

Listed Building Application: Report of Handling



Application No. 17/0454/LB

Renfrewshire
Council

KEY INFORMATION

Ward

4 Paisley Northwest

Applicant

R H Contracts
18 Woodside Place
Glasgow
G3 7QL

Registered: 15/08/2017

Report by Director of Development and Housing Services

PROPOSAL: DEMOLITION OF FORMER SCHOOL BUILDING

LOCATION: THE INSTITUTE, MAXWELTON STREET, PAISLEY

APPLICATION FOR: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT



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RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to conditions.

Fraser Carlin
Head of Planning and
Housing

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Scottish Historic Environment Policy Statement and Adopted Renfrewshire Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance set out four tests regarding demolition, only one of which requires to be satisfied; and these relate to whether the building is of special interest; whether it is beyond repair; whether refurbishment is economically viable; and, whether there are wider public benefits.
- There have been four letters of representation; one on the grounds that the building is architecturally and historically important and should be retained; others stating that the demolition is reluctantly accepted; and that parts of the building should be incorporated into the redevelopment proposals.
- Historic Environment Scotland has not objected to the proposed demolition of the listed building and accept that its retention and refurbishment are unviable.
- The supporting information demonstrates that the building is not capable of viable re-use, what remains has structural defects, and alternative options to secure its retention with enabling development have previously been examined, and consented, but have failed to materialise over a protracted period of time and with successive owners.
- The removal of the remains of the Half Time School would present the opportunity for the redevelopment of a site occupied by a derelict building.

Description

This application seeks listed building consent for the demolition of the former Half Time School, situated on Maxwellton Street, Paisley. The building currently occupying the site was significantly damaged by a fire in 1997, which left only the masonry standing and was subsequently further damaged by high winds in 1998, which blew down the eastern gable elevation. As such, the building now lies in a derelict state, with some walls partially standing and no roof or any interior walls, partitions, or finishes remain. The limited remaining exterior walls are supported by temporary propping and all are substantially affected by prolonged vandalism and coated with spray paint and graffiti. The building retains its category B listed status and was originally constructed as a school; and was latterly in use as a nightclub.

If demolition of the building is considered to be acceptable, the site is proposed to be redeveloped with the erection of a flatted block containing 40 units, which would be constructed in a single 'U-shaped' plan form, extend to four storeys in height, and which would be positioned towards the south of the site. The principal elevation would front onto Maxwellton Street, with the secondary, side elevation fronting onto Maxwellton Road.

The building would be of a modern design, which would incorporate some salvaged stone from the listed building within the scheme. A hard landscaping scheme around the site is also proposed, and this is proposed to include boundary treatments which incorporate decorative stone elements/materials from the existing building on site.

History

99/748/LB - Demolition of former school building - Refused.
99/1009/PP - Demolition of existing structure and erection of replacement buildings - Refused.

99/1142/LB - Demolition of existing structure and erection of replacement buildings - Refused.

00/377/PP - Reinstatement of existing structure to form residential flats, conversion of outbuilding and erection of lodge house - Disposed to Grant subject to Section 75 Agreement. Subsequent refusal following failure to conclude legal agreement. Appeal in respect of refusal of listed building consent - Dismissed.

00/378/LB - Reinstatement of existing structure to form residential flats, conversion of outbuilding and erection of lodge house - Disposed to Grant subject to Section 75 Agreement. Subsequent refusal following failure to conclude legal agreement. Appeal in respect of refusal of listed building consent - Dismissed.

04/1015/PP - Reinstatement of existing structure to 16 residential flats, conversion of outbuildings to form 2 flats and erection of lodge house - Withdrawn.

04/1016/LB - Reinstatement of existing structure to 16 residential flats, conversion of outbuildings to form 2 flats and erection of lodge house - Withdrawn.

07/0282/PP - Restoration and conservation of existing facade to Maxwellton Street and incorporation within new build residential development of 40 flatted dwellings and associated landscaping and parking - Granted.

07/0283/LB - Restoration and conservation of existing facade to Maxwellton Street and incorporation within new build residential development of 40 flatted dwellings and associated landscaping and parking - Granted.

09/0700/PP - Extension of planning consent 07/0282/PP for restoration and conservation of existing facade to Maxwellton Street and incorporation within new build residential development of 40 flatted dwellings and associated landscaping and parking for a further 2 years - Granted.

12/0090/PP - Variation of Condition 1 attached to planning permission 09/0700/PP to extend the time period for starting the works - Granted.

16/0750/PP - Demolition of former school building - Withdrawn.

16/0812/PP - Erection of 40 flats, formation of parking and landscaping - Withdrawn.

17/0456/PP - Erection of 40 flats, formation of parking and landscaping - Pending.

Policy and Material

Considerations

Development Plan - Adopted
Renfrewshire Local Development Plan
Policy ENV3 - Built Heritage

Built Heritage Supplementary Guidance
Listed Buildings - Demolition of Listed Buildings

Material considerations

Planning legislation requires that planning decisions, in relation to listed buildings, are made in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1997 and the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the proposal requires to be assessed against the above policies and guidance, the views of consultees, the objections received and the supporting information submitted by the applicant in respect of building condition and re-development viability. Reference must also be made to the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) and the accompanying guidance note Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Demolition.

Publicity

The application was advertised in the Edinburgh Gazette on 25/08/17, with a deadline for representations of 15/09/17 and the Paisley Daily Express on 23/08/17 with a deadline for representations of 13/09/17.

Objections/ Representations

Four letters of representation have been received, one from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, one from the Heritage Tourism Group, one from a local resident and one from a local member (Cllr Eileen McCartin). The substance of these can be summarised as follows:-

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland does not object to the demolition of the remaining structure but caveats this to the effect that the remaining building needs to be fully recorded; as much as possible needs to be salvaged and set aside for re-use; and demolition must only be permitted once the current project is confirmed as proceeding.

The Heritage Tourism Group notes the architectural and historic importance of the building and sees no reason why preservation of the remaining facade could not be incorporated into the proposed development.

The local resident objects to the demolition and considers that some of the old building should be incorporated into a new building.

The local ward member notes the architectural and historic significance of the building; suggests that its condition is as a result of previous consents for redevelopment proposals having been extended; and that should the present structure be taken down, any planning permission should be 'time-barred' and that if building is not started within 2 years, planning permission should be removed. It was suggested that any permission should re-use stone from the old building so that the frontage would re-create the look of the old school.

Consultations

Historic Environment Scotland - Consider that the building has a significant architectural and historical value and

importance within Paisley. However they accept that given the failure of previous schemes for its redevelopment to be implemented, its deteriorating condition and the financial implications of redevelopment, that they do not object to its demolition and the redevelopment of the site. They welcome the reuse of existing stone work and features by the applicant, in a hard landscaping scheme around the site.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service - Have requested that a condition be imposed on any approval issued, regarding the commissioning and completion of an archaeological survey to take a record of the remains of the building as it currently stands.

Paisley West and Central Community Council - Accepts with regret that the retention and restoration of the building appears to be beyond hope. It notes the issues with the building following the fire in 1997, partial collapse in 1998 and storm damage in 1999. It is suggested that as many stonework features as possible should be salvaged and that this should be secured by a condition of consent. The community council also considered that the design of the new development lacks imagination; and, that there are concerns over parking provision and the potential for on-street parking in Maxwellton Road.

Summary of Main Issues

Environmental Statement - N/A

Appropriate Assessment - N/A

Design & Access Statement - A design and access statement was submitted with the application. This was further supplemented with additional information, including financial costings for redevelopment of the site and demolition/new build works.

Other Assessments - N/A

Planning Obligation Summary - N/A

Scottish Ministers Direction - N/A

Assessment

The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that in

considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic merit.

In the case of applications for the demolition of listed buildings the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement states that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. It considers that planning authorities should only approve such applications where they are satisfied that:

- (a) The building is not of special interest; or
- (b) The building is incapable of repair; or
- (c) The demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or
- (d) The repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

These tests are re-stated in the Council's New Development Supplementary Guidance. The HES Policy Statement and the New Development Supplementary Guidance requires that only one of these four tests be satisfied.

When the proposed demolition is assessed against these requirements the following conclusions can be made:

The buildings are not of special interest

- The building retains its B listed status notwithstanding its derelict condition and is important both architecturally and by reason of its historical significance within Paisley. It was built in 1886/7 as a school used by pupils who would spend the morning at classes and the afternoons working in the Mills (hence the name 'Half Time school'). Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the building is not of

special interest and the applicants have not sought to demonstrate that this is the case. This test is therefore not met.

The condition of the buildings are beyond repair - The building was significantly damaged by a fire in 1997, which left only the masonry standing and was then further damaged by high winds in 1998, which blew down the eastern gable elevation. As such, all that remains of the building are partial walls and no roof exists; nor do any internal finishes or partitions. While previous schemes have been approved, which would have incorporated the reuse or retention of the existing facade, none have been implemented, (mainly due to the prohibitive costs associated with redevelopment of the building). Therefore, it has previously been demonstrated that while the building was physically capable of being redeveloped and repaired at that time, the costs have remained prohibitive. Furthermore, these schemes were approved a number of years ago and the building and stone work has further deteriorated into a worse condition, which significantly further limits the realistic opportunity for possible redevelopment as opposed to demolition.

Economic Viability - As indicated above, previously consented schemes for the redevelopment of the existing facade have been unsuccessful and unable to be implemented due to the prohibitive costs involved. The applicant has provided justification for the case for demolition of the building, with financial projections of demolition versus refurbishment, which show that redevelopment of the existing building is not economically viable. This test has therefore been met.

Wider public benefits - The proposals would create 40 new units within the Paisley area, in close proximity to the RAH and town centre. This would provide additional housing within the town and assist with housing unit numbers required to be delivered within Renfrewshire. With

regard to wider public benefits therefore, the building in its current condition has a negative impact on the immediate area in terms of visual amenity. Its demolition and replacement with an acceptable residential proposal could enhance the visual amenity of the immediate area and the amenity of the wider area in general.

Whilst the benefits of demolition and redevelopment are likely to be experienced more locally, rather than in a wider sense, this test is therefore only partially met.

In terms of the issues raised by the objectors, the applicants engaged with the Council and HES at an early stage with regard to this proposal and its suitability and a number of pre-application meetings and discussions took place. Several differing schemes were proposed, examined and discounted as being either economically or technically unviable; and with the current proposal emerging as the option capable of implementation.

The redevelopment proposals will use some salvaged stone from the existing ruinous structure as a means of representing the history of the site. Options were discussed with regards to further inclusion of existing stone work and features into the building's design, however, it was considered that these could appear incongruous within the context of the design of the modern building. As an alternative, it was considered that a hard landscaping scheme would be a more appropriate method to give recognition to the heritage of the existing building and the site it occupies. This would include the reuse of a number of features of the remains of the building, to form boundary features leading from the entrance to the building, with pillar features and the decorative stone urns being positioned at the entrance to the building.

The use of such features around the boundaries would give a more public

context to the previous history of the site. The detail and extent of incorporating these architectural salvage elements into the finished scheme are matters that should be safeguarded through the imposition of a condition.

It is considered that the applicants have satisfied the relevant tests and have demonstrated that the building is beyond viable conversion, refurbishment or reuse.

Recommendation and Reasons for Decision

It is considered that the relevant tests in both Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement and associated guidance and relevant Council policy and associated guidance have been satisfied and it is therefore recommended that the Board grant listed building consent for demolition subject to conditions.

Recommendation

GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Conditions & Reasons

Reason for Decision

1. The proposal accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and there were no material considerations which outweighed the presumption in favour of development according with the Development Plan.

2. No demolition shall take place until it has been demonstrated to the written satisfaction of the planning authority that signed and binding contracts are in place to secure the redevelopment of the site immediately following demolition, and in a manner consistent with that set out in planning permission reference number 17/0456/PP. The redevelopment of the site shall thereafter only proceed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and to ensure that the listed building is not demolished unless approved development is

to take place on the cleared site immediately following its demolition.

3. Prior to development commencing on site, the developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological standing building survey of the extant structures, to be carried out by an archaeological organisation acceptable to the Planning Authority. The scope of the archaeological standing building survey will be set by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service on behalf of the Planning Authority. The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the Planning Authority and to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service in writing, not less than 14 days before the survey commences. Copies of the resulting survey shall be deposited in the National Monuments Record for Scotland and in the local Sites and Monuments Record upon completion.

Reason: To preserve a record of the buildings heritage.

4. That prior to any demolition taking place, a detailed inventory shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Planning Authority itemising those architectural elements (including stone, ironwork, railings and gates) which are to be retained as architectural salvage for re-use and incorporation into both the boundary treatments and the hard and soft landscaping of the redevelopment proposals which are subject to approval under reference 17/0456/PP. The details shall include a method statement setting out the measures for the careful dismantling of those elements which are to be re-used and the arrangements for their safe storage (which may be either on or off site), until being required for incorporation into the redevelopment scheme.

Reason: In the interests of the preserving elements of architectural and/or historic importance.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Background Papers: For further information or to inspect any letters of objection and other background papers, please contact David Bryce on 0141 618 7892.

The site has been visited and the photographs archived.