



## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Report by Executive Director of Development and Regeneration Services

Contact: Mr I Briggs Phone: 0141 287 6051

**APPLICATION TYPE** Conservation Area Consent  
**RECOMMENDATION** Grant Subject to Condition(s)

<b>APPLICATION</b>	11/02578/DC	<b>DATE VALID</b>	16.12.2011
<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>	261 West Princes Street Glasgow G4 9EE		
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Partial demolition of former ballet school building.		
<b>APPLICANT</b>	NOAH City Developments 116 Elderslie Street GLASGOW G3 7AW	<b>AGENT</b>	Elder And Cannon Architects 40 Berkeley Street GLASGOW G3 7DW
<b>WARD NO(S)</b>	11, Hillhead	<b>COMMUNITY COUNCIL LISTED</b>	02_030, Woodlands/Park
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	Woodlands		
<b>ADVERT TYPE</b>	Affecting a Conservation Area/Listed Building	<b>PUBLISHED</b>	6 January 2012
<b>CITY PLAN</b>	Residential		

### PLANNING HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

This Conservation Area Consent application is related to the conversion of the former Ballet School building at 261 West Princes Street and the erection of 2 four storey accommodation blocks to the rear to provide a total of 103 studio rooms of student residential accommodation, with associated amenity space and landscaping. The building has been vacant since circa 2008, when the Scottish Ballet School found new accommodation within the city. The proposal requires the demolition of the existing annexes to the rear of the property, which requires Conservation Area Consent.

### REPRESENTATIONS/ CONSULTATIONS

#### REPRESENTATIONS

There have been 15 objections received in relation to this planning application, including objections from Cllr Wardrop, Bailie Malik, and Woodlands Community Council. The remaining 12 objections are from local residents. The main points raised in these representations will be summarised and discussed in the Assessment and Conclusions section below.

## SITE AND DESCRIPTION

The application site is within a predominantly residential area which is identified as 'Residential and Supporting Uses' within the adopted Glasgow City Plan 2 (2009). The site is approximately 2272 sq m in area. The existing building footprint is 2121 sq m, covering almost the entire site. It comprises a four storey red sandstone building fronting West Princes Street as well as a number of annexes at the rear of this building which extend from the ground floor to fill almost the entire backcourt area. The largest of these backcourt buildings is a former drill hall which dates back to 1912. The hall is a large shed structure which dominates the backcourt and backs directly onto neighbouring properties. With a barrel vaulted roof, approximately 11m at its apex, the hall dominates the surrounding area, and currently reduces amenity for neighbouring properties. The property is not listed, but is within the Woodlands Conservation Area.

Four storey traditional sandstone tenements and their backcourts bound the application site to the north, south and west. The former Willowbank Primary School is located to the east of the application site, and is a substantial three storey red sandstone building (C(s) listed). The surrounding tenements, whilst of a similar scale, are relatively modest compared to the main building at 261 West Princes Street which benefits from an elaborate architectural facade treatment reflecting the property's historic status as a non-residential building.

There is little variation to the ground levels within the site or to the adjacent land to the north, east and west. The tenement backcourts to the south west corner are approximately 1m below surrounding ground levels. The site is in an area of 'High' accessibility for public transport, being 130m from Great Western Road and 160m from Woodlands Drive (both Quality Bus Corridors) and 450m from Kelvinbridge Underground Station. West Princes Street is a one way street, with traffic travelling from east to west, with the street also being covered by a 'controlled parking zone' for residents with permits.

## PROPOSAL

It is proposed to demolish the existing drill hall building and ancillary annexes on the site, including a full height non-original extension to the rear elevation of the main building.. Where these buildings form the existing boundary treatment to the south, east and west boundaries it is proposed to carefully duntake the wallhead to a height of 2.4m, and to make the wall good with a suitable coping.

## ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that when an application is made it shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. Under Section 64 and 66 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the Council is required to have special regard to preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The main issues in the assessment of this application are considered to be:-

- (a) whether the proposal accords with the Development Plan;
- (b) whether the proposal preserves the setting of the C(s) listed former Willowbank Primary School Building, and whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Woodlands Conservation Area.
- (c) whether any other material considerations, including matters raised in the letters of representation, have been satisfactorily addressed.

With respect to (a), there are no policies within the Structure Plan which have a direct bearing on this application. Within the City Plan 2, the policies outlined below are considered relevant to the assessment of the application:

### **DES 3 – Protecting and Enhancing the City’s Historic Environment**

Policy DES 3 acknowledges that proposals for the demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive or neutral contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area must demonstrate that:

- (a) The building is incapable of viable repair and re-use; and
- (b) The proposed replacement will preserve or enhance the character of the area.

In this instance, it is recognised that the existing rear buildings are not of sufficient architectural merit to warrant statutory protection in itself and do not make a positive contribution to its setting. Whilst considerations against the remaining criteria is unnecessary, it can be concluded that; (a) the applicant has already considered the re-use of the premises but has concluded that they are commercially obsolete and incapable of being readily adapted to meet current day requirements, and

(b) one of the conclusions of the accompanying planning application is that the proposed replacement buildings would enhance the character of this part of the Central Conservation Area.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Conservation Area Consent be granted, subject to conditions.

With respect to (b), whether the proposal preserves the setting of the C(s) listed former Willowbank Primary School Building, and whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Woodlands Conservation Area, the development proposal is considered a marked improvement to the visual amenity of the site and relates well to the surrounding buildings. It is considered that the development preserves the setting of the former Primary School building and would have a positive impact on the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area.

With respect to (c), other material considerations include the points raised in the representations of support and objection to the application.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

The points raised in the representations of support and objection to the application may be summarised with an appropriate comment as follows:

*This will introduce a further transient population into a part of the city which has a high student population. A proper balance has to be met in this area or we will end up with a student ‘ghetto’.*

#### **Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*According to City Plan 2, there is an embargo on further HMOs in the Hillhead and Woodlands Area.*

#### **Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*Potential anti-social behaviour by students. The access to the accommodation will be through a small lane adjacent to existing residential flats. The development will result in significantly increased noise, litter, and traffic. The Woodlands neighbourhood is already suffering from severe problems with nightly disturbance, littering, fly tipping and abandoned bulk items, which is certain to worsen. Elderly residents in particular will be intimidated by increased volume of people and unknown residents.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*The blocks to the rear may constitute a fire hazard, as there is no independent fire escape.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*The rear accommodation blocks will overshadow and block light to the adjacent flats and gardens.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*The proposal will result in severe loss of privacy for a large number of residents in the surrounding buildings.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*Much wildlife currently uses the Ballet School land, which has grown up as woodland. This natural pocket of wildlife in the city will be destroyed by this development.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

The proposed new buildings do not fit with the other Victorian buildings in the Conservation Area. They fail to match the existing urban grain and have no regard to local plot patterns, building lines, heights, scale, massing, detailed design or use of materials.

**Comment:**

The proposed development to the rear of the main building is of contemporary design, and does not attempt to replicate the existing architectural forms (i.e. large stone-built tenements and school building. However, it is considered that the new buildings are sympathetic in their siting, scale and massing, and are of a high quality design and materials. In combination with the proposed landscaping proposals the development will have a positive impact on the character of this part of the Woodlands Conservation Area.

*There is no provision for parking for the development. Although student accommodation planning does not require provision of parking space, even a small percentage of residents with vehicles will severely restrict parking opportunities for current residents.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

*The proposal represents overdevelopment of the plot, with a density of 462 dwellings per hectare. The proposed new buildings are much higher than the existing Drill Hall.*

**Comment:**

The existing Drill Hall building is a maximum of 11m in height and is built up to the common boundaries with neighbouring properties, while the proposed accommodation blocks are a maximum of 12m in height but are set back from the common boundaries, and take up 70% less footprint than the existing buildings. Block C steps down to 8m in height in recognition of its closer relationship with the existing tenement buildings on Woodlands Drive. The proposed landscaping would be a substantial improvement, introducing a number of good quality extra heavy standard trees alongside raised planting beds within a courtyard space.

Density is generally expressed in 'dwellings per hectare'. However, the proposed development is not mainstream residential, and is not readily split into 'dwellings' given the reliance on communal facilities. The density is nevertheless significantly higher than neighbouring residential properties. Notwithstanding, the proposed development would have a positive townscape impact, and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with the City Plan 2 policy RES 1 – Residential Density.

*The destruction of the historic sandstone arch and replacement with a massive steel frame in the entrance lane is not in keeping with the historic character of the area and its architecture.*

**Comment:**

It is agreed that the proposed galvanised steel archway would be of a scale and design which does not relate comfortably with the historic frontage. It is recommended that a condition be attached requiring the retention and repair of the existing sandstone archway, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

*There could be potential damage to surrounding buildings (e.g. subsidence) as a result of demolition/construction.*

**Comment:**

This issue would not be controlled through the planning process.

*The loss of existing boundary treatments will result in loss of privacy. The proposal should include reinstatement of the boundary treatments.*

**Comment:**

Initial proposals involved loss of the existing boundary treatments to the backcourt area. However, it is now proposed to reinstate the existing boundary treatments through careful dismantling of the existing building walls to a height of 2.4m, and to make the walls good with a suitable coping.

*The design of the new buildings shows flat roofs, and there appears to be no roof protrusions such as plant or mechanical equipment indicated. We would hope that this is the case.*

**Comment:**

it is proposed to build sedum roofs, and there are no proposals to locate plant or machinery on the roof areas.

*The proposed roof terrace will exacerbate noise disturbance, and likely become an area for late night parties.*

**Comment:**

This point is not relevant to the assessment of this Conservation Area Consent application, which is restricted to a consideration of the impact of the demolition of these buildings to the character of the Woodlands Conservation Area, and the acceptability of any proposed replacement structures in terms of their impact on the Conservation Area.

**CONCLUSION**

Other material considerations including the letters of representation have been considered, but do not outweigh the acceptability of the proposal. It is therefore recommended that Conservation Area Consent be granted subject to the following conditions.

**CONDITIONS AND REASONS**

01. The development shall be implemented in accordance with drawing number(s)

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as qualified by the undernoted condition(s), or as otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** As these drawings constitute the approved development.

02. For the avoidance of doubt, the affected rear common boundary walls to the south, east and west boundaries shall be carefully dismantled to a height of 2.4m above existing ground level, and shall be finished with a suitable cope. Details of the proposed cope shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to its use on site.

**Reason:** To safeguard the character of the surrounding conservation area.

**ADVISORY NOTES TO APPLICANT**

01. Please be advised that the proposed development also requires Full Planning Permission. No works to implement this consent shall be carried out prior to receiving the appropriate consents.
02. The applicant is advised that the granting of planning permission does not remove him/her from the requirement to obtain the consent of adjacent landowners in respect of any access required to build, or maintain, this approved development. Such consent should be obtained prior to the commencement of works on site.
03. Before any work on the site is begun, an assessment of the impact of emissions to air from or associated with the development, including associated road transport and demolition, should be carried out. Where the development is assessed as having an adverse impact on local air quality, mitigation measures should be specified, and approved mitigation measures should be completed before the demolition works commence.

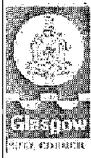
for Executive Director of Development and Regeneration Services

DC/ IAB/L  
16/02/2012

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**Glasgow City Council**

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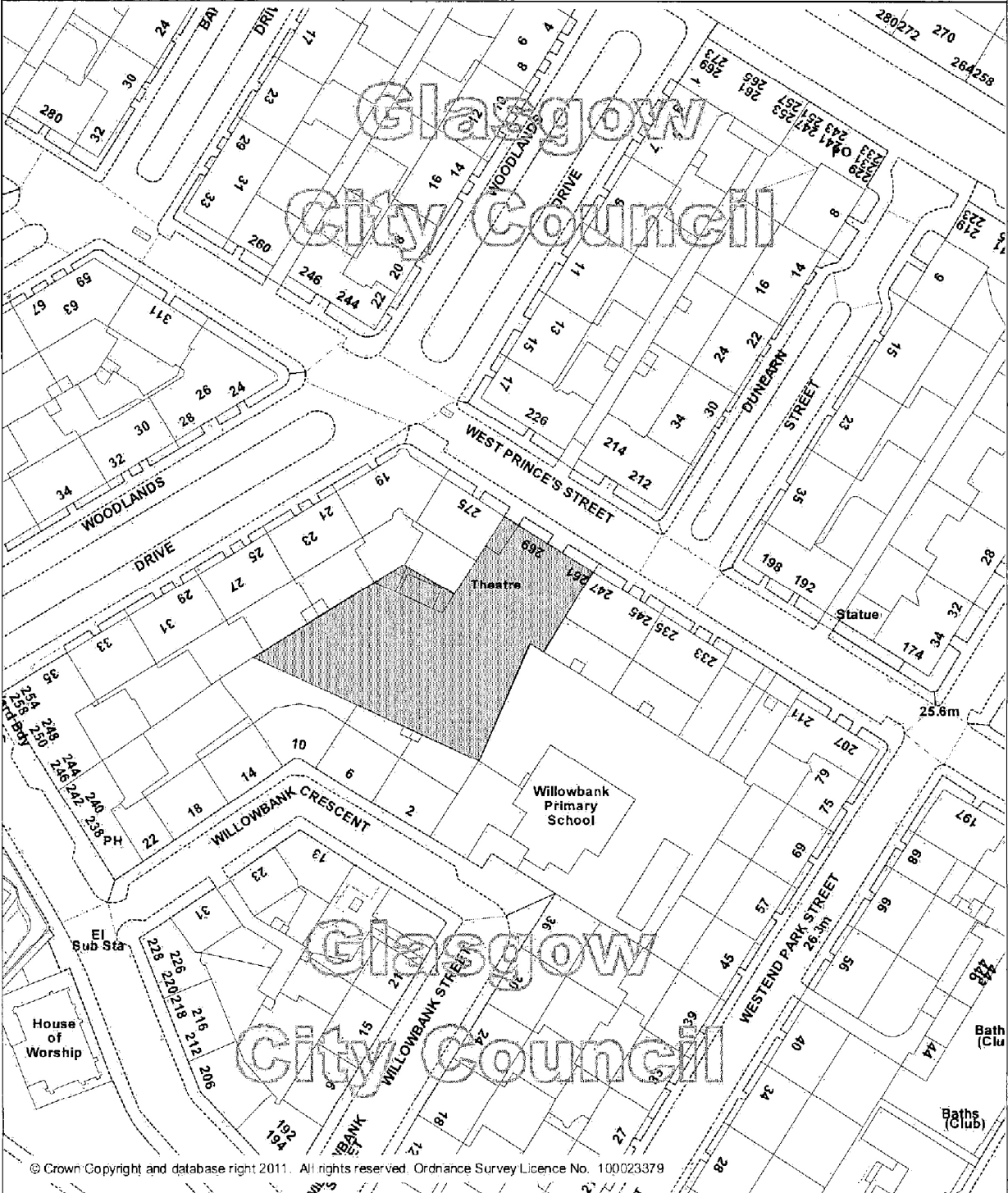
Reference No. **11/02578/DC**

Address : **261 West Princes Street**

Scale : 1:1250

**Indicative Site Location**

Ward : **11**



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Location of Site  
(For details, refer to Report)