

Plans to redevelop historic Edinburgh gatehouse have been refused

Plans to redevelop a crumbling, historic Edinburgh gatehouse have been refused over fears it would erase its historic features

The building at the entrance to the Edmonstone Estate has been on Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) 'at risk register' for nearly 10 years after being damaged by a fire.

Earlier this year Edinburgh Council refused a private developer's bid to restore and extend the Old Dalkieth Road eyesore, saying there were "no compelling reasons" to approve the proposed changes to the B-listed structure.

And despite admitting Edmonstone House South Lodge is "unsafe and unsightly," the Scottish Government has now thrown out an appeal.



Gatehouse plan. Image: EMA/Policies Holding Ltd & Hosp Ltd
Malcolm Mahony, a planning reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers, said the redevelopment to create a new four-bedroom home would result in an “adverse impact on the building’s architectural and historical interest”.

He acknowledged the building had been deemed at ‘critical’ risk of collapsing for nearly a decade, but added the “scale and form” of works proposed had not been justified.

An inspection four years ago found the gatehouse had become “more derelict with walls having collapsed” and “most of the timberwork destroyed”.

Mr Mahony said: “The structure is now regarded as unsafe and has temporary fencing around it to prevent access. It is unsightly, has been disfigured by graffiti, and the grounds are overgrown.”

Applicants Policies Holding Ltd & Hosp Ltd argued the project would halt a “history of decay and deterioration” and “allow

its original appearance and use to be restored”.

The proposal would “preserve what is left of the building,” an appeal statement submitted on their behalf said. “The height of the existing house will be retained as two storeys. The existing footprint and materials will be retained as much as possible.”

Meanwhile HES did not formally object to the plan but “noted concerns regarding the scale and design of the extension, and the failure to incorporate external fixtures the lodge once had such as decorative bargeboards”.

A 2018 bid to refurbish the gatehouse – with no extension to its original 18th century boundary – was approved but was never progressed and planning permission expired in 2021.

Mr Mahony said: “The case being made for the scale and form of extension now planned is that it would improve the amenity of the property and bring the house up to current space standards – the same justification as was given for the 2018 scheme.

“The appellant cites the current Domestic Technical Standards . . . stating that these require minimum areas in accessible bathrooms, living spaces and kitchens which require extending the footprint of the original building.

“However, these arguments relate to enlarging the property to provide a four bedroom dwelling, rather than a three bedroom dwelling as previously approved, resulting in an adverse impact on the building’s architectural and historical interest. I am therefore not persuaded that the scale and form of development proposed has been justified.”

Conservative Gilmerton councillor Phil Doggart said: “It is disappointing when a dilapidated building cannot be turned into something useful.

“Providing new accommodation of all types is something we need

in the city given the shortage of housing. Hopefully, there will be opportunity to have an upgrade to the site that will meet the required standards.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter