

THE COCKBURN ASSOCIATION

THE EDINBURGH CIVIC TRUST

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Head of Planning
City Development – Planning
City of Edinburgh Council
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
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30 November, 2011

Dear Euan Mcmeeken,

APPLICATION REF: 11/03469/LBC & FUL; 3F, 4 Bellevue Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 4DU

Internal modernisation through removal of later addition walls, entrance hall restored to original proportions. Cover existing felt roof with re-used Scotch slate. Form sunken roof terrace with sliding glass doors and dark stained timber cladding. Remove existing uPVC windows, widen two openings and fit new dark stained timber framed windows. Infill third opening with external finish to match existing lead panels.

The Association has studied the plans for the above proposal and wishes to make the following comments.

We wholeheartedly support the refusal of previous applications 11/00190/LBC & FUL which were very similar to the above proposal and have read the supporting documents presented to the Local Review Board at appeal.

We have read the extensive speculative discussion on the relative originality of the roof which could have been settled by an examination of the building control records. There seems to be little doubt that the building is a purpose-built tenement occupying an odd-sized plot in a street of townhouses and that the roof to the front has been raised to gain more floor space in an alteration probably pre-dating the 1947 Planning Act. Nevertheless, the roof and whole building is listed Category A and any alterations must address the listing criteria and character appraisal of the conservation area and location facing the boundary of the World Heritage Site.

The originality or not of the front roof area is not a justification to support the introduction of a roof terrace on the front of a Category A-listed building like a giant inverted dormer window. Listing exists to protect original features and guide the restoration of non-original detrimental work, which the current roof profile is. It extends to all features, fixtures and fittings within the curtilage. We could support restoration of the front roof area to something like its original pitch for slate, the re-instatement of a typical lead gutter behind the parapet and low eaves, but this would require the applicant to sacrifice some floor space. Other than this, significant changes to the existing front roof area are not justifiable. We agree with Historic Scotland that there is little merit in slating this non-original roof. To use the new silver roof covering, probably applied without planning permission, as a justification for other contentious changes would be to promote the neglect of existing roofs in the hope of planning gain.

Whilst the existing arrangement is not attractive, it does at least provide a consistently dark background to the balustrade when the balusters are seen in relief against the sky on other houses in the street (applicant's photograph: *existing view from Bellevue Crescent*). To introduce a break in this background caused by the terrace would be highly prominent. From the street the gap in the dark background would be evident as a patch of blue sky behind each baluster. At night the same inconsistency would be there, with

the proposed patio doors a brightly lit background against the dark silhouette of the balusters. In the applicant's photograph: *proposed view from top floor flat on Bellevue Crescent* the new glazing has been blackened as if it would be permanently dark, as have the windows below, whereas in reality there would be reflections from the glass and/or light from within.

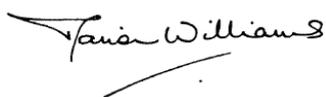
We are also opposed to roof terraces in general in incongruous places such as classical New Town streets because of the uncontrolled placing of pot plants, which could be the size of a tall hedge, sun umbrellas, barbeques and their chimneys, and other leisure equipment. Any terrace attracts such visual clutter if it is used and this can be highly visible. If consented this application would set an unwelcome precedent within the New Town for the principle of introducing roof terraces on the many roofs which are not original and were altered before the 1947 Act.

We note that the remaining windows to rooms adjacent to the proposed terrace will be changed to extended horizontal slot windows which no longer relate to the windows below. We are opposed to this for the above reasons of light at night. Whilst the preferred solution is no windows and/or a conservation roof light we are opposed to these changes which make the fenestration pattern worse. If windows are to be retained behind the balustrade they should follow the pattern and width of the main facade windows below.

The application describes 'restoration' of the original proportions of the entrance hall. This is only restoration in the vaguest sense since the proposal introduces a wall of floor to ceiling windows between the hall and terrace which is quite new and which would radically transform the space. Similarly, the original opening to the lounge is said to be 'restored' when in fact a new sliding door is to be introduced which cannot work with the original mouldings and door pattern. Such changes may be acceptable depending on how consistently they are handled and the quality of original fittings, but this is not restoration of a Category A-listed property. Because of the listing such changes and 'interventions' must first be judged according to how they fit within any restoration proposals and secondly for their modernity. If the applicant's ambition is to transform the property into a modern design then he or she should possibly have considered a new-build property.

We believe a different solution can be found to improve sunlight provision into the centre of this apartment. We remain firmly opposed to this rooftop terrace and therefore we strongly object to these applications being granted permission.

Yours sincerely



Marion Williams
Director