



Planning Development Management Committee

Report by Development Management Manager

Committee Date: 4 December 2025

Site Address:	15 Bon-accord Square, Aberdeen, AB11 6DJ
Application Description:	Change of use of ground floor to box storage facility (within the rear element of the building) and associated office accommodation (to the front)
Application Ref:	251082/DPP
Application Type	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	3 October 2025
Applicant:	Bowden Developments Ltd
Ward:	Torry/Ferryhill
Community Council:	City Centre



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RECOMMENDATION

Approve Conditionally

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The application property is a three and a half storey (including basement) mid terraced traditional granite building with slate roof located on the southern side of Bon-Accord Square. The property is Category B listed as part of a group listing for 1-17 Bon-Accord Square, 1-7 East Craibstone Street and 1-7 West Craibstone Street and located within the Crown Street/ Bon Accord Conservation Area. The property includes a large 1960s three-storey extension to the rear of the premises, with buff harled walls and a slated mansard roof, which is of little architectural merit and does not form part of the listing. The building is presently utilised as serviced apartments at basement and upper floor levels with reception area at ground floor level with the rest of the building (to which the current application relates) being vacant but having most recently been in use as a social club (United Services Club). The surrounding area includes a mixture of uses including offices, social clubs and residential properties. Craibstone Lane bounds the site to the rear.

Relevant Planning History

- 251083/LBC – Listed building consent for internal alterations to partitions and doors, formation of tea prep area and toilet, removal of raised stage, installation of steel stair and all associated works was approved conditionally in November 2025.
- 141342 – Listed building consent for internal alterations to ground floor and basement layout along with the re-opening of two side windows and the creating of two garage door opening to the rear lane was approved unconditionally on 7 November 2014. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.
- 141341 – Detailed planning permission for a change of use of the ground floor to six serviced apartments, creation of new basement storage area, re-open existing two side windows and creation of two new garage door opening to rear lane was approved conditionally on 10 November 2014. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.
- 120972 – Detailed planning permission for a change of use from social club to 19 hotel rooms, formation of new storage areas, re-open 2 existing windows and form 2 doors to storage area was approved conditionally on 2 October 2012. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.
- 120933 – Listed building consent for the insertion of two garage doors and re-opening of two windows to the rear and side elevation was approved unconditionally on 26 October 2012. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.
- 110500 – Detailed planning permission for a change of use from social club to form two serviced apartments, serviced offices, and alterations to form new windows and door openings on rear extension was approved unconditionally on 9 June 2011. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.
- 110502 – Listed building consent to re-open two existing windows, insert new windows, garage door and rear fire exit all to rear and side elevations was approved unconditionally on 3 June 2011. This permission was not implemented and has since expired.

- A7/0335 – Detailed planning permission for a part change of use from private members club to hotel/serviced apartments and extension to second floor was approved conditionally on 2 May 2007. This permission appears to have been implemented. An associated application for listed building consent A7/0354 for new dormer windows, windows and rear roof extension was approved conditionally on 2 May 2007.

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

The proposals seek detailed planning permission for a change of use of the ground floor to create a box storage facility (within the rear extension element of the building) and associated office accommodation (to the front, within the original granite townhouse). No external alterations to the building are proposed. The submitted information indicates that the premises would operate on a valet style storage and logistics model, with around 2-4 trips to the premises per day, undertaken by staff only, using a small van. Members of the general public/ customers would not have access to the storage facility. Two rear existing entrances would be used for unloading and loading of storage materials from Craibstone Lane.

Amendments/ Additional Information

- With the agreement of the applicant the description of the proposed development was changed from “*change of use to Class 6 (Storage and Distribution) and Class 4 (Business)*” to the current description to “*change of use of ground floor to box storage facility (within the rear element of the building) and associated office accommodation (to the front)*” to accurately describe the proposed development. Neighbour re-notification was not considered necessary.
- In addition, a Supporting Statement and Noise Impact Assessment were submitted in support of the application.

Supporting Documents

All drawings and supporting documents listed below can be viewed on the Council’s website at:

<https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=T3I9I7BZFH00>

- Supporting Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment

Reason for Referral to Committee

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because:

- The proposals have been subject to six timeous letters of objection.

Determination of the application therefore falls outwith the scheme of delegation.

CONSULTATIONS

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Internal Consultees

- **ACC - Environmental Health** – originally requested the submission of a Noise Impact Assessment due to the potential for the proposal to cause noise disturbance to existing sensitive receptors (residential) in the surrounding area. Following receipt of the supporting statement they confirmed that the proposals were acceptable subject to conditions restricting the use of the premises to that of a box storage facility and that the use is only operational between 0800 and 1800 hours.
- **ACC - Roads Development Management (RDM) Team** – note that the site benefits from good accessibility via sustainable modes of transport. Note that there is currently no dedicated parking spaces associated with the site, and none are proposed as part of this application.

Whilst controlled parking zone B provides a level of parking control that should prevent inappropriate or obstructive parking, and the applicant's proposed method of operation suggests the site will generate minimal vehicle trips. It is also expected that the business would apply for the necessary parking permit. RDM would support this, provided a suitable condition is attached to any approval, limiting the site's operation to the applicant's described mode - a valet-style storage and logistics service with no customer interaction on-site.

Also note the secure cycle storage which is being proposed for staff and confirm this is acceptable. Confirmation that no business bins are to be stored on the public road outwith collection time is acceptable.

RDM have no objection subject to a suitable condition(s) ensuring the site operates as has been described by the applicant.

External Consultees

- **City Centre Community Council** – no response received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Six representations have been received (six objections). The matters raised can be summarised as follows –

Material Considerations

1. Noise concerns and associated impacts on residential amenity and the proposals would have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.
2. The impact on quality office and residential accommodation within Bon-accord Square. The current mix of offices, serviced accommodation, clubs and residential properties is appropriate for the square and the proposed use is not an appropriate addition and should be located within an industrial area.
3. Traffic concerns associated with the proposed business and impacts that this would have on the surrounding road network/ parking facilities. The proposals would fail to comply with associated transport policies and guidance.

4. The proposals would be at odds with the aims of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, which seeks to re-introduce residential uses to the city centre.
5. The proposal, which is located within a low emissions zone, would conflict with the Council's aims of cleaner city centre air.

Non-Material Considerations

6. There was a lack of engagement with local residents regarding the proposals; meaningful consultation should have been undertaken to assess community sentiment and potential impacts.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Requirements

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the development plan; and, that any determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Development Plan

National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the long-term spatial strategy for Scotland and contains a comprehensive set of national planning policies that form part of the statutory development plan.

- Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises)
- Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation)
- Policy 3 (Biodiversity)
- Policy 9 (Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings)
- Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy 23 (Health and Safety)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

- Policy H2 (Mixed Use Areas)
- Policy T2 (Sustainable Transport)
- OP91 (Union Street West City Centre Masterplan Intervention Area)
- Policy VC1 (Vibrant City)
- Policy VC4 (City Centre and Retail Core)
- Policy WB3 (Noise)

Aberdeen Planning Guidance

- Noise
- Transport & Accessibility

Other Material Considerations

- City Centre and Beach Masterplan
- Bon-Accord and Crown Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal

EVALUATION

Key Determining Factors

The key determining factors in relation to the proposals relate to the principle of development, access and servicing of the building and impacts on residential amenity. These matters are addressed in the following evaluation. As no external alterations are proposed an assessment on the historic environment as well as design is unnecessary.

Principle of Development

The site is zoned as a mixed use area in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP), where Policy H2 (Mixed Use Areas) applies. This states that *“applications for development or change of use within mixed use areas must take into account the existing uses and character of the surrounding area and avoid direct conflict with the adjacent land uses and amenity.”* It also states that *“where new industrial, business or commercial uses are deemed appropriate, development should not adversely affect the amenity of people living and working in the area.”*

The proposal relates to a long-time vacant unit which was most recently in use as a social club, which would fall under Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Scotland Order 1997 (as amended). The proposal seeks to introduce office accommodation fronting onto Bon-accord Square with an associated box storage facility using the majority of the rear of the premises. The nature of the proposed business, as detailed in the applicants supporting statement, and set out in the below evaluation, have demonstrated that such a use could be accommodated in the premises without having an adverse impact on residential amenity, particularly when viewed against the consented use of the premises. The proposals would not impact on neighbouring users to an unacceptable degree and would therefore comply with Policy H2 of the ALDP in principle.

The application site is also located within the boundaries of the city centre. Policy VC1 (Vibrant City) of the ALDP advises *“proposals for new development, or expansion of existing activities, in the city centre, which support its vibrancy and vitality throughout the day and/or into the evening will be supported in principle. Proposals will be considered in relation to their locality and context within the city centre.”* Policy VC4 (City Centre and Retail Core) states *“development within the city centre must contribute towards the vision for the city centre as a major regional centre as expressed in the City Centre Masterplan.”*

The proposed development would only be partially open to members of the public, who may use the office accommodation but would have no access to the rear of the premises, where deliveries and pick-ups would be undertaken to the storage area by employees of the business. Given that the application property is a long-time vacant premises, it is considered that the office accommodation

to be provided to the front, would offer a degree of vibrancy and vitality, particularly when compared to the current use, and along with the consented use of the upper floors of the premises as serviced accommodation the proposals would be generally in line with Policy VC1 and VC4 of the ALDP and the aims and aspirations of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

It is noted that the part of the premises to which the proposals relate are vacant, and have been for a significant period of time. Policy 9 (Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings) of NPF4 states *“development proposals that will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and buildings, whether permanent or temporary, will be supported.”* The proposals will see a partially vacant building being brought back into full use as a box storage facility with ancillary office space, to be operated alongside the serviced accommodation. The proposals would result in the sustainable use of a partially vacant building and would comply with the aims of Policy 9.

The Bon-Accord and Crown Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal discusses matters such as the setting of buildings, the built environment, public realm and the natural environment. Given the proposals would bring a vacant building back into use and no external alterations are proposed to the building there would be no conflict with this document.

The application site is also located within OP91 (Union Street West City Centre Masterplan Intervention Area). This OP is not considered to be of particular relevance, although it does mention *“refurbishment of Bon Accord Square”*. The proposals would not impact on or prejudice this aspiration.

Transportation

The applicant, in their supporting statement, has advised that vehicle movements, associated with the proposed use, would be minimal (typically 2-4 small van trips per day) with rear access points to the building ensuring that all operational movements occur away from the frontage of the building on the rear lane. The supporting statement also advises that no customers are expected to visit the premises with the proposed use offering a “pick-up” facility. A single parking permit for the company vehicle would likely be required with a LEZ compliant vehicle, albeit these matters fall out with the control of planning. The applicants have also advised that cycle parking facilities would be provided for staff.

The proposals have been subject to consultation with the RDM who have provided various comments on the proposed development. They have noted that the site is located within the city centre, with good accessibility to the site via various modes of sustainable transport. They are content with the findings of the supporting statement, noting that the proposed use should be in line with the details of the supporting statement (via planning condition) and the provision of cycle storage facilities also to be controlled via planning condition. They have confirmed no objection to the application and consider that the proposal would comply with the general principles of both Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport) of NPF4 and Policy T2 (Sustainable Transport) of the ALDP.

Noise

Policy WB3 (Noise) of the ALDP advises *“in cases where significant exposure to noise is likely to arise from development, a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) will be required as part of a planning application.”* Similar guidance is provided by Policy 23 (Health and Safety) of NPF4 which states *“development proposals that are likely to raise unacceptable noise issues will not be supported. The agent of change principle applies to noise sensitive development.”*

The proposals were subject to consultation with Environmental Health, who initially raised concerns with regards to noise and the potential for impacts on adjacent residential properties and requested the submission of a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA). Following receipt of the applicant's supporting statement, which clarified the use of the proposed premises, Environmental Health confirmed that a NIA was not required, subject to conditions ensuring that the premises were only utilised as a box storage facility and the hours of operation of the premises were restricted to between 0800 and 1800. As a result of the above, and subject to these conditions, it is considered that the development proposal could operate without having an adverse impact on residential amenity and in general compliance with Policy WB3 of the ALDP and Policy 23 of NPF4.

Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, Climate mitigation and Biodiversity

Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises) of NPF4 requires significant weight to be given to the global climate and nature crises in the consideration of all development proposals. Policy 2 (Climate mitigation and adaptation) of NPF4 requires development proposals to be designed and sited to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible, and to adapt to current and future risks from climate change. Policy 3 (Biodiversity) of NPF4 requires proposals for local development to include measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, proportionate to the nature and scale of development.

The proposed development, which relates to the repurposing and re-use of a partially vacant ground floor building is sufficiently small-scale such that it would not make any material difference to the global climate and nature crises nor to climate mitigation and adaptation, nor are there any significant opportunities to minimise greenhouse gas emissions given the nature of the proposals. Therefore, the proposals are compliant with Policies 1 and 2 of NPF4. The proposed development would be small-scale and does not offer the opportunity for any biodiversity gain. The proposals are thus considered to be acceptable, despite some minor tension with Policy 3 of NPF4.

Matters Raised in Representations

1. Noise concerns and associated impacts on residential amenity and the proposals would have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area. *Response: this matter has been addressed in the above evaluation. The proposals are considered to be an acceptable form of development, with no adverse noise impacts arising.*
2. The impact on quality office and residential accommodation within Bon-accord Square. The current mix of offices, serviced accommodation, clubs and residential properties is appropriate for the square and the proposed use is not an appropriate addition and should be located within an industrial area. *Response: this matter has been addressed in the above evaluation. The proposed use is considered to be acceptable for the context and would see a vacant building, with a large extension, being brought back into use.*
3. Traffic concerns associated with the proposed business and impacts that this would have on the surrounding road network/ parking facilities. The proposals would fail to comply with associated transport policies and guidance. *Response: this matter has been addressed in the above evaluation. The proposed management plan/ clarification by the applicant would ensure that there are no adverse impacts.*
4. The proposals would be at odds with the aims of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, which seeks to re-introduce residential uses to the city centre. *Response: this matter has been addressed in the above evaluation.*

5. The proposal, which is located within a low emissions zone, would conflict with the Council's aims of cleaner city centre air. *Response: the proposed use would bring a vacant building back into use and would not negatively impact on the Council's low emission aims.*
6. There was a lack of engagement with local residents regarding the proposals; meaningful consultation should have been undertaken to assess community sentiment and potential impacts. *Response: there was no planning requirement for the proposals to be subject to pre-application consultation. Neighbour notification was carried out correctly, with properties located within 20 m of the application boundary notified of the application.*

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Conditionally

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposals are considered to be an acceptable form of development that would see a partially vacant building being brought back into use. Sufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposals would not adversely impact on residential amenity, and the transport arrangements are considered to be acceptable for the proposed use. The proposals are considered to be compliant with Policies 9 (Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings), 13 (Sustainable Transport) and 23 (Health and Safety) of National Planning Framework 4, Policies H2 (Mixed Use Areas), T2 (Sustainable Transport), OP91 (Union Street West City Centre Masterplan Intervention Area), VC1 (Vibrant City), VC4 (City Centre and Retail Core) and WB3 (Noise) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, its associated Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Noise and Transport & Accessibility as well as with the aspirations of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan Bon-Accord and Crown Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

CONDITIONS

(01) DURATION OF PERMISSION

The development to which this notice relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years beginning with the date of this notice. If development has not begun at the expiration of the 3-year period, the planning permission lapses.

Reason - in accordance with section 58 (duration of planning permission) of the 1997 act.

(02) PROPOSED USE AND HOURS OF OPERATION

That the use hereby approved shall be operated in general accordance with the details set out in the supporting statement by Bowden Developments Ltd (Ref: 251082-01) and shall be utilised as a box storage facility only as described by the applicant.

Reason – in the interests of residential amenity.

(03) HOURS OF OPERATION

That the use hereby approved shall not operate outwith the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on any day.

Reason – in the interests of residential amenity.

(04) CYCLE STORAGE FACILITIES

That the development hereby granted planning permission shall not be brought into use unless a scheme detailing cycle storage provision has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the planning authority, and thereafter implemented in full accordance with said scheme.

Reason - in the interests of encouraging more sustainable modes of travel.