

Development Management Sub-Committee Report

Wednesday 7 December 2022

**Application for Listed Building Consent
New Parliament House, 5 - 7 Regent Road, Edinburgh.**

Proposal: Form new premises for St Mary's Music School including demolition of later ancillary buildings, new residential, teaching and practice facilities, new landscaped public garden, new basement created under Main Hall to provide foyer and associated ancillary works (as amended).

**Item – Other Item at Committee
Application Number – 22/02450/LBC
Ward – B11 - City Centre**

Reasons for Referral to Committee

The proposed works affect an iconic category A listed building and are substantial. Therefore, the application must be determined by the Development Management Sub Committee due to being of significant public interest.

Recommendation

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

Summary

The proposed development will preserve an iconic listed building in Edinburgh's historic core in an enduring and sustainable use. The scheme is conservation-led and the proposed alterations and extensions are informed by thorough research of the building and its historical development.

The proposals are acceptable in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

SECTION A – Application Background

Site Description

The application site comprises the former Royal High School with its grounds and ancillary buildings. The site, measuring 1.13 hectares is located in a prominent, elevated position on the north side of Regent Road at the base of Calton Hill.

The former school, including the retaining/boundary walls, gateposts and railings are category A listed (reference LB27987, listed on 19 April 1966). The main building, known as the Hamilton Building, was designed in the Greek revival style by Thomas Hamilton in 1825-1829 and is composed of a strong symmetrical grouping of the principal Doric temple-pavilion, with flanking colonnades and subsidiary temples (the East and West Pavilions). Architecturally, the building is widely regarded as an exemplar of its type.

The listed group includes the Lodge on the north-west side of the site (built in 1885) and a classical style, classroom block (the Gymnasium Building) sitting to the north-east of the main building. The northern boundary of the former school grounds is enclosed by a deep retaining wall (also part of this listing). The wall runs alongside the public walkway on Calton Hill and there is a tower at its eastern end, currently hidden from view by vegetation and the Gymnasium Building. Other buildings within the site are listed as they were built before 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building. These buildings include a block known as the Classroom Building situated to the north-west of the Hamilton Building on the northern edge of the site, and the Luncheon Hall located to the south of the Gymnasium Building.

The Hamilton Building, Pavilions, Gymnasium Building and Lodge are on the Buildings at Risk Register.

An area of informal landscaping, including small trees and shrubs, is located at the western end of the site next to the entrance to the former school and the walkway to Calton Hill. This area contains a car park which is largely screened from public view by the planting. There is a former playground space to the rear of the building and between the buildings at the eastern end. There are terraces and lawns at the front of the site which slope down towards the boundary wall on Regent Road.

There is a collection of category A listed buildings on Calton Hill, including National Monument (reference LB27820), Nelson's Monument (reference LB27823), Dugald Stewart Monument (reference LB27835), Playfair's Monument (reference LB27826) and The City Observatory (reference LB27603), all listed on 19 April 1966. Other category A listed buildings in proximity to the site are: The Robert Burns Monument (by Thomas Hamilton, reference LB27826, listed on 19 April 1966) to the east of the Royal High School on the opposite side of Regent Road; 1 Regent Terrace situated immediately to the east of the site (reference LB29618, listed on 16 December 1965 and part of the 'Calton A' group of listed buildings) and St Andrew House (reference LB27756, listed on 14 December 1970) located to the south-east of the former school, on the opposite side of Regent Road. There is a category B listed 'K6' telephone box (reference LB49151, listed on 19 March 2003) to the west of the site on the northern pavement of Regent Road.

The public park on Calton Hill lies to the north of the site. The park is designated as a Special Landscape Area in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), being part of the Arthur's Seat Volcano. The part is also included in Historic Environment Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

The site is within 800m of Holyrood Park, which is a Royal Park and a scheduled monument, (reference SM13032, designated on 7 February 2013) and also within 800 metres of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which is a Royal Palace and category A listed building (reference LB28022, listed on 14 December 1970). The associated Holyrood Abbey, precinct and remains are designated as a scheduled monument (reference SM13031, designated on 7 February 2013).

The site is located in the New Town Conservation Area and the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

Description of the Proposal

This application is an amendment to the previously approved listed building consent application (reference 15/05665/LBC) to conserve, adapt and extend the original buildings of the former Royal High School to form a new school and public performance space as premises for St Mary's Music School.

The Gymnasium Building, Luncheon Hall and Classroom Block will be demolished.

The key proposed external alterations proposed are as follows:

Hamilton Building

- form a glazed slot in the portico terrace directly behind the columns to allow daylight into the new performance space foyer at lower ground level and install a glass balustrade along the north edge of the slot;
- create a wide glazed entrance opening below the portico on the south elevation, remove part of the existing steps to either side and erect a central flight of steps to access the existing terraced area on the level below (for use by those attending the performance venue);
- remove the existing railings enclosing the terrace at lower ground floor level and re-erect a substantial section at basement level on the southern boundary;
- install 397mm high bronze planters with 40mm high bronze flat bar handrails forming protective balustrades to enclose the proposed terraces and walkways to the south of the portico;
- replace the existing four rooflights adjacent to the Main Hall roof with two new linear rooflights;
- adapt the former Assembly Hall to form a public performance space, including the removal of the existing tiered seating and floor and installation of a new floor structure spanning the width of the room to support a retractable seating system;
- excavate the basement area to create a large, vault-roofed foyer space for the proposed concert hall;
- install new stair and lift access to provide circulation to and from the concert hall; and
- make minor slappings and sub-divisions at all levels.

New Extension

A low-lying, contemporary style, predominantly glazed and flat/mono-pitch roofed extension to house residential accommodation for boarders, teaching space and practise rooms will be erected to the north and east of the Hamilton Building. The proposed structure is split over two storeys, covering the majority of the eastern side of the site and stepping down to follow the site topography. The northern element of the extension will sit parallel to the rear elevation of the original building and is single storey apart from two symmetrically-placed, two-storey, octagonal-plan 'turrets' with octagonal glazed cupolas. The new extension will be linked to the Hamilton Building at lower ground level via stairs and a lift housed within a stone-faced circular tower. These stairs and lift will also connect the teaching/practise level with the residential accommodation on the level below. The proposed materials comprise mainly double-glazed, timber/aluminium composite-framed windows, ashlar sandstone walling, ventilated power-coated aluminium panelling, dark-grey finished galvanised steel fascia and grass/wildflower roofs with areas of zinc standing-seam and arrays of photovoltaic panels.

New Entrance Pavilion

The above extension will include a two-storey entrance structure at the west end, accommodating a reception area on the ground floor and administration area at first floor level. The new pavilion comprises a traditionally shaped form with contemporary style detailing. The proposed materials are similar to the rest of the extension, but with smooth-finished, pre-cast stone framing. A double-height section at the south end will allow service, delivery and emergency vehicles through to access the new school.

West Pavilion

The West Pavilion will be converted into a cafe, involving the removal of the existing external steps and flight of steps on the terrace to the immediate south, reduction in the level of this terrace and formation of a new opening in the north elevation to make the entrance accessible. The opening will be predominantly glazed with a solid panel on one side.

East Pavilion

The East Pavilion is proposed for use as ancillary staff residential accommodation at upper ground floor level and service space below. A slapping will be made in the rear wall at basement level to provide access to the service areas within the new extension.

Entrance Lodge

The existing Entrance Lodge is to be converted to form ancillary accommodation for teaching staff. The only external alteration proposed is the removal of the existing stone entrance steps and replacement with an accessible ramp.

Boundaries

The majority of the original walls and railings on the boundary of the site are to be retained. Apart from the relocated section of railings to the north of the portico as described above, two runs of existing railings on retaining walls within the east section of the site are to be removed and stored for use elsewhere on the site. Alterations are proposed to the existing entrance gates and railings at the main site entrance on Regent Road to the west of the site to incorporate form a 4.2 metre wide vehicle access and two matching-width pedestrian gates on either side, one to access the new western garden area. This will involve the reduction of the existing pedestrian gates by 435mm each, extension of the existing vehicular gates and repositioning of the original stone gatepiers.

Access to the performance venue is proposed via the two existing openings with gates in the retaining wall below the portico on Regent Road.

Scheme 2

The revised scheme proposes:

- the reduction of the height of the new Entrance Pavilion by one metre and re-alignment of the structure at right angles to the site retaining wall;
- the set back of the link structure between the Hamilton Building and new extension to behind the screen wall; and
- the further set back and reduction in scale of the proposed planters and handrails to the south of the Hamilton Building; and
- the retention of the historic pedestrian gates below the portico on Regent Road and
- the removal of only two original columns within the Assembly Hall, rather than the replacement of all with console brackets.

Key Changes to the 2015 Application

- the creation of a glazed slot in the portico terrace;
- the formation of a café within the West Pavilion, including a new entrance opening in the pavilion wall and new external terrace;
- the extension of the practise rooms along the north boundary wall to adjoin a new entrance pavilion; and
- the formation of a plantroom/service area within the east section of the new extension at basement and lower ground floor level, accessed via the existing Regent Road entrance and East Pavilion courtyard.

Planning Permission Application

The proposed change of use, external alterations, demolition of the Gymnasium Building, Classroom Building and Luncheon Hall are also assessed in the associated application for planning permission (application reference 22/00327/LBC), along with the proposed landscaping and parking.

Supporting Information

The following supporting documents have been submitted with this application and are available to view on the Planning and Building Standards Online Services:

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

Relevant Site History

15/02381/PAN

New Parliament House

5 - 7 Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH7 5BL

Conservation and adaption of former Royal High School building designed by Thomas Hamilton to form new premises for St Mary's Music School and adaption and demolition of later ancillary buildings essential to form new residential and practice facilities for the school.

Approved

5 June 2015

15/03989/FUL

New Parliament House

5 - 7 Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH7 5BL

Change of use, alterations to and restoration of principal former Royal High School building and pavilions (original Thomas Hamilton-designed school buildings), demolition of ancillary buildings including the former Gymnasium Block and Lodge, new build development, new/improved vehicular, service and pedestrian accesses, landscaping, parking, public realm and other works to create a world class hotel of international standing with associated uses (including publicly accessible bars (public house) and restaurants (Class 3)).

Refused

18 December 2015

15/03990/LBC

New Parliament House

5 - 7 Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH7 5BL

Refurbishment (external and internal), alteration and extension of principal former Royal High School building and pavilions, demolition of former Lodge, Gymnasium Block, demolition of 2 curtilage buildings (former Classroom Block and Luncheon Hall), demolition of existing gates, wall (in part) and formation of new service access.

Refused

21 December 2015

15/05662/FUL
New Parliament House
5 - 7 Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5BL

Project proposes conservation of Thomas Hamilton designed former Royal High School building to form new premises for St Mary's Music School. Combined with demolition of later ancillary buildings, space to the East is created for new residential, teaching/practice facility. Proposed new landscaped public garden to West. New basement created under Main Hall to provide new foyer giving access to public performance spaces above.

Granted
27 February 2017

15/05665/LBC
New Parliament House
5 - 7 Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5BL

Project proposes conservation of Thomas Hamilton designed former Royal High School building to form new premises for St Mary's Music School. Combined with demolition of later ancillary buildings, space to East is created for new residential, teaching + practice facility. To West, a new landscaped public garden is proposed. A new basement created located under the Main Hall to provide new foyer giving access to the public performance spaces above (as amended).

Granted
27 February 2017

17/00587/LBC
New Parliament House
5 - 7 Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5BL

Refurbishment (external/internal), alteration + extension of principal former Royal High School buildings (to include works to north elevation to create new door openings/new corridor links), demolition of former Lodge, Gymnasium Block, demolition of 2 curtilage buildings (former Classroom Block + Luncheon Hall), demolition of existing gates/wall (in part) to facilitate development of a world class hotel.

Refused
7 September 2017

17/00588/FUL
New Parliament House
5 - 7 Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5BL

Change of Use, Alterations to + Restoration of Principal Former Royal High School Building/Pavilions (Original Thomas Hamilton-designed school buildings). Demolition of ancillary buildings including former Gymnasium Block/Lodge, New Build Development, New/Improved vehicular, service/pedestrian accesses.

Landscaping/Parking/Public Realm + other works to create a world class Hotel of International Standing with associated Uses (Including publicly accessible bars (Public House) + Restaurants Class 3.

Refused

11 September 2017

Other Relevant Site History

DPEA references PPA-230-2178 and LBC-230-2076

Appeals dismissed against refusal of planning permission reference 15/03989/FUL and listed building consent reference 15/03990/LBC.

20 October 2020

DPEA references PPA-230-2213 and LBC-230-2118

Appeals dismissed against refusal of planning permission reference 17/00588/FUL and listed building consent reference 17/00587/LBC.

20 October 2020

Pre-Application process

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

Consultation Engagement

Historic Environment Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland

New Town and Broughton Community Council

Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of the consultation response.

Publicity and Public Engagement

Date of Neighbour Notification: Not Applicable

Date of Renotification of Neighbour Notification: Not Applicable

Press Publication Date(s): 10 June 2022.

Site Notices Date(s): 6 June 2022.

Number of Contributors: 2

Section B - Assessment

Determining Issues

Due to the proposals relating to a listed building(s) and being within a conservation area, this report will first consider the proposals in terms of Sections 59 and 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (the "1997 Heritage Act"):

- a) Is there a strong presumption against granting planning permission due to the proposals:
 - (i) harming the listed building or its setting? or
 - (ii) conflicting with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- b) If the strong presumption against granting planning permission is engaged, are there any significant public interest advantages of the development which can only be delivered at the scheme's proposed location that are sufficient to outweigh it?

This report will then consider the proposed development under Sections 25 and 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the 1997 Act):

If the proposal is in accordance with the development plan the determination should be to grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise?

If the proposal is not in accordance with the development plan the determination should be refuse planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise?

In the assessment of material considerations this report will consider:

- the Scottish Planning Policy presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is a significant material consideration due to the development plan being over 5 years old;
- equalities and human rights;
- public representations and
- any other identified material considerations.

Assessment

To address these determining issues, it needs to be considered whether:

- a) **The proposals harm the listed building or its setting?**
- a) **The proposals harm the listed building and its setting?**

The following HES guidance is relevant in the determination of this application:

- Managing Change: Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings
- Managing Change: Demolition
- Managing Change: Setting

The former Royal High School is a nationally, as well as internationally, important building, being the finest example of Greek Revival architecture in Scotland with no other building matching it in terms of ambition, site, function or form. The building stands not only as an architectural masterpiece but also as one of the most culturally important buildings of its time and one of the most significant buildings in Scotland. Significant interventions are proposed as part of the redevelopment proposals.

A conservation-based approach mainly comprising repair, maintenance and improvement is proposed for the Hamilton Building. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) does not object to this application or the corresponding listed building application and considers that the proposals represent a measured re-use of a nationally and internationally important site and building. HES welcomes the proposed restoration and repairs to the listed buildings on the site and the design of the new school accommodation blocks which, by their scale and positioning, will firmly retain the primacy of the Hamilton Building on the site. However, HES raises concerns relating to specific elements of the proposals affecting the main listed building and its setting. These are addressed in the assessment below.

Demolitions

HES emphasises the importance of retaining listed buildings and only resorting to demolition if every other option has been explored. Keeping listed buildings in an existing use, or finding a new use that has the least possible impact, are the best way to protect them.

In this case, a significant material consideration in relation to demolition is the overall approach to conservation within the site. This therefore needs to be considered alongside HES guidance in respect of the proposed demolition of the category A listed Gymnasium Building, Luncheon Hall and Classroom Block. The value of returning the main Hamilton Building to a long-term, sustainable use cannot be underestimated and the demolition of these buildings is necessary to successfully deliver the requirements of the music school. The conservation-based approach to the site does not permit significant new build in the western section to protect the setting of the Hamilton Building, so the new teaching and accommodation facilities need to be located to the north and east of the main building, hence the need for the demolition of these selected listed structures.

The assessment of this proposal falls under the HES Managing Change guidance, "Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings" as the proposals involve the selective demolition of parts of the listed building to enable the most significant parts to be retained. As the listing description includes the three structures proposed for demolition, the application does not need to be assessed under HES's guidance, "Demolition of Listed Buildings" as the principal listed building and most significant original structures are being retained.

The Luncheon and Classroom blocks are listed by virtue of their pre-1948 age and location within the curtilage of the Hamilton Building and are not of intrinsic special interest. In contrast, the Gymnasium Building is a late 19th century, classical style, structure of intrinsic historic and architectural interest.

However, this building occupies a significant area of the north-west section of the site, and this is precisely where a substantial part of the new facilities for the music school needs to be located to avoid having an unacceptable impact on the setting of the Hamilton Building.

In summary, the significant historic and cultural benefits to be gained by bringing the principal, category A listed building into use as a music school with a concert hall provide strong justification for the demolition of the category A listed Gymnasium Building and other two listed structures. A condition has been applied to ensure that all listed structures to be removed are officially recorded and details regarding the salvage/re-use of the materials are submitted before these buildings are demolished and any historic material is removed from the site.

Alterations

Hamilton Building

The most significant alteration to the building's external fabric is on the principal (south) elevation, where the formation of a new opening is proposed below the portico, to allow for an entrance into the foyer of the new performance space. This is considered an essential element of the long-term viability of the project for the music school. Although this entails a significant intervention in the main façade, the new entrance and terrace would be masked from key public viewpoints by the existing retaining wall and would not be visible from Regent Road. In the revised application, the height of the new opening has been reduced to lessen conspicuousness further and the fully glazed infill is an appropriate way to enclose the opening whilst allowing maximum daylight to penetrate the new performance space.

Another significant intervention associated with the proposed performance space foyer at lower ground level, comprises the formation of a glazed slot in the portico floor directly behind the columns and installation of a glass balustrade along the north edge of the slot. HES initially opposed this alteration as it will involve the removal of a section of the existing Craigleith stone paving and recommended the installation of smaller individual lightwells instead. This paving is not the original Arbroath sandstone paving which was replaced by Craigleith sandstone in 1841, but it is nevertheless of significant value in terms of age and quality. HES now accepts this intervention given the importance of this design to the functionality and appearance of the performance space entrance. Whilst the proposed foyer is an underground space, the new lightwell will introduce a beam of sunlight into the foyer which will penetrate into the space and create an intriguing view of the portico soffit. Individual lightwells would not achieve the same effect. A detailed plan of the existing flagstones and proposed configuration has been submitted and the removed paving will be salvaged for re-use elsewhere on the site.

The portico will be accessible to the public from the main assembly hall, so a glass balustrade is proposed for safety purposes, located on the inside of the columns along the north edge of the lightwell. HES has expressed concern that the use of glass in this location will 'draw the eye' due to its reflectiveness and recommends the use of simple bronze or bronze-finished railings instead. However, in the set-back position proposed, this balustrade will not be visible from the street and is therefore acceptable.

Neither the proposed lightwell, nor balustrade will have an adverse effect on the visually solid, robust and self-contained character of the portico. A condition has been applied to ensure that the detailing of the balustrade is appropriately refined.

The removal of part of the existing steps to either side of the portico and erection of a new central flight of steps accessing the existing terrace on the level below was approved in the previous application as a relatively modest and discreet intervention to enable use of this terrace as a congregation space for the new performance venue.

Another concern of HES is the proposed removal of the existing railings enclosing the existing terrace at lower ground floor level on the south façade below the portico. This alteration was accepted in the previous application to enable access to the new performance space entrance via the upper terrace. Also approved was the re-erection of a substantial section of these railings at basement level on the south boundary and this is still proposed in the current scheme. Further detailed drawings have been submitted which demonstrate that the existing railings will be carefully dismantled and altered sensitively and minimally at the base to fit within the allocated area on the south elevation. Any leftover sections will be stored for future use on the site.

A new intervention proposed in this application is the installation of planters with handrails to enclose the terraces and walkways that will be formed to the south of the portico. HES is concerned that these are likely to be visible on the principal frontage, reducing the solid monumentality of Hamilton's masonry building and has suggested simple set-back railings instead. However, the main reason for the planters is to allow lower height handrails that will satisfy building regulations. The planters will provide a deep barrier in front of the rails that will deter people from going near an otherwise unprotected edge. Railings alone would have to be significantly higher and have closely spaced uprights. These would be more conspicuous than the proposed arrangement and would appear jarring against the clean horizontal lines of the terrace edges.

The proposed planters and handrails are of minimum height necessary to meet building regulations and have been positioned as far from the terrace edges as possible to minimise conspicuousness. The proposed bronze finish is appropriate in this context and any visible areas will sit unobtrusively within the general horizontality of Hamilton's composition.

The other proposed external alterations to the original Hamilton Building are relatively minor and will have no detrimental impact on historic or architectural character.

Internally, the building is mostly functional in character with the main space of value being the former Assembly Hall. This important space will be retained, although modifications are required to form a public performance hall that meets functional and safety requirements. Whilst the removal of the existing tiered seating and floor within the main auditorium will alter the character of the space, this is an essential alteration to enable the installation of a new floor structure that will support a retractable seating system. Also, the interior of the Hall was altered in the 1970s when the former school became the proposed site for the Scottish Assembly. These alterations included the removal of the original padded benches and extensive rebuilding of the central floor area, and the extension of the gallery around the south end of the hall involving the removal of the original symmetrical staircases.

The loss of the tiered seating and floor is offset by significant conservation gain through the restoration of the original balcony and stair arrangement at the south end of the Hall to match the original detailing. The retention of six of the eight original columns is welcomed and the two to be removed are at north end of the Hall where two new stairs need to be installed to meet fire escape requirements. The proposed fixed raked auditorium seating against the north wall will have no detrimental impact on the volume or architectural detailing of the Assembly Hall. Conditions have been applied to ensure that the detailing of the new stairs at the north end of the Hall is appropriate and that the two removed columns are re-sited in an appropriate location within the new landscaping.

The excavation of the basement area is acceptable in principle as the basement was altered in the 1970s and any original spaces that remain are functional in nature. This will allow for the creation of a substantial foyer space for the concert hall above and will have no adverse impact on character.

Other principal spaces within the Hamilton Building will be retained and conserved with any alterations limited to amending previous alterations or carrying out minor new interventions.

West Pavilion

The proposed use of this pavilion as a café will help to maintain the structure and the proposed new contemporary style entrance in the blank north elevation is acceptable to provide daylighting and a connection with the proposed café terrace. A substantial area of this elevation is subterranean at present and the proposed arrangement will reveal the full north elevation whilst maintaining a significant area of sandstone.

East Pavilion

Similarly, the east pavilion will benefit in terms of maintenance from the proposed use as ancillary staff residential accommodation with service space below. The new slapping in the rear wall at basement level will not be conspicuous and will provide the required level access to the service areas within the new extension.

Entrance Lodge

The conversion of the existing entrance lodge to form ancillary accommodation for teaching staff is another positive intervention and the proposed removal of the existing stone entrance steps is acceptable to accommodate an accessible ramp.

Entrance Gates and Boundary Railings

The proposed widening of the listed entrance gates and railings at the main site entrance on Regent Road is necessary to incorporate an access of adequate width for service vehicles to enter the site without risking damage to the historic gateposts. These posts have been damaged by vehicle movements in the past and the proposed arrangement, detailed in the submitted drawings, will have no detrimental effect on the overall appearance and composition of the gate piers and gates.

The removal of two runs of existing railings from retaining walls within the east section of the site is acceptable to enable construction of the new teaching and accommodation extension. These railings will be stored for use elsewhere on the site and a condition has been applied requiring details of the proposed storage location and future use.

New Extension (including new Entrance Pavilion)

The proposed extension will result in a significant increase in the footprint of the original building on its northern and eastern sides. However, the new structure is low-lying and designed in a "quiet" contemporary style to ensure it appears subservient in scale and appearance in relation to the Hamilton Building. The proposed connection to the historic structure at low level is discreet and sensitively handled and allows clear visual and physical separation between the old and new buildings at ground level. The specified materials palette is an appropriate high-quality mix of traditional and modern which will create an elegant and distinctive but complementary structure.

The impact of this extension is assessed further in the following section.

Setting

Historic Environment Scotland's document 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Setting' states;

"Setting is the way the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced".

Hamilton Building

The design of the former Royal High School was conceived integrally with the National Monument to the north on Calton Hill. The building was placed on the side of the hill, mimicking the relationship of the Propylea or Lesser Temple (Gateway) to the Parthenon (National Monument) on the Acropolis (Calton Hill), hence the name for Edinburgh, *"the Athens of the North"*. As well as commanding a prominent position on Calton Hill, the Hamilton Building terminates Regent Terrace and provides the foreground for the arrangement of buildings on Calton Hill. The ancillary buildings on the site along with the Burns Monument and landscaped historic gardens on the south side of Regent Road provide a frame for the classical style, centrepiece building.

The proposed new teaching and accommodation block on the eastern section of the site sits lower than the existing Gymnasium Building and its stepped massing and form will follow the natural topography of the hill. The simple, layered style of the design will allow the Hamilton Building to retain primacy when viewed from the most prominent aspects. The inclusion of planting and green roofs will anchor the building into its wider landscape context, making it visually recessive in contrast with the imposing, symmetrical architecture of the Hamilton Building. The relationship between buildings and landscape as originally planned will be enhanced as a result of the low-profile form of the proposed extension.

Whilst the new practise rooms and classrooms proposed to the rear of the Hamilton Building will interrupt views of the building on the approach from the west of the site and from the path to Calton Hill, this will have no serious impact on the historic setting as the north elevation, which formed the main entrance to the former Royal High School, will remain legible. An uncharacteristic series of interlocking spaces will be created close to the main building façade, but the series of spaces created will provide new visual interest in this area of the site. The proposed structure will not follow the sweep of the Calton Hill retaining wall, contrary to HES's recommendation, but sufficient space will remain between the Hamilton Building and new extension to allow 'breathing space' for the listed building. HES has also questioned whether the proposed glazed cupolas to the new practice blocks are appropriate, but these features will not be conspicuous in key views given that two of these cupolas will be to the rear of the main building and the third will merge visually with the glazing of the new extension to the west.

As regards the proposed Entrance Pavilion, the purpose of this structure is to separate the buildings and external areas of the music school (which will be used by staff, students and performers) from the western garden, cafe and southern terraces (for use by the general public). The proposed pavilion is designed to be a distinctive gateway through which all school members and visitors must pass.

The design of the new pavilion structure is influenced by the historic West and East Pavilions having approximately the same footprint, proportions and roof pitch and acts as an aedicule within which sits a reception space reading as a separate building. HES previously recommended the omission of the new pavilion on the grounds that it would obscure the significant approach to, and visibility of, the west and rear façades of the Hamilton Building. In the revised scheme, the proposed structure is aligned at right angles to the north retaining wall and the height has been lowered by one metre. These amendments mean that views of the main listed building from the locations specified above will be less interrupted, including clearer sight of the roof of the Hamilton Building. A series of views are included in the updated Design and Access Statement which demonstrate the impact of the new pavilion on key approaches from the west and how the degree of concealment of the Hamilton Building changes depending on the viewpoint. Overall, the impact on the setting of the main building will not be significant and the proposed Entrance Pavilion will provide an appropriate and visually interesting addition to the site. The use of precast concrete for the frame and proposed contemporary detailing alongside otherwise traditional materials and a traditional form and will subtly distinguish the new architecture from the historic pavilions.

The proposed site landscaping is assessed in detail in section c) but in summary, the removal of several existing trees on and around the site, along with the landscape design, materials and planting specified will enhance the setting of the Hamilton Building and restore the visual prominence of the built structure. At present, this imposing listed building is partially concealed by unmanaged tree and vegetation growth and the formality and clarity of its landscape setting as originally planned has been diminished as a result.

Surrounding Listed Buildings

The low-profile form of the proposed new extension and its careful siting within the site's topography will ensure that the structure has no adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings or monuments within the vicinity of the application site, including those on Calton Hill.

Conclusion in relation to the listed building

The proposed conservation-based scheme for restoring and revitalising this iconic listed building in an appropriate and long-term, sustainable use represents significant conservation gain, despite the loss of ancillary listed structures. The scheme includes benefits to the wider landscape context of the site and overall setting of the building.

The proposals are acceptable in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 and relevant HES guidance.

b) The proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area?

Section 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states:

New Town Conservation Area

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

- *" Georgian and early Victorian rectilinear development of grand formal streets lined by fine terraced building expressing neo-classical order, regularity, symmetry, rigid geometry, and a hierarchical arrangement of buildings and spaces;*
- *terminated vistas within the grid layouts and the long-distance views across and out of the conservation area;*
- *a richly varied topography of ancient landform shaped by volcanism and later by glacial scouring;*
- *internationally important private and public open spaces lying within, and on the edge of a neoclassical grid pattern and reflecting the picturesque tradition of landscape improvement; and*
- *gardens that create open and framed long distant picturesque views of exceptional quality."*

The character and appearance of the former Royal High School and its landscape setting, which are key elements of the New Town Conservation Area, will be preserved and enhanced through the sensitive re-development and extension of the iconic, category A listed Hamilton Building to accommodate a sustainable and viable use. The proposed use as a music school is similar to the former use as a high school.

The Royal High School was purposefully designed and sited on a prominent location within the landscape setting of Calton Hill. The other monuments on the Hill are designed to be seen alongside one another within this urban landscape. The proposed retention of the Hamilton Building and West and East Pavilions, with minimal interventions to the exteriors, along with most of the original site boundary enclosures will ensure that the contribution these features make to the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved.

Whilst the listed Gymnasium Building and other structures to be demolished contribute to the character of the conservation area to varying extents, these buildings are not part of the original architectural group, so the proposed demolitions are justifiable, given the benefits of the retention of the principal listed buildings on the site and need to accommodate purpose-built facilities for the new music school. The most significant of these buildings, the Gymnasium Building, sits in the eastern section of the site where the bulk of the new build element of the proposed development has to be located to avoid having a detrimental impact on the setting of the Hamilton Building.

The massing and design of the proposed extension, in particular the low-profile form, respect for the topography of the site and "quiet" architecture with green roofs, will ensure that the Hamilton Building retains its dramatic presence as the centrepiece of this highly prominent and sensitive site within the New Town Conservation Area.

Setting of Old Town Conservation Area

The proposals have also been considered in terms of the impact on key views of the Old Town skyline and architecture from the top and sides of Calton Hill, given the site's location at the base of the Hill.

Key characteristics of the Old Town Conservation Area include:

- *" the landscape and topography formed by vigorous geological activity; and*
- *the quality of long-distance views both open and framed in out and through the spaces, and views from different levels and idiosyncratic angles."*

Whilst the new extension to the Hamilton Building will be visible from Calton Hill, this structure is low-lying and will not impact on views of the Old Town Conservation Area, including views of the Castle. There are two paths at lower level on the south flank of Calton Hill, but views of the Old Town from these paths are already obscured by foliage at the upper level and the Hamilton Building at lower level. On this basis, the proposed extension, including the glass cupolas on the turret structures to the north and east of the main building will have no impact on views of the Old Town.

Conclusion in relation to the conservation area

The proposed development will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area and will have no detrimental impact on the setting of the Old Town Conservation Area.

The proposals are acceptable in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

c) there are any other matters to consider?

The following matters have been identified for consideration:

Archaeological Remains

The site is within an area of archaeological significance containing the nationally important former Royal High School. Prior to the school's construction, the site occurred on the edge of the medieval burgh of the Canongate. The proposed scheme involves no changes to the approved 2015 application that necessitate further consultation with the City Archaeologist.

The demolition of three listed buildings requires a detailed programme of historic building to be undertaken prior to demolition, with particular focus on the Gymnasium Building, which is the most significant.

Accordingly, a condition has been applied to ensure that a comprehensive programme of archaeological work is undertaken which will include detailed historic building surveys prior to and during demolition/alteration works affecting the listed buildings on the site and a programme of public/community engagement during development.

Equalities and human rights

Due regard has been given to section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010. No impacts have been identified.

Consideration has been given to human rights. No impacts have been identified through the assessment and no comments have been received in relation to human rights.

Public representations

A summary of the representations is provided below:

material considerations

objection comments

- the proposed entrance pavilion will obstruct the view of the north-west corner of the west elevation of the Hamilton Building and the oblique view of the north elevation from the west, so the building should be reduced to a single storey structure; and
- the size of the new opening in the north elevation of the West Pavilion is excessive, as it involves the removal of an excessive amount of original wall to create a 'pocket' for the sliding doors with full width glazing above.

These comments are addressed in section a) of the assessment.

support comments

- the proposed redevelopment of this site to form a new Music School is an appropriate use of the buildings; and
- a suitable balance has been struck between the impact of the proposed slot in the portico of the Hamilton Building with increased light and access for the new basement space, and the set back of the new balustrade will reduce its visual intrusion.

non-material considerations

The comments relating to the impacts of structural alterations on the listed buildings, residential amenity, use of the existing Lodge and seating/tables on the external terraces are non-material in terms of the assessment of this application for listed building consent.

Conclusion in relation to other matters considered

The proposals do not raise any issues in relation to other material considerations identified.

Overall conclusion

The proposed development will preserve an iconic listed building in Edinburgh's historic core in an enduring and sustainable use. The scheme is conservation-led and the proposed alterations and extensions are informed by thorough research of the building and its historical development.

The proposals are acceptable in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Section C - Conditions/Reasons/Informatives

The recommendation is subject to the following;

Conditions :-

1. No demolition of any listed structures on the site shall commence until the applicant has confirmed in writing the start date for the new development by the submission of a Notice of Initiation for the associated planning application reference 22/02449/FUL.
2. A detailed specification, including trade names (where appropriate) and sources, of all the proposed external materials (including any recycled materials from the demolished structures) for the repairs and alterations to the retained historic assets on the site and proposed new buildings and landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before any repair/new construction work is commenced on site. Note: samples of the materials may be required.

3. Notwithstanding the details of the glazed balustrade on the portico terrace shown on drawing number AL-21-001 Revision A (CEC reference 76), the final design of this balustrade shall be refined to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. Detailed drawings of the agreed design shall be submitted and approval by the Planning Authority before the balustrade is installed.
4. No changes shall be made at any point to the glazing covering the new slot in the portico terrace without first informing the Planning Authority.
5. Details of the storage location and method for the remaining parts of the original railings removed from below the Hamilton Building portico and the original railings removed from the retaining walls within the east section of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before these railings are removed.
6. Details of the new stairs at the north end of the Assembly Hall and the proposed site within the landscaping for the two removed cast iron columns shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before these stairs are erected and the columns are removed.
7. No demolition/development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a comprehensive programme of archaeological work. This programme shall include detailed historic building surveys undertaken prior to and during demolition/strip out works of the three listed buildings to be removed and any alteration work to the Hamilton Building. These surveys will include surveyed elevations, phased plans, combined with photographic and written surveys and archival research to provide an accurate and permanent record of these historic buildings. The work shall also include a programme of public/community engagement during development (interpretation analysis and reporting, publication) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

Reasons:-

1. In order to retain and/or protect important elements of the existing character and amenity of the site.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
4. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
5. In order to retain and protect important historic fabric.
6. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.
7. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.

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.

Background Reading/External References

To view details of the application go to the [Planning Portal](#)

Further Information - Local Development Plan

Date Registered: 24 May 2022

Drawing Numbers/Scheme

01-12,13A-34A,35,37,38A-50A,51,53,54A,55,56A,57-67,73-78,80+81

Scheme 2

David Givan
Chief Planning Officer
PLACE
The City of Edinburgh Council

Contact: Clare Macdonald, Senior Planning Officer
E-mail:clare.macdonald@edinburgh.gov.uk

Summary of Consultation Responses

NAME: Historic Environment Scotland

COMMENT: Scheme 2

HES still has concerns with the scale and siting of the new reception gatehouse and its impact on the setting of the listed building. HES considers the scale of the proposed structure, in particular the shallow-pitched roof, will have an adverse impact on the setting of the Hamilton Building in terms of views of its west façade and rear elevation from the important western approach. HES recommends a simpler reception building, which could follow the temple design, but without a roof over the gateway. HES had also hoped that the proposed practise rooms/classrooms to the north of the main building, which now follow the sweep of the site retaining wall, could have been moved back further from the listed building's north façade.

Regarding the other proposed alterations, HES reiterates the previous comments stating a preference for individual lightwells rather than a slot in the Hamilton Building's portico floor and bronze-finished railings or steel wire rather than a glazed balustrade around the new opening. HES also considers that there is scope to retain either end of the existing railings on the south façade (facing Regent Road) and to re-use the existing gates on this elevation. HES remains unconvinced by the need for visible planters to the frontage of the building and would prefer simple set-back railings but notes the reduction in scale and extent of the planters.

HES welcomes the setting back of the link to the new eastern building behind the screen wall which will retain Hamilton's significant east elevation without alteration, with the original boundary railings reset.

Internally, HES welcomes the revisions that now retain the cast iron columns in the Assembly Hall, but notes the loss of northernmost columns which could be moved a relatively short distance and still be adapted/incorporated within the new stair enclosure.

DATE: 11 November 2022

NAME: Historic Environment Scotland

COMMENT: Scheme 1

HES welcomes the proposals create a National Centre for Music providing a future for one of Scotland's most significant buildings which is at risk.

Hamilton Building and Associated Listed Buildings

The principal of demolition of the ancillary buildings on the site has been accepted within the previous application. Consideration should be given to salvaging materials from the demolished buildings in line with HES's Managing Change advice on demolition.

HES welcomes the confirmation on the location, scale and dimensions of the proposed new structural opening under the portico of the Hamilton Building and concurs that this opening will not be visible from eye level on Regent Road. The preference would be for individual lightwells, rather than the proposed slot in the portico floor, but HES could accept the slot approach, provided the existing Craigleith slabs are salvaged for reuse elsewhere on the site. Simple railings, ideally bronze or bronze-finished, should be specified instead of the proposed glass balustrade.

HES accepts that the retention of the entire section of railings below the portico would be complicated and acknowledges that the removal of these railings already has consent. However, a reduction in the scale of the staircase rising to the proposed upper terrace would allow the majority of the railings to remain, with only a central opening. The gates to Regent Road on the south façade should be reused rather than renewed.

The proposed new barrier planters and handrails are likely to be visible on the frontage of the building and would reduce the solid monumentality and power of Hamilton's masonry building as a result, so HES would recommend simple set-back railings instead.

HES supports the approach for the restoration and revitalisation of the interior of the Hamilton building, including the opening-up of subdivided original volumes and reinstatement of significant original design features in the Assembly Hall. The cast iron columns in the Hall are accepted by all to be by Hamilton's hand, and represent his finished designs for the space, so HES remains unconvinced by their replacement with brackets.

The loss of the original vaulting and structure at the basement level is most unfortunate, but this has been agreed to be essential for the creation of the new events space. HES assumes that the proposed works will be suitably recorded.

New Extension

HES is concerned that the new reception/gatehouse block at the west end of the proposed flat-roofed teaching accommodation to the north of the Hamilton Building, would obscure the significant western approach to, and visibility of, the main building (both its west façade and rear). This element should be revised to remove the roof structure over the gateway, retaining a simpler reception building and an unroofed gateway. Also, the new gatehouse and classroom range should follow the sweep of the Calton Hill approach road and retaining wall to allow the main building 'breathing space' and to be experienced 'in the round'.

The glazed cupolas to the new practice blocks were not given planning permission in the previous proposal, and HES assumes this will still be the case. The link to the new eastern building from the Hamilton Building should be a minimal flat-roofed extension, rather than the proposed arched vault design.

DATE: 8 July 2022

NAME: New Town and Broughton Community Council

COMMENT: The Community Council is fully supportive of this proposal and considers that the current scheme represents a modest revision to the previously consented proposals, reflecting a more detailed and considered view of the facilities necessary to deliver a sustainable long-term use of the building, as well as a cultural asset to the city of Edinburgh and its residents.

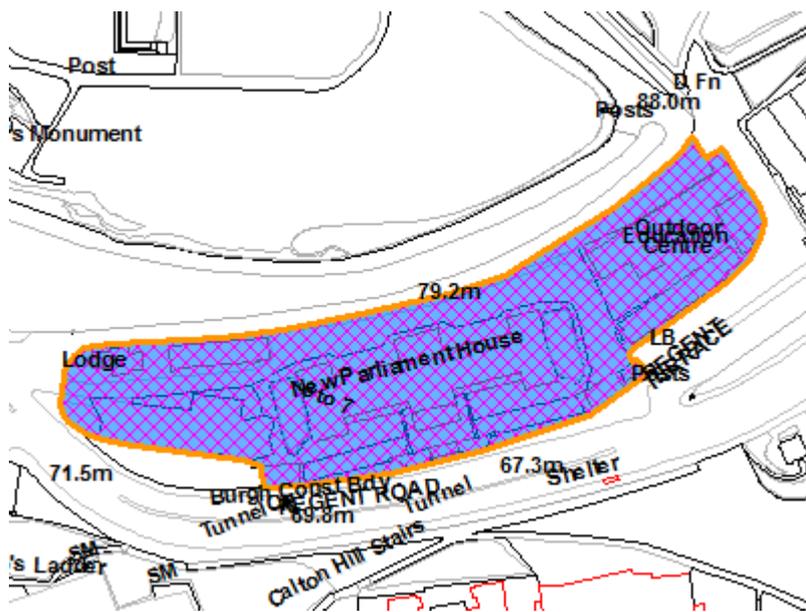
It appears that a suitable compromise has been achieved regarding the proposed glazed floor light to the external portico of the Hamilton Building.

The Community Council accepts the need for a clearly defined separate entrance for the music school but notes that the new pavilion appears (perhaps) unnecessarily dominant. This contemporary interpretation of a pavilion as the new school entrance could be detrimental to views of the Hamilton Building from Waterloo Place, although this may be acceptable when assessing the wider benefits of the proposal.

DATE: 4 July 2022

The full consultation response can be viewed on the [Planning & Building Standards Portal](#).

Location Plan



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