



.Glasgow City Council

Local Review Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,
Regeneration and Sustainability

Contact: Sam Taylor Ext: 78654

Item 1

26th August 2025

25/00044/LOCAL – 114 Union Street Glasgow
Conversion of upper floor offices (Class 4) to form thirteen residential flats
(Sui generis), with alterations to roof including, height extension to fire
escape stair, removal of lift shaft overrun, formation of flat roof and
installation of plant

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Committee with a summary of the relevant considerations in the above review.

Recommendations:

That Committee consider the content of this report in coming to their decision.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide: n/a

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1 LOCATION, DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATIONS AND PROPOSAL

Location

- 1.1 The site consists of five floors within a 5-storey building on the east side of Union Street, immediately overlooking the east entrance of Central Station. The floors currently consist of vacant offices.
- 1.2 The building is unlisted, though lies within the Central Conservation Area, and has a high accessibility by public transport. Being in the city centre, the area is also part of the City Centre Economic Development Area.

Proposal

- 1.3 It is proposed to change the use from offices to 13 flatted properties, which comprise as follows:

- 1st floor - 1 x 1-bed flat and 2x 2 bed flats
- 2nd floor - 1 x 1-bed flat and 2x 2 bed flats
- 3rd floor - 1 x 1-bed flat and 2x 2 bed flats
- 4th floor - 1 x 1-bed flat and 2x 2 bed flats
- 5th floor - 1 x 2 bed flat

On the fifth floor, the existing staircase will be raised in order to be fire safety compliant. The existing pitched roof (not visible to the public) will be removed and replaced with a flat roof to allow for air conditioning plants and an escape corridor.

- 1.4 Facilities for all flats would comprise of an open plan kitchen/lounge and dining room and bathroom /toilet. No on-site car or cycle parking is proposed.
- 1.5 Of the 13 flats, all have access to natural light. 9 of the flats (flats 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13) have primary single aspect of Union Street, while 4 overlook Union Place (flats 1, 4, 7 and 10). Facing Union Place, is the NCP car park approximately 5.8 metres away. Photos of the view of the car park are provided, which show the window view of the stairwell and a low parapet wall into the car park. The car park stairwell is however semi-glazed and only a vehicle only area is visible from the windows.

An internal lightwell provides the sole daylight for all of the bedrooms in 4 flats while half of the bedrooms at Union Place have aspect solely by an internal lightwell. Windows are 5.3 metres from the windows of neighbouring flats, however glazing will obscure the kitchen windows of the four south facing flats.

- 1.6 Associated external alterations would include an increase in height of the rear fire escape, removal and replacement of the existing lift, new replacement windows to the front of Union Street with double glazing. Security bars in place on some windows are removed in the drawings to ensure all habitable rooms have access to natural light.

- 1.7 Materials proposed include double glazed high transmissive glass windows – to improve daylight levels -with timber frame to the front, and uPVC to the rear.

2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

- 2.1 The relevant National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and City Development Plan (CDP) policies and Supplementary Guidance are:
- **Policy 1:** Tackling the climate and nature crises
 - **Policy 2:** Climate mitigation and adaption
 - **Policy 16:** Housing need
 - **Policy 27:** City, town, local and commercial centres
- 2.2 The relevant City Development Plan policies and Supplementary Guidance are:
- **CDP 1 & SG1:** The Placemaking Principle
 - **CDP2 & SG2** Sustainable Spatial Strategy
 - **CDP6 & SG6:** Green Belt and Green Network
 - **CDP9 & SG9:** Historic Environment
 - **CDP 10 & SG10:** Meeting Housing Needs
 - **CDP11 & SG11:** Sustainable Transport
- 2.3 Other material considerations are:
- Central Conservation Area Appraisal
 - City Centre Strategic Development Framework

3 REASONS FOR REFUSAL / RELEVANT CONDITION(S)

- 3.1 The reasons for refusal are set out below:
01. The proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4, Policy 27 (adopted February 2023) and CDP1 and the associated supplementary guidance of the Glasgow City Development Plan (adopted March 2017) as specified below, and there is no overriding reason to depart therefrom.
02. The proposed development, by reason of its proximity and relationship to opposing premises on Union Place, would result in significant and unacceptable overlooking of flats and would be severely detrimental to the amenity of intended residents. Consequently, the proposal fails to comply with National Planning Framework 4, Policy 27 and with City Development Plan policies CDP1 and SG 1 The Placemaking Principle.
03. The proposed development, by reason of its proximity and relationship to opposing premises on Union Place, would result in an oppressive aspect from flats and would be severely detrimental to the amenity of intended residents. Consequently, the proposal fails to comply with National Planning Framework 4, Policy 27 and with City Development Plan policies CDP1 and SG 1 'The Placemaking Principle'.

04. The proposed development, by reason of the reliance on bedroom windows facing onto a restricted internal light well and the absence of aspect, would be severely detrimental to the amenity of intended residents. Consequently, the proposal fails to comply with National Planning Framework 4, Policy 27 and with City Development Plan policies CDP1 and SG 1 The Placemaking Principle.
05. The proposed development, by reason of the removal of mullions and enlargement of apertures to selected windows on the Union Place elevation, would significantly disrupt the original fenestration pattern and would unacceptably detract from the visual appearance of the property. Consequently, the proposal fails to comply with City Development Plan policies CDP1 and SG 1 The Placemaking Principle, in addition to CDP9 Historic Environment and SG9 Historic Environment.

4 APPEAL STATEMENT

- 4.1 A summary of the material points raised in the appeal statement is given below:
 01. There has not been enough weight given to the strategic need to bring people back into the City Centre by re purposing vacant buildings (including vacant offices in this case)
 02. That too much weight has been given to the issue of “overlooking” as a reason for refusing the proposed development. There is no unacceptable impact on the visual amenity in relation to changes to windows on the rear elevation to Union Place which in any case is not readily visible, and the front elevation is left intact with improved windows.
 03. That too much weight has been given to the issue of “aspect” as a reason for refusing the proposed development. The amended plans address issues relating to larger rooms and daylight.
 04. The issue of overlooking or aspect was not covered by consultation and relates only to 4 of the 13 flats.
 05. That the reasons for refusal 1-4 rely heavily and inappropriately on General Standards identified in SG1 Placemaking and CDP
 06. That reason for refusal 5 has been too strictly applied and is outweighed by the Strategic Support for the proposed development.
 07. That the reasons for refusal state that the proposals are contrary to Policy 27 in NPF 4 which is incorrect as in fact, Policy 27 is supportive of the proposed development.
 08. More weight should be given to strategy policies by the council. This will bring a much needed residential use into a vacant group of offices in a key location within the Conservation Area within the heart of the City Centre and

significantly outweigh any concerns about overlooking, aspect and visual impact to the rear of the building. There has not been enough weight given to the strategic need to bring people back into the City Centre by re purposing vacant buildings (including vacant offices in this case)

09. The market will determine the acceptability of each property in terms of overlooking, aspect and visual impact.

4.2 The applicant did not request any further procedure in the determination of the review.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 The previous planning application history for the property includes the following:

- 00/00234/DC - Use of first floor office (Class 4) as class 2 office.- - Grant Subject to Condition(s)
- 24/01547/FUL - Conversion of upper floor offices (Class 4) to form thirteen residential flats (Sui generis), with alterations to roof including, height extension to fire escape stair, removal of lift shaft overrun, formation of flat roof and installation of plant.- Refuse

6 REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

6.1 There was no representations to the application or at the appeal stage.

7 COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The key issues for Committee to consider are:

7.2 Climate change, mitigation and city centre living

National Planning Framework 4: NPF4 Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crises and Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation states that “when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises” and that “development proposals to retrofit measures to existing developments that reduce emissions or support adaptation to climate change will be supported.”

NPF4 Policy 27 City, town, local and commercial centres Intends to encourage, promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres, recognising they are a national asset. Development proposals for residential development within city/town centres will be supported, including the conversion, or reuse of vacant upper floors of properties within city/town centres for residential. Development proposals for city or town centre living will take into account the residential amenity of the proposal.

Committee should note that:

- the area has high public transport accessibility and is located within the city centre
- Policy 27 is supportive in principle of this proposal.

Committee should consider whether:

- the climate crisis and climate mitigation has been sufficiently considered in this proposal?
- has the proposal achieved sufficient residential amenity?

7.3 Housing needs

City Centre Strategic Development Framework vision for a sustainable liveable city centre includes “a choice of attainable, affordable, adaptable and low carbon homes of exceptional design quality, including new build and converted buildings, which will provide greater variety in housing size, type, tenure and cost throughout the centre”;

NPF4 Policy 16 Quality Homes

Intends to encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable homes, in the right locations, providing choice across tenures that meet the diverse housing needs of people and communities.

Development proposals for new homes on land not allocated for housing in the LDP will only be supported in limited circumstances where the proposal is otherwise consistent with the plan spatial strategy and other relevant policies including local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods;

CDP2 Sustainable Spatial Strategy and SG2 Sustainable Spatial Strategy

The Council's City Centre Living Strategy seeks to repopulate the city centre by almost doubling the existing population and to achieve 40,000 residents by 2035.

As part of SG2, the City Centre Strategic Development Framework recognises that the main opportunities for the creation of new homes in the City Centre lie in the redevelopment of vacant land and buildings, conversions of former/redundant commercial buildings and the conversion of upper floors as part of vertically mixed-use buildings.

Committee should note:

- the area around the development is well afforded by retail, transport nodes and other amenities.
- the proposal site is a vacant office building.

Committee should consider:

- if the proposal is of sufficient quality, and would contribute towards the re-population of the City Centre?

7.4 Overlooking and aspect

SG1: Placemaking Principle (Part 2) - Conversion and Subdivision to Residential Use

Conversions to residential use should result in good quality accommodation with appropriate facilities and residential amenity.

2.52 General standards –

- a) All dwellings should, ideally, have dual aspect (*proposed flats with their sole aspect into a parking court will generally be unacceptable*). Where single aspect is proposed developers will be required to demonstrate that the amenity enjoyed by the flats is similar, if not better than that of dual aspect flats in a similar location. An exception may also be made in terms of Listed Buildings, where the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the special character of the building would be detrimentally affected by a dual-aspect arrangement.
- b) All habitable rooms (all rooms other than halls, landings, bathrooms, toilets and small utility rooms) should receive natural daylight and ventilation. A minimum of 18 metres should be provided between habitable room windows directly facing windows in buildings on adjacent sites, wherever possible. Where the adjacent site is vacant, no new habitable room windows should be formed on an elevation less than 9 metres from the common boundary;
- c) access to upper floors should be provided internally;
- d) there should be internal access from each dwelling to both the front and rear of the building, to enable occupants to reach refuse/recycling facilities and private/communal amenity space; and

NPF4 Policy 14 Design quality and place intends to encourage, promote and facilitate well designed development that makes successful places by taking a design-led approach and applying the Place Principle. The policy required development to be designed to improve the quality of an area regardless of scale. Development will be supported where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places:

Healthy: Supporting the prioritisation of women's safety and improving physical and mental health.

Pleasant: Supporting attractive natural and built spaces.

Connected: Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency

Distinctive: Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted, literally or creatively, into designs to reinforce identity.

Sustainable: Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience, and integrating nature positive, biodiversity solutions.

Adaptable: Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can be changed quickly to accommodate different uses as well as maintained over time.

Policy 14 states that proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported.

Committee should note that:

- The flats overlooking Union Street, though single aspect, overlook a number of historical buildings and a busy thoroughfare with acceptable levels of daylight.
- The flats overlooking Union Place have a view of the NCP car park. This is 5.8m from the nearest residential window, looking into a bedroom. Specifically overlooking, is the car park stairwell and an exposed section of vehicle, however the stairwell is covered by semi-glazed windows and the exposed section is a vehicle only ramp. This is considered generally unacceptable by 2.54 of SG1 Part 2.
- The NCP hours of operation are open 24 hours.
the applicant submitted an 'Interior Daylight Survey', the findings of which confirmed that with modifications to some rear window apertures, including the removal of mullions and lowering of cills, 27 of the 35 rooms tested (77%) were predicted to meet the relevant thresholds within BRE 209. Additional measures proposed here include removing mullions (at the first and second floor) along with glazing and security bars in place on some windows to ensure all habitable rooms have access to natural light. This however is not covered in the drawings.
- High transmissive glass was proposed for all windows to improve the daylight levels, however this could improve visibility into windows to the rear.
- According to the survey itself, there are flaws in the methodology as the windows to the west are currently obstructed by scaffolding from the nearby Egyptian Halls building and there was dirt on some windows. However the survey was not an in-situ test, but a desk methodology so it is unclear why this would be the case.

Committee should consider whether:

- They are happy with the level of aspect and overlooking for both the front and the rear apartments?
- Given the obligation of the developer is that they demonstrate the amenity enjoyed by the flats with single aspect is similar, if not better than that of dual aspect flats in a similar location, are committee satisfied this has been met?
- they are satisfied with the level of privacy afforded for residents to the rear?
- Another survey could be conditioned after some remedial works have taken place?

7.5 Heritage assets

Overview

NPF4 Policy 7 Historic assets and places intends to protect and enhance the historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places. Development proposals in or affecting

conservation areas will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced.

Committee should note that:

- The area lies within the Business District & Blythswood Character Area and is regarded as an Unlisted Building of Townscape Quality. Reference is made to the building as part of the 'concentrations of commercial/retail warehouses in Union and Hope Streets' with red sandstone.

SG9 Historic Environment: Works Affecting the Exterior of Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas

Repair and Replacement of Windows

The Council encourages the retention and repair of original windows wherever possible, particularly as traditional sash and case windows can be overhauled to provide modern standards of comfort and convenience. Where new windows can be justified, this will generally mean installation to match the original.

Double Glazing - Timber framed windows fitted with double glazed units may be considered acceptable in listed buildings where existing windows of an inappropriate design or beyond repair are replaced by windows which match the originals exactly in their design, profile, method of opening and materials.

Class 7A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2024 brought in permitted development rights for some replacement window proposals.

Prior approval is required for replacement windows on a principal elevation in a conservation area, where the window would not be the same, or substantially the same, as the window to be altered or replaced in the following respects—

- (i) the manner in which the window is opened and closed,
- (ii) the number, orientation and colour of the panes comprised in the window,
- (iii) the dimensions and colour of the frame of the window or any astragal bars comprised in the window.

Committee should note that:

- All windows on the front elevation are to be replaced with double-glazed timber-framed sash-and-case windows to match those existing.
- Rear windows are to be replaced with double glazed uPVC framed windows, in line with policy.
- The applicant has confirmed that all front windows shall be upgraded to double glazed timber frame units with profiles to match existing.

Committee should consider whether:

- The proposed replacement windows are acceptable in this case, with the appropriate conditions applied?

7.6 Other residential amenity

Parking provision: vehicles

SG11 Sustainable Transport – There are no minimum standards for parking in the city centre. The site is located in the City Centre, where the Council seeks to discourage private car use in developments.

Parking provision: cycle

The Council shall require the provision of 1 cycle parking space per mainstream residential unit unless a dedicated garage or other storage could be provided.

- Cycle parking for residents should, generally, be located within, or to the rear of, the residential building to ensure it is safe and secure.
- Bike storage lockers/cupboards allocated to each unit, or cycle stands in a secure, covered compound, are the preferred solution for flatted developments. These should be easily accessible and usable and normally be on the ground floor or in the basement, providing the basement has ramped access or a suitable lift.
- Cycle parking should always be safe, sheltered and secure. The form of cycle parking provided should facilitate the securing of the frame of the bike to the “stand”. “Sheffield” racks are a good, and preferred, example of such provision.

Committee should note that:

- The site is located in the City Centre, where the Council seeks to discourage private car use in developments.
- One cycle parking space is required.
- no cycle storage has been proposed for this site, however there is nearby on street cycle parking.

Committee should consider whether:

- They are happy the lack of parking provision accords with the council's policy aims or discouraging car use in the city centre?
- Committee should consider whether adequate cycle parking is provided.

Waste Storage, Recycling & Collection

Designing New Development

All new developments must include appropriate and well-designed provision for waste storage, recycling and collection which meets the City's wider placemaking objectives. All waste/recycling areas must be located discreetly, so as to have no adverse visual impact or cause traffic/noise nuisance to neighbours.

Provision should be made such that where bins are to be located temporarily for kerbside collection, there remains adequate space for continued use of the footway/road.

Flatted Development - The following guidance applies:

- the bins/recycling stores should be as unobtrusive as possible. Large wheeled containers should be located conveniently in relation to where the collection vehicle will park. This should ideally be no more than 20 metres from the location of the waste containers.
- privacy is important to the rear of flats, where ambient noise levels are lower. Habitable rooms should not be located immediately above waste/recycling storage areas.

Committee should note that:

- no waste management plan has been submitted, contrary to policy.
- This can be submitted as a condition of the approval

Committee should consider whether:

- the proposed waste storage, recycling and collection arrangements are suitable in this case?
- If a suitable management plan can be submitted in conditions?

Greenspace provision

CDP6: Green Belt and Green Network SG6: Green Belt and Green Network sets out general contributions required for residential developments of 10 or more including conversions these include:

- the provision of open space in the City Centre: £580 per bedroom (5.20 Table 7)
- outdoor sports provision: £111 per bedroom (5.41)
- food growing provisions: £55 per bedroom (5.36 Table 9)

Committee should note that:

- 22 bedrooms are proposed for the development
- The council has proposed a condition to meet the requirements above, in order to generate a total contribution of £16,412.
- Due to the relative size of the amount requested, a S69 agreement must be in place before commencement of works on site.

Committee should consider whether:

- They are happy with the proposed conditions for an S69 agreement in accordance with CDP6/SG6?

Noise impact

NPF4 Policy 23 Health and Safety states that Development proposals that are likely to raise unacceptable noise issues will not be supported. The agent of change principle applies to noise sensitive development. A Noise Impact Assessment may be required where the nature of the proposal or its location suggests that significant effects are likely

Committee should note:

- The area of Union Street has considerable noise during the day
- Double glazed window replacements are proposed, but no noise impact mitigation has been mentioned in the accompanying statement.
- During the site visit however, no exceptional levels of noise were reported by the officer.

Committee should consider whether:

- They would require a noise impact assessment to be undertaken to satisfy that amenity would not be affected by noise levels below?

8 COMMITTEE DECISION

8.1 The options available to the Committee are:

- a. Grant planning permission, with or without conditions (see over for draft conditions);
- b. Refuse planning permission.

8.2 *Section 43A(12)(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997* requires that reasoning behind why the local review body has been decided be supplied in the decision notice. Should committee be minded to grant planning permission, material considerations that justify a departure from the plan would require to be identified.

9 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: n/a

Legal: n/a

Personnel: n/a

Procurement: n/a

Council Strategic Plan: n/a

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. n/a

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? no significant impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. n/a

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: n/a

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? n/a

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? n/a

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

10 Recommendations

That Committee consider the content of this report in coming to their decision.