

Leith Central Community Council response to planning application

February 2021

21/00246/FUL

Demolition of house and redevelopment to form an apartment building with associated garden ground and bin/cycle storage.

50 Pilrig Street Edinburgh EH6 5AL

1. Local Development Plan

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Des 1 Design Quality and Context

- The largest facade of the proposal (on Dryden St) is treated like a gable with its most prominent windows being small scale bathroom windows. This design is below minimum standards, let alone in a conservation area. The facade does not demonstrate any sympathetic approach to the immediate or wider environment.
- Planning permission will not be granted for poor quality or inappropriate design or for proposals that would be damaging to the character or appearance of the area around it, particularly where this has a special importance.
- The main entrance of the proposal is stepped in order to imitate the neighbouring buildings but therefore becomes not accessible. The accessible entrance is at the rear of the building by the bin store.
- The proposal does not demonstrate innovation in the interpretation of its immediate and wider context.

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Des 3 Development Design - Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features

- The recess on Dryden St from the boundary wall has not been continued as per the current and other existing buildings on the street. It is not clear how this can be justified.
- The proposal is contrary to the Pilrig Conservation Area Character Appraisal which states:

"The area is mainly comprised of low rise residential development. The predominant height is two storeys but there are a small number of flatted properties of mainly three and four storeys. The buildings are complemented by garden settings and stone boundary walls. The stone boundary walls give definition to the street layout and create a clear distinction between public and private spaces." (p17)

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Des 4 Development Design – Impact on Setting

- While the height of the proposal seems consistent with 48 Pilrig St, its height is out of scale with regard to 52 Pilrig St as the street is sloping down.

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Des 5 Development Design – Amenity

- The proposal has not demonstrated that the amenity of neighbouring buildings would not be adversely affected and that future occupiers would have acceptable levels of amenity in relation to noise, daylight, sunlight, privacy or immediate outlook. The applicant has not provided a daylight and sunlight analysis.

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Des 6 Sustainable Buildings

- The proposal has not demonstrated that the current carbon dioxide emissions reduction target has been met, with at least half of this target met through the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies.
- The proposal has not demonstrated that other features are incorporated that will reduce or minimise environmental resource use and impact like:
 - measures to promote water conservation
 - sustainable urban drainage measures that will ensure that there will be no increase in rate of surface water run-off in peak conditions or detrimental impact on the water environment. This should include green roofs on sites where measures on the ground are not practical.
 - use of materials from local and/or sustainable sources

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy 7 Layout Design

- The proposal has not demonstrated that safe and convenient access and movement in and around the development will be promoted, having regard especially to the needs of people with limited mobility or special needs.

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Env 6 Conservation Areas - Development

- The proposal is not submitted in a sufficiently detailed form for the effect of the development proposal on the character and appearance of the area to be assessed.
- Coloured elevations would be helpful to assess the proposal in the Conservation area.
- Rendered perspective views from both Pilrig St and Dryden St would also help with any assessment.

The application is contrary to the Edinburgh Local Development Policy Env 16 Species Protection

- The proposal has not demonstrated that it would not have an adverse impact on species protected under European or UK law like bats.
- Bats are observable at the back of Pilrig St and Dryden St. Bats are a protected species covered by Habitats Regulations. Planning permission will not be granted for development that would have an adverse impact on species protected under European or UK law.

- Biodiversity enhancement would not have been demonstrated while this should be a fundamental aspect of the design of the proposal (Scottish Planning Policy para 194 – “seek benefits for biodiversity from new development where possible”).
- In the absence of a wildlife survey, the proposal would be ignoring the current ecological character of the site (inc. bats habitats).

2. Comments on the Supporting Planning Statement:

- 1.3

“Investigations undertaken during the pre-application process confirmed that the adjoining building had been designed to be extended into the application site. This is evident on the gable of number 48 which has an additional set of chimney flues, ragged cope and recessed quoins which are ready to receive a building on the application site.”

 - Could the applicant provide such evidence. According to the owner at 48 Pilrig St, all 8 chimneys relate to his building.
- 3.3

The applicant refers to sustainable development in the Scottish Planning Policy. According to the SPP, the definition of sustainable development is a “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
- It is not clear how the current front stepped entrance from Pilrig St and the accessible entrance at the rear of the proposal (by the bin store) demonstrate sustainable development and meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.11

Despite previous discussions at pre-application stage, the overall bulk and articulation of the rear of the building as it turns the corner into Dryden Street is still of great concern for the street and the conservation area.

3. General comments

The application appears to have been quite an unfriendly process with regard to the Pilrig community who have been kept out of the loop from the application and the design process, including the main interested neighbour at number 48. One would expect at least a sensible discussion to have taken place before a new build potentially abuts on an existing listed building.

This is deplorable and not the way to help build stronger communities which is a key objective of the Council who encourages well designed developments that relate

sensitively to the existing quality and character of the local and wider environment to create a sense of place for all.