

14-16 Hope Terrace Road EH9 2AR

Planning Application 21/00857/FUL

OBJECTION from Grange Association

25 March 2021

This application comprises proposals for the restoration of two magnificent family villas that are characteristic of the Grange. The site has been neglected while in the ownership of the NHS and has suffered from unsympathetic 20th century functional additions and from a general lack of maintenance of the buildings and grounds. We welcome the proposals in general and applaud many elements, including:

- Removal of the non-original outbuildings;
- The restoration of the two villas at 14 and 16 as family homes with gardens;
- The preservation of the trees on the site, together with the proposed planting of replacements for those that are to be removed.

This is a major project and it is inevitable that some stakeholders will be disadvantaged by the changes that will occur as a result. We have consulted our members and, while there is a range of views, the members who stay close to the site have raised specific concerns about the proposals for the new property to become No. 16A, on the former tennis court to the east of the site. We consider these to be sufficiently material to warrant an objection from this Association.

Our objection relates only to the proposals for the 16A site; we would be content for approval to be granted for the works at 14 and 16 with the proposals at 16A to be subject to further review and amendment.

We are pleased to see the site being restored to family use and we stress that this objection is not intended to frustrate the overall ambition of the applicant to create family homes on the site. We would wish to work with the applicant to ensure that the proposals can proceed in a way that creates an acceptable outcome for all stakeholders.

Proposed new build at 16A

Our concerns about the proposals for 16A relate to:

1. Separation of houses in the Conservation Area;
2. Height, form and materials colours of the proposed new house (north);
3. Height of rear extension (south); and
4. Principal elevation too close to the street.

1. Separation of houses in the Conservation Area

The Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) identifies the characteristic features of the Grange that make it worthy of conservation:

Grain and density

The density of development is generally very low. Houses on the north side of the street are generally situated to maximise front gardens, whereas most properties on the south side have larger rear gardens. Building line and separation are therefore of key importance.

The separation of dwellings creates a characteristic rhythm and solid-void repetition between precisely-sited structures of similar scale and massing. The spacious gardens provide an important setting for the buildings and mature trees within.

The gaps between buildings are important in maintaining the dominant green character, a sense of generous space, and glimpse views of rear and side gardens.

Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal (page 15)

The CACA goes on to identify pressures associated with development proposals, including:

Development of villa grounds

A major pressure is on the setting of villas, garden space and boundary walls and the loss of mature trees through extensions to existing property and the erection of new developments within villa grounds.

Key elements of the area's special characteristics are potentially at risk through such development, such as the separation/distinction between buildings and the important gaps between them.

Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal (page 32)



Figure 1: Gap between 18 and 16 Hope Terrace (March 2021) looking southwest

The present gap between the villas at 18 and 16 is characteristic of the Grange Conservation Area.

The new house will close the visual gap from the street between 18 and 16 and will become a dominant intrusion into the sightline. As shown in Figure 1 above, looking southwest, in the winter months the trees create minimal obstruction to the views which the new house would eliminate and the trees will provide minimal screening in winter.



Figure 2: Applicants' impression of summer streetview of new house (16A) looking southeast.

Even in the summer months, the view to the southwest will be dominated by the new house and will harm the character of the Conservation Area.

The City of Edinburgh Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) includes a number of Policies, including ENV6:

Development within a conservation area or affecting its setting will be permitted which:

- a) preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the conservation area and is consistent with the relevant conservation area character appraisal

Edinburgh Local Development Plan Policy ENV6

We consider that the current proposal for the new house at 16A is inconsistent with the Grange CACA and so is incompatible with Policy ENV6.

2. Height, form and materials colours of the proposed new house (north)

The proposed new house to be built on the tennis court, forming 16A, will be three storeys high with a flat roof. This is a marked contrast with the neighbouring property to the east (18) which is a classical two storey villa with a pitched slate roof.



Figure 3: 18 Hope Terrace (two storeys with pitched slate roof) (Google streetview May-2016)

The proposed new house would be higher than the west extension to No 18 which it adjoins. Moreover, the proposed block form with full-height windows and flat roof will be an alien intrusion into the sightline at that height. No other property on the street with three storeys has an undifferentiated top floor with such a uniform design over its full height.

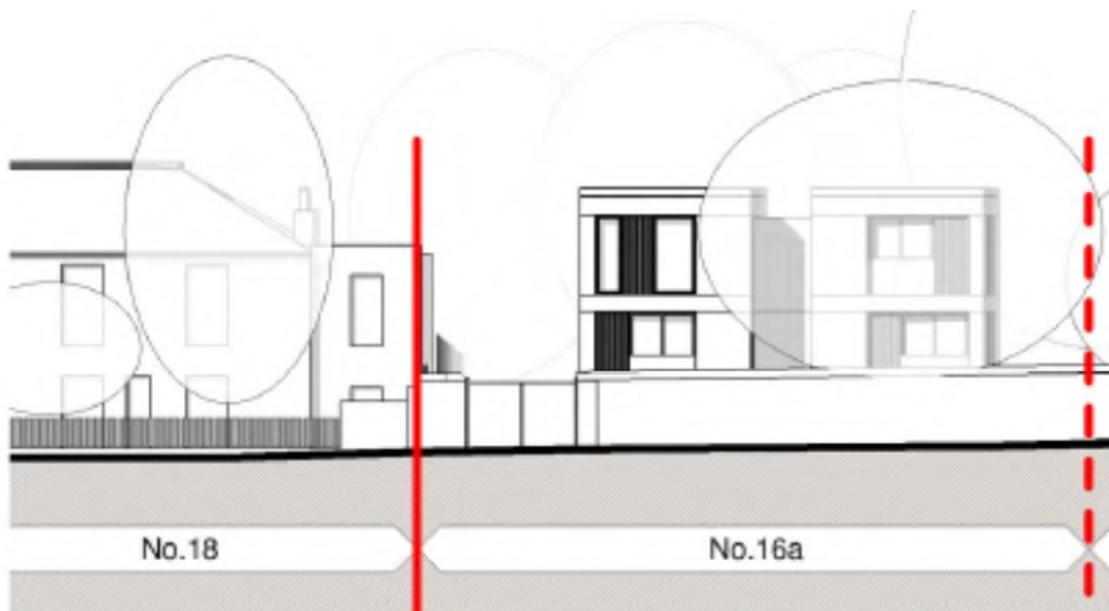


Figure 4: Applicants' Design Statement (p. 52): Proposed street elevation (trees indicated)



Figure 5: Applicants' Design Statement (p. 93): Proposed north elevation

The applicants' Design Statement (p. 5) acknowledges the characteristic style of the Grange:

"2.1.4 Strict feuing requirements restricted the height of development to two storeys and an attic."

The proposed form of the house at 16A pays no regard to the prevailing style of either the traditional Victorian properties or the modern villas on the street which respect this 'two storeys plus attic' tradition. There is no attempt to soften the top storey or to differentiate it to give the appearance of an attic floor.

Examples of traditional and new build properties in Hope Terrace show that the second floor is designed to reflect the "attic" tradition, being visibly differentiated and subservient to the lower floors, traditionally with a mansard-style roof with a gutter line above the first floor.



Figure 6: 23-25 Hope Terrace – Mansard roof at second floor



Figure 7: 10 Hope Terrace – New build with subservient second floor

In addition to our concerns about height and form set out above, we query the specification of the materials colours. The proposed “Buff/grey sandstone” for the principal elevation is specified only superficially and we request that a condition of any approval is that detailed specifications or samples be submitted for approval by the Council’s Planning Officers prior to construction, to ensure consistency with the villas at 18 and 16.

The LDP includes Policy DES4 which places conditions on the height, form and materials of new developments.

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that it will have a positive impact on its surroundings, including the character of the wider townscape and landscape, and impact on existing views, having regard to:

- a) height and form;
- b) scale and proportions, including the spaces between buildings;
- c) position of buildings and other features on the site;
- d) materials and detailing.

Edinburgh Local Development Plan Policy DES4

We consider that the current proposal for the new house at 16A is incompatible with Policy DES4.

There are examples in adjacent areas of South Edinburgh where controversial development proposals were finally approved with large prestigious homes built to mirror the prevailing form of the street, such as the recent development in Pavilion Crescent EH16 5FE. Figures 8 and 9 below illustrate.



Figure 8: Pavilion Crescent EH16 5FE – New build mansard roofs at second floor



Figure 9: Pavilion Crescent EH16 5FE – New build in distance, viewed from Crawfurd Road, respecting the traditional height and form of the street

3. Height of rear extension (south)

The proposals for the new house at 16A include a two-storey rear extension, housing a family kitchen / dining area with a library and entertaining area above.



Figure 10: Applicants' Design Statement (p. 87): Visualisation of 16A from looking northeast



Figure 11: Applicants' Design Statement (p.94): East elevation of 16A

This extension will not be visible from the street. However, it will be visible and dominant from the gardens of No. 18 and No. 16 and from the properties to the south in Blackford Road, especially in the winter months with little tree cover. The land slopes down towards the south. The proposed design appears to comprise floors a generous 3m apart, creating an extension 6m above ground level. It includes a balcony at first floor level to the south which will adversely affect neighbours in relation to noise and privacy.

We request that the applicant be invited to reconsider the design of this rear extension with a view to reducing its height and visual impact on the neighbouring properties. Suggestions for the rear extension could include reduced room heights in this rear extension, an overall lowering of the extension by modest careful excavation of the site, or a redesign to create a high-ceiling open single storey family kitchen/dining area containing a mezzanine floor for the library / entertaining room accessed by a redesigned stair from the kitchen area, or a combination of these.



Figure 12: Applicants' Design Statement (p. 43): Block visualisation of 16A looking northeast

The LDP includes Policy DES5 which places conditions on the amenity of neighbouring properties:

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that:

- a) the amenity of neighbouring developments is not adversely affected and that future occupiers have acceptable levels of amenity in relation to noise, daylight, sunlight, privacy or immediate outlook

Edinburgh Local Development Plan Policy DES5

We consider that the proposal for the rear extension to the new house at 16A is incompatible with Policy DES5.

4. Principal elevation too close to the street

The proposals for 16A involve the property being sited as close as feasible to the street, which we understand is to protect the copper beech tree to the rear and to maximise the remaining south-facing garden. However, we consider that the design is too close to the road.

The Council's Householder Guidance makes specific reference to villas and the special guidelines include:

Distances from the main facades to the boundaries being at least 12.5m

Householder Guidance (Feb. 2019) (page 10) – Special guidelines for villas

Those guidelines apply specifically to extensions and alterations to villas but imply a characteristic of villas whose form should be protected in the conservation area. We therefore consider that this criterion of a 12.5m minimum frontage should apply to any new dwelling built between villas.

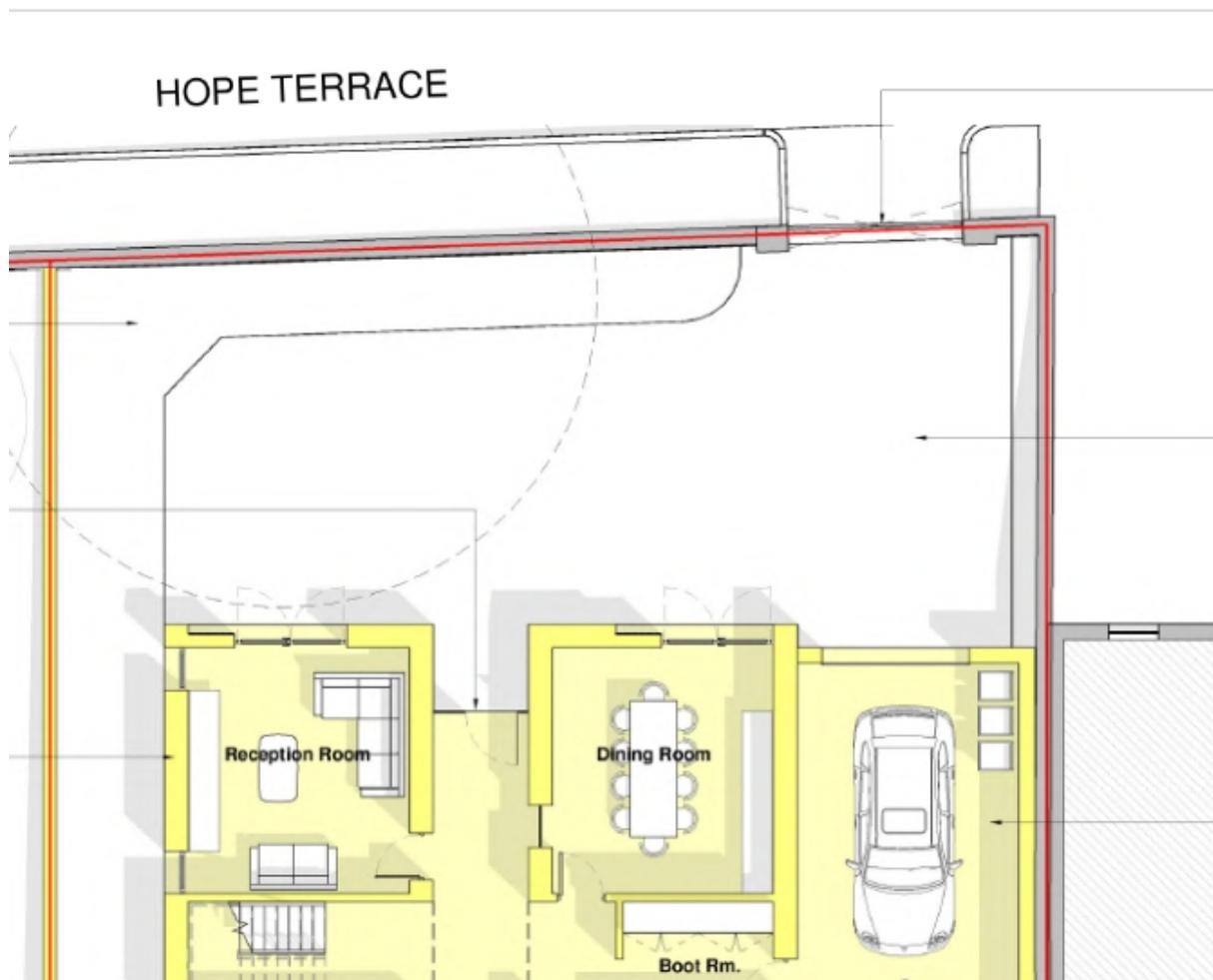


Figure 13: Proposed 16A Hope Terrace: Principal elevation only 7m from and not parallel with roadline

The present design indicates that the western edge of 16A would be less than 7m from the site boundary at the street, using a straight-line extrapolation from the principal elevation of 18 Hope Terrace to provide the building line for 16A. However, No 18's principal elevation is not parallel with the line of Hope Terrace. The drawings for 16A correctly show the angle of the street by comparison with the proposed principal elevation and so the drawings as proposed have the new 16A closer to the street than its neighbour at No. 18.

Regardless of the siting of No. 18, we consider that no part of the principal elevation of the proposed 16A should be closer to the street boundary than 12.5m. The photo at Figure 1 above indicates the visible gap between villas which would be closed and the loss of the sightlines from the street to the villa at No. 16. We request that the design be reconsidered to relocate the frontage of the house back from the street (with necessarily a somewhat reduced depth) and especially the frontage of the western part, so that views from the street south-westwards towards No. 16 can be improved to retain some of the traditional streetscape.

Conclusion

We are pleased to see the site being restored to family use and we have no wish to frustrate the overall ambition of the applicant to create family homes on the site.

Our objections relate solely to the proposals for the new house on the tennis court to become No. 16A. We consider that the plans for this house, if unamended, would:

- Harm the character of the Grange Conservation Area, destroying the separation between buildings and with a loss of views between them, contrary to ENV6;
- Fail to reflect: (a) the prevailing height and form of villas on Hope Terrace of 'two storeys and attic'; and (b) their materials colours, and would present an alien intrusion to the street, contrary to DES4;
- Threaten the amenity of neighbours from the height of the rear extension, contrary to DES5; and
- Position the house too close to the street, blocking views from the street, contrary to ENV6 and the Householder Guidance.

We request that the applicant be asked to review and moderate the proposals for the house at 16A.

Grange Association
25 March 2021