

Development Management Sub-Committee Report

Wednesday 25 October 2023

**Application for Listed Building Consent
Strathmore House, 4 Church Hill, Edinburgh.**

Proposal: Change of use from former nursing home to 6 private apartments. Proposals include car parking provision, private and communal amenity garden space, plus refuse, recycling, and bicycle storage facilities. Proposals include anew three storey new build extension located subserviently to the rear of the building with no impact upon the existing symmetrical front facade. All primary internal rooms are proportionally reinstated, and all existing ornate cornicing and fireplaces are retained in place (As amended).

**Item – Committee Decision
Application Number – 23/02101/LBC
Ward – B10 - Morningside**

Reasons for Referral to Committee

This application has been deferred to the Development Management Sub Committee on recommendation of the Chief Planning Officer.

Recommendation

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

Summary

The proposals have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and will not adversely impact on its special architectural and historic interest. The proposals will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is acceptable with regards to Section 14 and Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. There are no material considerations that outweigh this conclusion.

SECTION A – Application Background

Site Description

The application site is a substantial traditional detached villa located on the south side of Church Hill, Morningside. It has two storeys and a basement level and is finished in sandstone with a slate roof. The building was last in use as a nursing home.

There is a single storey side extension on the existing west elevation of the building that was granted permission in 2002.

The original villa plot was subdivided in the late 1980s with Chartwell (4b Church hill), a two-storey block of flats, developed to the south of the application building. The subdivision has resulted in a large area of hard standing for car parking. A shared access road runs through the eastern section of the site.

There are mature trees within the site.

The building is category B listed (date of listing: 30/03/1993, listing reference: LB27048) and is in the Merchiston and Greenhill conservation area.

Description of the Proposal

The application proposes alterations to support the conversion of former nursing home to form six residential flats.

The proposal is to remove the existing side extension and in replacement, erect a one and three storey flat roofed side extension. The three-storey element will sit back approximately by 13 metres from the front building line. The treatment finish includes dressed buff sandstone block/cladding, vertical standing seam zinc cladding, aluminium grey windows, and spandrel panels with painted grey balustrades.

Internally, the proposal seeks to retain most of the adapted layout with small alterations to existing studs' partitions. New openings between the front facing rooms are proposed on the first and second floors. In terms of downtakings, the proposal is to create an opening on the ground, first and second floor to facilitate the new extension on the west elevation.

The existing shared access from Church Hill is proposed to be retained and widened by 500mm.

A covered cycle storage is proposed against the east elevation of the building. The storage includes stands to facilitate twelve bikes. The cycle storage will be timber clad with metal frames.

To facilitate the proposed development, one individual tree will require to be removed and two trees will require pruning in height. In addition, partial removal of a tree group is required as part of long-term management. The proposal includes four replacement tree planting.

Scheme One

The original site plan was revised reduce impact on existing trees. This included re-positioning the widening of existing access road, reducing the number of car parking to facilitate the relocation of the cycle parking and replacing stone wall boundary with hedging instead.

Relevant Site History

No relevant site history.

Other Relevant Site History

None.

Pre-Application process

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

Consultation Engagement

Historic Environment Scotland

Archaeology

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): 26 May 2023

Site Notices Date(s): 23 May 2023

Number of Contributors: 1

Section B - Assessment

Determining Issues

Due to the proposals relating to a listed building(s) within a conservation area, this application for listed building consent requires to be assessed against Sections 14 and 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (the "1997 Heritage Act"):

- Having due regard to HES Policy and guidance, do the proposals:
 - a. harm a listed building or its setting? or
 - b. conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area?

- If the proposals do comply with HES Policy and guidance, are there any compelling reasons (including but not limited to the public sector equality duty) for not approving them?

- If the proposals do not comply with HES Policy and guidance, are there any compelling reasons (including but not limited to the public sector equality duty) for approving them?

Assessment

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

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

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

- Managing Change Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings
- Managing Change Extensions
- Managing Change Settings
- Managing Change External Walls
- Managing Change Interiors

The application is for a similar resubmission of a previously refused scheme which was dismissed on appeal at the Local Review Body and DPEA (applications 22/05336/FUL and 22/05607/LBC). The DPEA reporter's assessment (appeal reference, LBA-230-2251) is a relevant material consideration in the assessment of the current proposals. It should be noted the reporter did not take issue with the proposed side extension against the listed building or its impact on the conservation area. Instead, the issue related to the interior proportions of principal rooms being disrupted by the width of the openings to the new extension, subdivision of bedrooms with en-suites, subdivisions interfering with fireplaces and the degree of intervention to historic floor plans.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) were consulted on the proposals. They advise that the changes in this application represents a more sympathetic alteration of the listed building's internal layout that better protects its character and appearance. The proposed internal alterations work more with the villa's surviving floorplan, retaining the proportions of rooms which remain intact. The proposals also protect more of the hall's plan form on the ground floor. In addition, the retention of surviving fireplaces and cornicing is welcomed.

In terms of internal connection to the new side extension (kitchen and corridor), the proposals include timber panelled double doors and a single timber panel door. This will allow the historic proportion of the rooms to be preserved on the first and second floor.

A condition is required to make it clear that historic timber-panelled doors should be retained and reused. If required, they shall be retrofitted with intumescent strips and/or paint. This is to preserve the special interests of the listed building.

HES 'Managing Change Extensions' guidance acknowledges that it is difficult to set hard and fast ground rules for extending listed buildings as much of it depends on the site, the landscape, the scale, and form of the listed building and of the extension proposed.

A basic principle, however, is that an extension should play a subordinate role and avoids creating an unbalanced design. It also acknowledges that some substantial contemporary additions can be made to listed buildings where they can either have a differential or assertive contrast.

The principal elevation of the main building is symmetrical in appearance. The size and arrangement of windows on the side elevations are not linear or uniform in appearance. There is an existing single storey side extension on the west elevation of the building. Given the subdivision of the original villa plot to facilitate the residential development to the rear of the site, the original setting of the listed building has been compromised to a degree. This includes the access road that runs through the site, the size and distance of the neighbouring infill development to the rear of the site, and the size of the application plot itself. The development to the rear of the site occupies a large area of hardstanding for residents parking. The application plot has extensive tree cover to the front and to the sides.

The proposed side extension will be set back from the principal elevation of the main building. The flat roof element and the proposed use of vertical standing seam zinc cladding would contrast with the existing building. The ground floor element will be set back by 3 metres where it will largely be screened by an existing wall. The three-storey element will be set back approximately by 13 metres where it will have a depth of 5.5 metres on the west elevation of the existing building. Existing windows will not be affected by the proposed extension. Due to the degree of set back from the principal elevation, simplified treatment finish to the front, and existing tree cover, the proposed extension will not result in an unbalanced composition. While the extension to the front will provide a differential contrast, it will not result in adverse harm to the listed building or to its setting.

The design of the extension to the rear is more assertive with articulated detailing and use of treatment finish to break up its scale and massing. The use of contemporary windows and spandrel panels will provide a lightweight separation between the existing and new. The proposed use of vertical standing seam zinc cladding and dressed buff sandstone block will allow the new addition to read as a contemporary and complementary addition without resulting in adverse harm to the listed building or to its setting.

HES advise that the proposed design of the side extension, with its set-back, is acceptable in terms of form, materiality, scale, and siting.

A condition requiring sample details of all treatment finish to be provided is required. This is to consider this matter in more detail and to ensure that the materials are appropriate for its context.

As a category B listed villa, the site is of historic interest. The City's Archaeology recommends that a basic archaeological historic recording of the building is undertaken prior to development to provide a permanent record of the building and its Victorian interior decoration. A condition is applied to that effect.

Conclusion in relation to the listed building

The proposal will not impact on the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building and is acceptable with regards to Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

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

The Merchiston and Greenhill character appraisal advises that by the early 20th century, the spatial layout of the area was well established. The character of the street layout is dominated by Victorian villas, interspersed with substantial two, two and half and three storey terraces of outstanding quality. In the Churchill area there are significant contrasting changes of density and built form. Buildings are complemented by a profusion of mature trees, hedges, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls with gatepiers, metal railings, a variety of gates/fences and spacious roads. The villas incorporate a considerable variety and blend of architectural styles, unified with the use of local building materials, with grey sandstone and slated roofs.

The character appraisal also acknowledges that a number of sites within the conservation area have been redeveloped with modern block of flats. In some instances, their bulk and siting sharply contrast with the more elegant setting and fine urban grain that is prevalent in the area.

Due to the degree of set back from the principal elevation and existing tree cover, the location of the proposed extension will have limited impact on the appearance of the conservation area. In terms of character, the application site is an example of where subdivision of the original plot and redevelopment of flats to the rear of the site contrasts sharply with the urban grain of the area. However, as there is an existing side extension, the principle of redevelopment is compatible with that character. The proposed scale, form and design will not undermine the character or the appearance of the conservation area. The proposed treatment finish will allow the extension to read as a modern and complementary addition without having a detrimental impact on the conservation area. The proposal will result in conservation gains by allowing a vacant building to be adapted and brought back into use.

The location and design of the proposed refuse and cycle store will not result in adverse harm to the character or the appearance of the conservation area. The use of timber cladding for the cycle storage is acceptable.

The proposal includes replacement tree planting to off-set loss to amenity. The trees within the site will continue to contribute positively to the conservation area.

Conclusion in relation to the conservation area

The proposal has regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The proposal is acceptable with regards to Section 64 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:

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 signed petition with twenty-three names was received in support of the application.

A summary of the representations is provided below:

material considerations

- The proposal is sympathetic to the building and conservation area - Addressed in Section A

non-material considerations

- Facilitate a redundant building to provide much needed accommodation - not applicable to the assessment criteria of this application.

Conclusion in relation to other matters considered

The other matters have been identified and addressed. There are no outstanding material matters to resolve.

Overall conclusion

The proposals have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting and will not adversely impact on its special architectural and historic interest. The proposals will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is acceptable with regards to Section 14 and Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. There are no material considerations that outweigh this conclusion. It is recommended that the application be approved.

Section C - Conditions/Reasons/Informatives

The recommendation is subject to the following;

Conditions

1. No works shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (historic building recording, analysis and reporting) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.
2. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, sample/s of the proposed dressed buff sandstone block/cladding for the side extension and samples of the proposed local stone boundary wall shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before work commences on site. The samples should detail the stone type, colour and size.
3. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the historic timber-panelled doors shall be retained and reused. If required, they shall be retrofitted with intumescent strips and/or paint.

Reasons

1. In order to safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage.
2. In order to enable the planning authority to consider this/these matter/s in detail.
3. To preserve the special interests of the listed building.

Informatives

It should be noted that:

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Background Reading/External References

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

Further Information - [Local Development Plan](#)

Date Registered: 15 May 2023

Drawing Numbers/Scheme

01-09, 10A, 11-14, 15A, 16-24.

Scheme 2

David Givan
Chief Planning Officer
PLACE
The City of Edinburgh Council

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Appendix 1

Summary of Consultation Responses

NAME: Historic Environment Scotland

COMMENT: No objections.

DATE:

NAME: Archaeology

COMMENT: No objections, subject to programme of archaeological works.

DATE: 22 May 2023

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

Location Plan



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