

Case reference	NA-GLW-075
Planning Application details	Erection of hotel with commercial/retail at ground floor -16/02417/DC
Site address	8 Dixon Street, Glasgow
Applicant	Clyde Dixon Land & Property Ltd
Determining Authority	Glasgow City Council
Local Authority Area	
Reason(s) for notification	Objection by Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Representations	13
Date notified to Ministers	6 April 2017
Date of recommendation	12 June 2017
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Planning Permission is sought for the erection of a 17 storey mixed use development comprising 150 room hotel and rooftop restaurant with 2 commercial units on ground floor at 2-8 Dixon Street Glasgow, replacing unlisted buildings within the Glasgow Central Conservation Area. A related Conservation Area Consent (CAC) for the demolition of the buildings at 2-8 Dixon Street has also been notified to Ministers (16/02418/DC). The existing buildings consist of a group of 3 storey traditional sandstone buildings dating from 1825 and form a corner block with the main frontage to Dixon Street and an elevation fronting the River Clyde on Clyde Street and one fronting Fox Street.

EIA Development:

- The proposal fits the description of being an urban development project under 10(b) of the table in Schedule 2, but is below the size threshold of 0.5ha. The site is not located within a sensitive area. Therefore the Council's view that no EIA is required is reasonable.

Consultations and Representations:

- One objection from HES. 12 other representations (of which 11 are objections) were received raising issues such as the loss of the existing buildings,

overshadowing of nearby buildings, height and design of the proposed hotel out of keeping with surrounding area, adversely affects the setting of various listed buildings, alternative brownfield sites are available, proposed development does not take account of major regeneration initiatives, levels of pre-application consultation was not sufficient. One letter of support considered the new building would be beneficial to the local area, act as an anchorage point/gateway to the Clyde from Buchanan Street and generate much required activity and enhanced public realm.

- No other representations were received for the related CAC application.

Assessment:

1. The application has been notified because HES have advised against the granting of planning permission. It is their view that the proposed replacement building will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the A-listed St Enoch Square Underground Station building which dates from 1896. HES consider because of the distinctive building's prominent position within St Enoch Square, its exuberant roofline and the topography of the city, it has a key role in terminating the vista down Buchanan Street. They object on the grounds that St Enoch Underground Station already provides the focus for Buchanan Street and the proposed building because of its height and design will overwhelm the character of the A-listed building, significantly reducing its prominence as a landmark.
2. HES' objection relates solely to St Enoch Square Underground Station however they consider that there will also be significant impacts on the setting of the A-listed Customs House and A listed South Portland Street suspension bridge and its relationship with Carlton Place as the new building will dominate them.
3. The Council has encouraged a vista stopper at the end of Buchanan Street and supports the development of tall buildings along this section of the River Clyde to help with regeneration and investment. The Council considers that the area is not homogenous in form or architectural content and this reflects the changing role of the river. The frontage to Clyde Street contains a wide array of built forms and architectural styles with no one dominant prescribed form or sequence.
4. The Council considers that the replacement building is unique in design and such a bold and striking building would be a welcome addition enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. The design of the scheme was influenced by the comments of the Glasgow Urban Design Panel which plays a key role in reviewing urban design projects and public environments within Glasgow. The Panel assesses projects and provides pre-application and application advice on development in the city. It is coordinated by the Council and membership consists of representatives from groups, societies, and other organisations nominated by the Council.
5. The Council believes that the scale and mass of the new building relates to the development of the river frontage and the large scale developments which are proposed for the area. There are several consented tall buildings schemes in the vicinity - 14 and 15 storeys with upper floors set back from the historic river

frontage, although only one of these schemes is currently under construction on Clyde Street.

6. The Council states that the intentions within the recently adopted City Development Plan (CDP) largely follow on from the policies in City Plan 2 and, in summary, the proposed development is considered to comply with the policies contained within the CDP.
7. The Council disagrees with HES over the impact of the scheme on the St Enoch's Square Underground building and considers it forms a subdued end stop to Buchanan Street and that the new glazed entrance canopies to the underground also result in a significant loss of prominence for the A-listed building. They consider the replacement scheme, rather than detracting from nearby listed buildings and the Central Conservation Area, would be a welcome and stimulating addition to the city.
8. The HES objection concentrates solely on the impacts on St Enoch's Underground Station building. However, the proposals will also have an impact in the conservation area, result in the loss of historic buildings from the 19th mercantile expansion of Glasgow and affect the setting and historic character of the riverside. In coming to a decision the Council has attached significant weight to the urban design and public realm aspects and given less consideration to the historic environment issues and impacts within the Central Conservation Area.
9. The Council has given significant weight to the changing urban context (see Annex 1), although several of these schemes have not been implemented and remain derelict gap sites. The proposed development is expected to bring economic benefits and support regeneration. It is worth noting, however, that national policy would favour prioritising development of existing gap sites rather than removal of existing buildings which are partially in use and contributing positively to the character of the conservation area.
10. However, most significantly, previously consented tall buildings in the vicinity have compromised the historic setting of the riverside and conservation area and Historic Scotland (now HES) did not raise any objections with these schemes at the time, even though they raise similar issues to this proposal in terms of the setting of listed buildings and impacts in the character of the conservation area.
11. The recommendation on call-in is very finely balanced, however, given the emerging urban context with regard to consented schemes within the conservation area and the lack of previous objections from HES, it is not considered that the application raises issues of national interest that would warrant Ministerial intervention.

Decision/Recommendation:

- Clear the planning application back to Glasgow City Council to determine.

