

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

ABERDEEN, 27 October 2016. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM.
Present:- Councillor Milne, Convener; Councillor Finlayson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Cooney, Cormie, Crockett, Donnelly, Greig, Hutchison, Jaffrey, Jean Morrison MBE, Nicoll and Sandy Stuart.

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE NOTE

1. The Forum had before it the procedure note and guidance for members on the operation of Forum meetings.

The Forum resolved:-

to note the procedure note and guidance for members.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 18 AUGUST 2016 - FOR APPROVAL

2. The Forum had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 18 August, 2016 for approval.

The Forum resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

BON ACCORD CENTRE EXTENSION - 161104

3. The Forum had before it a report by the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on a submission of a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) by GVA on behalf of their client, BMO Real Estate Partner, for a proposed major development which would be a mixed use comprising Class 1 (shops), class 2 (Professional services), Class 3 (Food and drink), Class 4 (Business), Class 7 (Hotels), Class 11 (Leisure), flats, serviced apartments, car parking, services and all ancillary development, at the Bon Accord Centre Aberdeen.

The report advised that this was a proposed extension to the Bon Accord Shopping Centre to provide additional floor space and could potentially include retail, professional services, food and drink, business use, hotel/service apartments, leisure, flats and student accommodation. Car parking is also included in the description. It was noted that the site incorporates a relatively large area in order to allow for potential public realm works. The report also explained that the proposed application did not detail any location, scale/form/height/massing or design/external finishes matter or the level of car parking proposed for any of the proposals, rather is simply shows the extent of the site.

The Forum heard from Joanne Wilkes (BMO Real Estate Partner, owner of the Bon Accord Centre), Richard Slipper (GVA Planning Consultants), David Hannah (CDA Architects) and Alan DeVenny (Transport Consultant JMP). They outlined the proposal

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in detail and responded to questions from members. Mr Slipper explained that the project was about collaborative working and engaging with the City Centre Masterplan (CCM), with one of the proposals contained within the CCM to extend the Bon Accord Centre. Mr Hannah outlined that the previous public consultation held in July had been very well attended with the second one taking place from 4pm on 27 October. It was hoped that the final planning application would be submitted early 2017. Mr Hannah went on to explain that they had looked at four key headings and also looked at three development opportunity sites. (1) East George Street; (2) West George Street and (3) North Crooked Lane. Regarding the first site, Mr Hannah outlined that they aimed to improve the public space and at site two on West George Street, they aimed to create areas of public realm. With the third site Mr Hannah advised that there was the potential for making this area shop units and could be seen as a landmark building. It was also noted that BMO Real Estate had recently purchased Crooked Lane to realign the street for the customers of the Harriet Street car park. Overhead coverage on George Street for customers from the Bon Accord Centre was also discussed. Questions were raised regarding seagulls and Mr Hannah advised that this was being taken into consideration with any improvements to the Centre.

Mr Slipper then explained that a solution regarding connectivity between St Nicholas Centre and Bon Accord Centre had been drawn up by Mr Alan DeVenny, Transport Consultant which meant that pedestrians would take priority for the crossing between the centres. The crossing would be wider, with a narrower road and the traffic lights would be changed to give priority to pedestrians. Suggestions were raised regarding a bridge between the two centres. The presenters advised that this was examined however it was felt that the view to Marischal College would be lost as well as taking the appearance away from the heart of Aberdeen.

Members went on to ask various questions and it was noted that the owners of the Bon Accord Centre had recently purchased the Co-op building on George Street however they did not own the Santander bank or the local bar situated next to the Bon Accord Centre on George Street. Ms Wilkes explained that they had consulted with the local businesses including the local bar however no responses had been received. Members also questioned whether access to Harriett Street car park could be changed to via the Crooked Lane. Mr DeVenny advised that this could be examined but would require the ramp in the car park to be changed.

Ms Wilkes also explained that they had a good relationship with the owners of John Lewis and would continue to consult with them regarding any future developments; and she highlighted that they had recently held a very useful meeting with the principle of RGU, who recognised the importance of the area to the university.

Finally Councillor Finlayson questioned whether the old RGU building on St Andrews Street could be used as a link with the centre. It was noted that this building was bought by Malmaison hotels however Ms Wilkie advised that she was happy to work with the owners.

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The Forum then heard from the Case Officer, Andrew Miller, who addressed the Forum and provided more details regarding the planning aspects of the application and responded to questions from members. Mr Miller explained that regarding consultation, there had been mail drops, an advert in the Evening Express as well as two consultation events held regarding the proposals. Community Councils were also notified of the PoAN as well as ward members for George Street/Harbour and Midstocket and Rosemount, Aberdeen Civic Society, Aberdeen Inspired, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Aberdeen Action on Disability North East of Scotland Tourism Partnership and also MP's and MSP's for Aberdeen.

The report recommended:-

That the Forum –

- (a) note the key issues identified;
- (b) if necessary, seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which they would like the applicant to consider and address in any future application.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to request that the applicant liaise with the appropriate officers to look at the district heat network for Marishcal Square and the Gallowgate;
- (ii) to request that the applicant look at the feasibility of making the access of Harriett Street car park from Crooked Lane;
- (iii) to request that the applicant consider using the same material for both the improvements to Crooked Lane and the pedestrian area between the two centres; and
- (iv) to thank Ms Joanne Wilkes, Richard Slipper, David Hannah, Chris Miller and Alan DeVenny for the informative presentation.

- COUNCILLOR RAMSAY MILNE, Convener.

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