Flood Protection

Policy Env 21 (Flood Protection) seeks to ensure development does not result in increased flood risk or be at risk of flooding by demonstrating sustainable drainage measures.

The applicant has provided a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) demonstrating that the development provides suitable drainage and flood protection. These measures have been confirmed as acceptable by the Council's Flood Protection Officers as long as a condition relating to an assessment of the existing culvert was applied, if the application was to be granted. SEPA were consulted as part of the assessment of the application and provided no objections.

It is noted that since the Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plan have been assessed the applicant has slightly reduced the footprint of the development. This should not materially change the flood measures proposed but, if granted, it is advised that an amended FRA and SWMP be conditioned for the approval of Flood Planning and SEPA.

Archaeology

LDP Policy Env 9 (Development of Sites of Archaeological Significance) states that planning permission will be granted for development on sites of known or suspected archaeological significance if it can be concluded that no significant archaeological features are likely to be affected by the development.

LDP Policy Env 8 (Protection of Important Remains) states that the development will not be permitted which would damage or destroy non designated archaeological remains which the Council considers should be preserved in situ.

The Councils Archaeologist was consulted as part of the assessment of the application. The proposal broadly complies with LDP policy Env 8 and Env 9 as long as a condition relating to the requirement for a historic building survey is applied to the consent, if granted.

Waste

Waste Services have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposal.

Air Quality

The proposal is car free and encourages active travel and the use of public transport. This will ensure that there will be no significant impact on air quality.

Coal Mining

The site falls within a defined low risk area for coal mining related hazards. As a result, a standing advice informative from the Coal Authority should be applied to the consent, if granted.

i) Public comments

Material Comments - objections

- Principle of student housing and overprovision in the area - addressed in Section 3.3 a);
- Does not comply with student housing guidance - addressed in Section 3.3 a);
- Lost opportunity for housing - addressed in Section 3.3 a);
- Need for the provision of family and affordable housing - addressed in Section 3.3 a);
- Lack of transportation and bus links - addressed in Section 3.3 g);
- Road and pedestrian safety concerns -addressed in Section 3.3 g);

- Impact upon visual amenity of the area - addressed in Section 3.3 b);
- Demolition of the existing building - addressed in 3.3 b);
- Overdevelopment and poor scale, massing and design - addressed in Section 3.3 b);
- Noise impacts from students, bike sheds, fire alarms and heating and ventilation addressed in Section 3.3 c);
- Impact on amenity, privacy, outlook, overshadowing, daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties and garden - addressed in Section 3.3 c);
- Impact on parking - addressed in Section 3.3 g););
- Loss of trees - addressed in Section 3.3 e);
- Risk of flooding - addressed in Section 3.3 h);
- Impact on wildlife - addressed in Section 3.3 f);
- Impact upon services- addressed in Section 3.3 h);
- Loss of an important amenity within the area- addressed in section 3.3a and
- Insufficient neighbour notification carried out - The neighbour notification process has been carried out correctly.

Support

- Students will bring economic benefits and support the area- addressed in section 3.3a;
- The removal of the existing buildings on the site is permitted development- addressed in section 3.3a;
- The existing buildings on the site have been poorly extended and are of no architectural merit- addressed in section 3.3b;
- Good sustainability with being car free, lots of bike spaces proposed and close to University campuses- addressed in section 3.3 a and g;
- Design, scale and mass is good and appropriate- addressed in section 3.3b;
- Removes the existing non-conforming use on the site-addressed in section 3.3a; and
- Fulfils the requirement for student accommodation. More purpose-built student housing means more accommodation for local residents as students are not renting flats- addressed in section 3.3 a.

Neutral comments

- Need for the provision of family and affordable housing - addressed in Section 3.3 a);
- Numbers of students will decrease with coronavirus- This is not a material planning consideration.

Non-material comments

- Students keep anti-social hours - this is not a planning matter;
- Development could become short-term lets - this would require further planning applications;
- Does not contribute to council tax - this is not a planning matter;
- Numbers of students will decrease with coronavirus- This is not a material planning consideration

Conclusion

The principle of student accommodation is acceptable in this location and the development will not result in an excessive concentration of students in the locality. However, the proposal is not of an appropriate scale, form or design and will not draw from positive characteristics of the surrounding area. The features worthy of retention within the site have not been identified, incorporated and enhanced through the proposals design. The development will have a damaging impact upon the TPO protected trees within the site. Whilst adequate levels of cycle parking will be incorporated on site, the proposed cycle stores will not be located in suitable locations and will not be completely weatherproof and secure. The proposal does not comply with Local Development Plan and there are no material planning reasons to justify approval. There are no material planning considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

It is recommended that this application be Refused for the reasons below.

3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives

Reasons:-

1. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Des 1 in respect of Design Quality and Context, as the development would be damaging to the character and appearance of the area around it.
2. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Des 3 in respect of Development Design - Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features, as it has not been demonstrated that the existing characteristics and features worthy of retention on the site have been identified, incorporated and enhanced through its design.
3. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Des 4 in respect of Development Design - Impact on Setting, as the development will not have a positive impact upon its surroundings, including the character of the wider townscape and landscape, due to its height and form, scale and proportions.
4. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Env 12 in respect of Trees, as it is likely to have a damaging impact upon trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
5. The proposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Tra 4 in respect of Design of Off-Street Car and Cycle Parking, as the proposed cycle storage is not located internally within the building and not all the external bike storage proposed is located in a safe and secure location.

Financial impact

4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:

The application is subject to a legal agreement for developer contributions.

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

The application was advertised on 3 July 2020.

A total of 127 representations were received relating to the proposal. These included 98 objections, 28 support comments and one neutral comment.

The representations are summarised and addressed in the assessment section 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 3 July 2020

Drawing numbers/Scheme 01,02, 03A, 04B, 05A-14A, 16, 17, 18, 19,

Scheme 2

David R. Leslie

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

Contact: Robert McIntosh, Planning Officer

E-mail: robert.mcintosh@edinburgh.gov.uk

Links - Policies

Relevant Policies:**Relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.**

LDP Policy Del 1 (Developer Contributions and Infrastructure Delivery) identifies the circumstances in which developer contributions will be required.

LDP Policy Des 1 (Design Quality and Context) sets general criteria for assessing design quality and requires an overall design concept to be demonstrated.

LDP Policy Des 3 (Development Design - Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features) supports development where it is demonstrated that existing and potential features have been incorporated into the design.

LDP Policy Des 4 (Development Design - Impact on Setting) sets criteria for assessing the impact of development design against its setting.

LDP Policy Des 5 (Development Design - Amenity) sets criteria for assessing amenity.

LDP Policy Env 12 (Trees) sets out tree protection requirements for new development.

LDP Policy Env 16 (Species Protection) sets out species protection requirements for new development.

LDP Policy Env 21 (Flood Protection) sets criteria for assessing the impact of development on flood protection.

LDP Policy Hou 1 (Housing Development) sets criteria for assessing the principle of housing proposals.

LDP Policy Hou 3 (Private Green Space in Housing Development) sets out the requirements for the provision of private green space in housing development.

LDP Policy Hou 7 (Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas) establishes a presumption against development which would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of nearby residents.

LDP Policy Hou 8 (Student Accommodation) sets out the criteria for assessing purpose-built student accommodation.

LDP Policy Tra 2 (Private Car Parking) requires private car parking provision to comply with the parking levels set out in Council guidance, and sets criteria for assessing lower provision.

LDP Policy Tra 3 (Private Cycle Parking) requires cycle parking provision in accordance with standards set out in Council guidance.

LDP Policy Tra 4 (Design of Off-Street Car and Cycle Parking) sets criteria for assessing design of off-street car and cycle parking.

Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines

Non-statutory guidelines Student Housing Guidance interprets local plan policy, supporting student housing proposals in accessible locations provided that they will not result in an excessive concentration.

Non-Statutory guidelines Edinburgh Design Guidance supports development of the highest design quality and that integrates well with the existing city. It sets out the Council's expectations for the design of new development, including buildings, parking, streets and landscape, in Edinburgh.

Appendix 1

Application for Planning Permission 20/02562/FUL At Northfield House Hotel, 115 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh Demolition of existing hotel and redevelopment of the site for purpose built student accommodation including landscaping and all ancillary development.

Consultations

Roads Authority

Further to the memorandum dated the 24th of July 2020 and the subsequent amendments made the application should be refused

Reasons:

1. Whilst it is acknowledged that Transport is willing to accept external cycle stores that the applicant has made improvements to the proposed stores. The proposals are still considered contrary to LDP Policy Tra 4 - Design of Off-Street Car and Cycle Parking for the following reasons:
 - a. The location of the external store to the rear of the property is not considered an acceptable location due to the lack of natural surveillance;
 - b. The cycle store is not considered to be completely weatherproof and secure;

Should the application be approved please include the following as condition or informative as required:

1. The applicant will be required to:
 - a. Remove the vehicular access point from Lasswade road as it is no longer required;
 - b. Contribute the sum of £2,000 to progress a suitable order to redetermine sections of footway and carriageway as necessary for the development;
2. In support of the Council's LTS Cars1 policy, the applicant should consider contributing the sum of £18,000 (£1,500 per order plus £5,500 per car) towards the provision of car club vehicles in the area;
3. In accordance with the Council's LTS Travplan3 policy, the applicant should consider developing a Travel Plan including provision of pedal cycles (inc. electric cycles), secure cycle parking, public transport travel passes, a Welcome Pack, a high-quality map of the neighbourhood (showing cycling, walking and public transport routes to key local facilities), timetables for local public transport;

Note:

- I. The application has been assessed under the CEC's parking standards (Jan 2020). These permit the following:
 - a. A maximum of 17 car parking spaces (1 space per 6 beds). 0 car parking spaces are proposed;

- b. A minimum of 103 cycle parking spaces (1 space per bed). The applicant is proposing 70 communal cycle parking spaces and 38 electric bikes;
- c. As 0 car parking is proposed there is no requirement for EV or Accessible car parking;
- d. A minimum of 4 motorcycle parking spaces (1 space per 25 beds). 0 dedicated motorcycle parking is proposed;

II. Car ownership and usage associated with Student accommodation generally is relatively low, and with the site being adjacent to bus stops that is served by a city centre bound service (Lothian 31) and the proposals related to the e-bike hire, the level of car parking is considered acceptable and it complies with the current parking standards;

III. With regards to the level of cycle parking, whilst there is nothing definitive regarding bike/e-bike hire as a substitute for cycle parking within CEC's policies or guidance, the proposal of 38 e-bikes to be provided by the applicant to aid the future residents travel requirements (pg 31 of D&A statement) instead of the required amount of communal cycle parking is considered acceptable;

IV. There is an expectation that cycle parking for new build developments be internal within the buildings, mainly for security reasons and ease of accessibility. Whilst exceptions can be made to accept external stores, these must be designed to a high standard and be placed in areas of easy access and good natural surveillance. The proposed location of the store in the northern corner of the site is not considered to be a part of the site that will have good natural surveillance. The design of the store is not considered to be adequately weatherproof and secure due the proposed slatted sides and open metal mesh doors. The following guidance documents are relevant when assessing this application:

- a. Cycle by Design (2010) - Transport Scotland;
- b. Edinburgh Street Design Guidance Fact Sheet C7 - Cycle Parking (Draft);

Archaeology

Further to your consultation request I would like to make the following comments and recommendations in respect to this application for the demolition of existing hotel and redevelopment of the site for purpose-built student accommodation including landscaping and all ancillary development.

The Victorian Northfield House was constructed in 1870 as a standalone villa on what 19th century OS maps show as a triangular piece of open ground (farmland) formed by the junction of Lasswade Road, the historic road access road to the medieval settlement of Stenhouse the line of the Stenhouse Burn. Although no sites have been recorded from the site itself, such a prominent location would lend itself to earlier settlement.

Although unlisted Northfield House is regarded as having local historic interest in terms of the 19th century development of rural Edinburgh and the wider Liberton area and so is seen as occurring within an area of archaeological potential given its historic crossroads location. Accordingly, this application must be considered therefore under terms the Scottish Government Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), PAN 02/2011 and Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) 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 seek to demolish the current Victorian villa, an action which would have an obvious significant adverse impact. However, although regrettable the loss on balance of this historic building is not seen as significant enough to warrant refusal of planning permission. However it is essential that a detailed historic building survey (annotated plans, elevations, photographic and written description) prior to demolition as part of the overall programme of archaeological works.

As stated, the site is regarded as being of archaeological potential given its historic location at the cross roads of two historic roads and Stenhouse Burn. Although affected by the current use of the site, the proposed development will require extensive excavations in terms of demolition and construction of new buildings, utilities etc. Accordingly, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological excavation is undertaken prior to development / demolition.

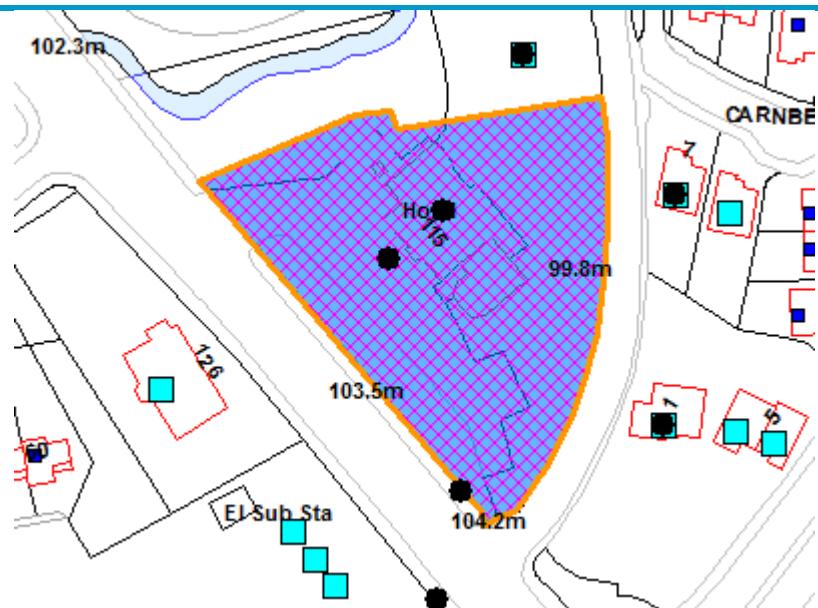
This will require a phased archaeological excavation. The initial phase will be an archaeological evaluation up to a maximum of 10% prior to demolition, to assess what may survive on site. The results will determine the scope of further mitigation strategies to be drawn up to ensure the appropriate protection and/or full excavation, recording and analysis of any surviving archaeological remains affected.

Accordingly, it is essential that the following condition is attached to this consent to ensure that undertaking of the above elements of archaeological work are undertaken.

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

The work must 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



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