

MILE END PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDSTOCKET ROAD, ABERDEEN

REDEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION OF MILE END SCHOOL TO 37 RESIDENTIAL UNITS WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AND LANDSCAPING. ALTERATION OF THE VEHICULAR ACCESS ON BEECHGROVE PLACE. DEMOLITION OF THE SINGLE STOREY TOILET BLOCK EXTENSIONS, OUTDOOR SHELTER AND THE STAND ALONE DINNER HUT.

For: Mile End Developments Ltd.

Application Ref.	: P120568	Advert	:
Application Date	: 20/04/2012	Advertised on	:
Officer	: Garfield Prentice	Committee Date	: 8 November 2012
Ward: Midstocket/Rosemount (B Laing/F Forsyth)	Cornie/J	Community Council	: Comments



RECOMMENDATION: To approve the application, subject to conditions, but to withhold the issue of the consent document until the applicant has entered into a legal agreement with the Council to secure the affordable housing and planning gain contributions negotiated between the two parties.

DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the corner of Midstocket Road and Gordondale Road and comprises the former Mile End primary school. The school building and the servitor's cottage are listed buildings (Category C). The main building is positioned centrally on the site with the servitor's cottage located in the south west corner adjacent to the junction of Gordondale Road and Beechgrove Place. The school was constructed circa. 1900. It is an imposing 3½ storey grey granite building with classical detailing. The principal elevation, which has a symmetrical design with regular fenestration, faces west towards Gordondale Road. Single storey, flat-roofed toilet blocks were added to the north and south elevations of the building. The walls of those structures are rendered. The original windows have been replaced throughout the building with upvc-framed units. The servitor's cottage is single storey and constructed in granite with a slate roof. The original windows have been replaced with aluminium-framed units. The school dining hut, a single storey building with metal-clad pitched roof, is located to the north of the main building, close to the boundary with Midstocket Road. Most the ground surrounding the buildings is either concreted or tarred and was used previously as the playground for the school. The site is enclosed by low granite walls with railings or hedging. Only part of the railing are original, with the remainder being installed at a later date. Part of the site is also enclosed by 3 metre high chainlink fencing. The gates, gatepiers, boundary walls and railing are also listed Category C. There are numerous large mature trees around the periphery of the site, which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. There is currently a vehicular access from Beechgrove Place and pedestrian accesses from Gordondale Road and Midstocket Road.

The site is surrounded by residential properties: 2 storey terraced properties on Midstocket Road, 1½ storey houses and 2 storey blocks of flats on Gordondale Road and single storey and 2 storey properties on Beechgrove Place. The surrounding street are within a controlled parking zone.

PROPOSAL

Detailed planning permission is sought for the conversion and extension of the former school building to form 36 flats (16 maisonettes and 20 apartments) and the refurbishment of the servitor's cottage to form one residential unit. All but two of the maisonettes would comprise 3 bedrooms, the other two units would have 2 bedrooms. 18 apartments would comprise 2 bedrooms and two properties would have 1 bedroom. The proposed extensions would be 4 storeys high and would be located on the north and south sides of the building. The top floor would be set back from the main walls by 5.5 metres. Each extension would measure 12 metres by 16 metres and would attain a height of 16.5 metres. The two extensions would be of the same design and would be finished mostly in granite with large glazed screens on the walls. The extensions would have flat roofs. Small terraces would be provided at the 4th floor level. This is an amended proposal. The footprint of both extensions have been reduced by 14% compared to the original proposal. It is also now proposed to finish the extensions mostly in granite. The car parking layout has also been adjusted in order to maximise the amount of garden/open space within the development.

It is proposed to carry out extensive alterations to the interior of the building in order to create the flats. The most significant architectural feature within the building is the central atrium around which the classrooms are arranged. It is proposed to re-create a central atrium, albeit smaller than the current feature, within part of which a glass sided lift would be installed. Where possible the original internal walls would be retained, although some sections would be removed.

Externally, it is proposed to replace the windows throughout the building with new timber sash and case windows. It is also proposed to construct six new dormers and replace two existing dormers. Four conservation style rooflights would also be installed. An area between the pitched roofs would be infilled in order to provide additional accommodation at attic level. A new entrance door would be formed on the front elevation of the building.

The refurbishment of the servitor's cottage involves the removal of some of the internal partition walls and the formation of a first floor within the attic. Externally, it is proposed to construct two dormers on the front elevation and to install three conservation style rooflights. New timber sash and case windows would be installed. A three-bedroom house would be created.

It is proposed to provide 72 car parking spaces within the development. The parking spaces would be located mostly to the rear (east side) of the main building with some areas of parking also on the north and south sides. Vehicular access would be taken from Beechgrove Place, utilising an existing entrance. Pedestrian access would be provided from Midstocket Road and Gordondale Road. Storage facilities for 38 cycles would be provided within the development.

It is proposed that the area between the main building and Gordondale Road would be landscaped. Landscaped strips would also be provided along the frontages with Midstocket Road and Beechgrove Place, including some new hedging. The proposal may require one medium sized tree to be removed in order to form the improved entrance of Beechgrove Place. Bin storage enclosures would be provided close to the boundary with Gordondale Road.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

The application has been referred to the Sub-committee because the proposal has attracted six or more objections from the public and concerns have been raised by Rosemount and Mile-End Community Council. Accordingly, the application falls outwith the scope of the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – The provision of 72 car parking spaces is acceptable. The development should include 1 cycle parking space for each residential unit. It should be provided within fully enclosed and secure stores. Roads construction consent will be required for the improved access into the site. The existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Beechgrove Place would have to be revised to take account of the access. A condition should be applied to ensure the developer

meets the costs associated with implementing the revised TRO. The turning area for service vehicles is satisfactory. With regard to site drainage, adequate levels of treatment would be provided for the surface water discharge in line with SUDS principles. As the site was allocated for residential development in the 2008 Aberdeen Local Plan, the proposed development would not be required to contribute to the Strategic Transport Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – It is recommended that conditions be applied to any planning permission to control the hours of construction, in order to protect the amenity of adjacent residents and to require the submission of site contamination report, as there may possibly be contamination issues arising from the boiler room in the school buildings. Suitable and adequate bin storage facilities should be provided within the development.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – Rosemount and Mile-End Community Council has submitted comments on the proposed development. The proposed extensions to the existing building, which is listed, would not be in keeping with the style of the original building and the area as a whole. The Community Council questions the need for all traffic generated by the development to be via Beechgrove Place. There appears to be no reason why entry should not be taken from Midstocket Road or Gordondale Road, with Beechgrove Place being “exit only”. It would reduce the volume of traffic on that road. An “entry only” access off Midstocket Road would have little effect on the flow of traffic. The Community Council draws attention to the access allowed off Midstocket Road for the Beechgrove Church development.

The Community Council fully supports the development of the former school for housing. However, for the reasons above the proposal should be re-considered to ensure the quality of life of adjacent residents is not adversely disturbed.

REPRESENTATIONS

33 letters of objection have been received from residents in the surrounding area. Several of the objectors have expressed support for the principle of redeveloping of the school for residential use, but raise objections on specific aspects of the proposal. The objections raised relate to the following matters.

- Concern that the development would be accessed by only one entrance off Beechgrove Place, which would result in excessive disturbance for the residents in that street. Many of the objectors have suggested that there should be a vehicular entrance from Midstocket Road or Gordondale Road and an exit only on to Beechgrove Place. A precedent for access off Midstocket Road was set with the development at Beechgrove Church.
- The size, height, design and external finishes of the proposed extensions would dominate, overpower and be out of keeping with the existing school building, which is a listed building. The extensions do not reflect the architecture of the school building. The building is an important landmark and a nostalgic icon for generations of Aberdonians and should be protected. It is an imposing and elegant building with classical detailing and represents one of the finest examples of Aberdeen school buildings of its time.

- The proposed extensions would obscure the fine granite work on the north and south elevations of the building.
- The height of the extension on the south side of the building would impact on the amount of daylight reaching the nearby residential properties
- The design of the entrance appears “small and mean” and positioned at the furthest point from the car parking
- Natural screening should be provided along the boundary with Beechgrove Place in order to prevent light from car headlights shining into the property directly opposite the site
- The proposal represents an over development of the site. The footprint would be increased by 50%
- Concerns regarding the amount of traffic that would be generated by the development, including an increased risk to pedestrians
- Concerns there would be insufficient on-site parking leading to overspill parking on adjacent streets
- Concerns there would not actually be sufficient space to provided the parking as shown on the drawings
- Concerns that there would be insufficient space for delivery vehicles, visitors etc
- The loss of privacy for adjacent residents
- The loss of a tree on Beechgrove place in order to form the new entrance
- The existing railings on the site perimeter should be retained
- Approval of the proposal could set a precedent for allowing large extensions to other listed buildings
- Given the residential developments currently under construction at Oakbank and Beechgrove Church, there is no need for a further 37 flats.
- The number of flats and the large extensions are driven by the desire of the developer to maximise returns at the expense of the significant environmental cost of the proposal
- Security fencing should be erected during the construction of the development and it should be placed inside the existing railings.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) is the statement of Government policy on land use planning and includes the Government’s core principles for the operation of the planning system and concise subject planning policies. The general policy on sustainable development and the subject planning policies relating to the historic environment and transport are relevant material considerations.

“Designing Places” is the statement that sets out the Government’s expectations of the planning system to deliver high standards of design in development projects and is a relevant material consideration.

Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan

The Structure Plan sets out the following key objectives for the growth of the City and Aberdeenshire.

Population growth: to increase the population of the city region and achieve a balanced age range to help maintain and improve people's quality of life.

Quality of the environment: to make sure new development maintains and improves the region's important built, natural and cultural assets.

Sustainable mixed communities: to make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

Accessibility: to make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Policy D1 – Architecture and Placemaking

To ensure high standards of design, new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. Factors such as siting, scale massing, colour, materials, orientation, details, the proportions of building elements, together with the spaces around buildings will be considered in assessing that contribution.

Policy D2 – Design and Amenity

In order to ensure the provision of appropriate levels of amenity the following principles will be applied: (a) privacy shall be designed into higher density housing, (b) residential development shall have a public face to a street and a private face to an enclosed garden or court, (c) all residents shall have access to sitting-out areas, (d) when it is necessary to accommodate car parking within a private court, the parking must not dominate the space, (e) individual flats within a development shall make the most of opportunities offered by the site for views and sunlight, and (f) external lighting shall take into account residential amenity and minimise light spillage into adjoining areas and the sky.

Policy D4 – Aberdeen's Granite Heritage

The City Council will encourage the retention of granite buildings throughout the City even if not listed or in a conservation area. Conversion and adaptation of redundant granite buildings will be favoured.

Policy D5 – Built Heritage

Proposals affecting listed buildings will only be permitted if they comply with Scottish Planning Policy.

Policy H1 – Residential Areas

Within existing residential areas a proposal for new residential development will be approved if it: (a) does not constitute over development, (b) does not have an unacceptable impact on the character or amenity of the surrounding area, and (c) does not result in the loss of valuable and valued areas of open space.

Policy H5 – Affordable Housing

Housing developments of five units or more are required to contribute no less than 25% of the total number of units as affordable housing.

Policy NE5 – Trees and Woodlands

There is a presumption against all activities and development that will result in the loss of or damage to established trees that contribute significantly to nature conservation, landscape character or local amenity.

EVALUATION

Section 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where, in making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the development plan and that determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan and Aberdeen Local Plan. Scottish Planning Policy and Designing Places are also relevant material considerations. SPP states sets out the Government's core principles that underpin the modernised planning system. It states "*There should be a clear focus on the quality of outcomes, with due attention given to the sustainable use of land, good design and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment*". SPP also states that the planning system should proactively support development that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and to high quality sustainable places, whilst protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and built environment as an asset for that growth. It states that planning authorities should take a positive approach to development. It is in this context that the application requires to be assessed. Designing Places sets out what the Government considers to be successful places, including being 'distinctive', 'safe and pleasant', 'easy to get to and move around' and 'welcoming'.

Principle of Residential Use

Policy D4 encourages the conversion and adaption of existing redundant granite buildings. The property, which was purpose-built as a school, is a Category C listed building that has lain vacant for some time. It is unlikely that it will be brought back into use as a school. Consequently, in order to ensure the long term maintenance of the building it is necessary to consider appropriate alternative uses. The site is located in an area designated as residential in the local development plan. Policy H1 supports new residential development and other uses that would complement the residential area. There is general support in SPP for the conversion of the building to a suitable use that would protect the listed buildings character and integrity and ensure its long-term maintenance and retention. Accordingly, the principle of residential use on the site is acceptable.

Proposed Alterations to the Former School Building

The proposal involves quite extensive alterations to the interior of the building, including the removal of some sections of the original internal partition walls. Where possible, original walls would be retained, but it would be difficult to convert the building to residential use without the removal of some of the walls. The central atrium, which is a typical and important feature of the schools built in Aberdeen circa 1990, would be re-created, albeit smaller than the current feature. Notwithstanding, the new atrium would reflect the historical internal character of the building with a walkway provided around its periphery and accommodation beyond that. Although the original classroom layout would be lost, which would be inevitable, at least to some extent, in any conversion to residential use, the overall internal character of the listed building would not be significantly adversely affected. It needs to be recognised and acknowledged that the building is unlikely to be used again as a school, so an alternative use must be found, even if it results in some of the original layout and fabric of the building being lost.

Externally, it is proposed to replace the windows throughout the building with new timber sash and case windows. The existing windows are not original, having been replaced by upvc-framed units. The specification of the proposed windows is acceptable and would enhance the appearance of the listed building. Although the Historic Scotland publication "Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Roofs" advises that new dormers should generally be avoided, the construction of new dormers in this case would not adversely affect the overall appearance and integrity of the listed building. This is partly due to the fact there already are dormers, but also because the size of the dormers relative to the scale of the building means there would be little visual impact on the overall appearance of the building. The infilled area between the pitched roofs would not adversely affect the integrity of the building. It would not be visible from any public place. The provision of a new door on the principal elevation is acceptable. Its size and proportions are satisfactory. The symmetry of the building would be retained and there would be no adverse impact on its appearance.

It is considered that overall the proposed works to the former school building would be sympathetic to its character and appearance and thus are acceptable.

Proposed Extensions to the Former School Building

The proposal involves constructing two extensions, one on each to the north and south sides of the building. Since the proposal was originally lodged with the Council, the size of the extensions, in terms of their footprint, have been reduced by 60sqm (i.e a 14% reduction). For comparison, the footprint of the existing building with the toilet blocks (which it is proposed to demolish) is 1128sqm, while the proposed extensions would result in an overall footprint of 1238sqm, an increase of 110sqm (10% increase). In the context of the size of the existing building and the size of the site, this increase in footprint is not considered to be significant or detrimental to the listed building or the character of the surrounding area.

Whilst the footprints of the proposed extensions are acceptable, of greater importance is the scale and massing of the extensions, which would be 16.5 metres high. Policy D1 requires all new development to be of a high standard and designed with due consideration for its context. There should also be a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area. Policy D5 permits alterations and extensions to listed buildings provided they comply with Scottish Planning Policy. SPP states *“Planning authorities should support the best viable use that is compatible with the fabric, setting and character of the historic environment. The aim should be to find a new economic use that is viable over the long term with minimum impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the building or area.”* Historic Scotland’s document *“Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Extensions”* states *“Extensions must protect the character and appearance of the building; should be subordinate in scale and form; should be located on a secondary elevation; and must be designed in a high-quality manner using appropriate materials”*.

It is in this context that the proposed extensions must be assessed. The history of use of a historic building is reflected in the cumulative changes made to it. New alterations and additions form part of this continuum. Most historic buildings can sustain some degree of alteration or extension to accommodate new uses. *“Managing Change in the Historic Environment”* indicates that quite substantial additions can be made to some buildings without detracting from the character of the original building. Although the Community Council has expressed concerns that the style of the extensions would not be in keeping with the listed building, in this case, it is considered that relatively large extensions would be acceptable. The scale and massing would be subordinate to and complement the building, while the design would provide a contrast of old and new in a non-assertive way. It is acknowledged that the building is an imposing landmark in the local area. However, the addition of the extensions would not dilute that stature. It would still remain as an imposing and elegant landmark building. The principal elevation of the original building would remain visually dominant in particular when viewed from Gordondale Road. The building’s architectural quality would not be undermined by the design of the extensions. The proposed external finishes, in particular the extensive use of granite, are of a high quality and would respect and complement the existing granite building. Whilst the extensions would be on secondary elevations, albeit elevations that face towards a road, it is acknowledged that there would be some visual impact on the principal elevation. However, the extensions would be lower than the original building and set behind from the line of the principal facade, in accordance with Historic Scotland guidance. The former school is a large building of symmetrical design. The two extensions, which would be of the same design but handed, would ensure that the symmetry would remain and thus would not undermine the original design concept of the building. The number, position and proportions of the windows in the extensions are satisfactory. The inclusion of balconies would not detract from the appearance and character of the extensions or original building. For these reasons it is considered that the proposal complies with the design principles set out in the relevant Historic Scotland guidance documents and the underlying principles of Policy D1 and thus is acceptable in this regard.

The proposal generally complies with most of the requirements of Policy D2. The layout of the flats would be such that no privacy issues would arise. Due to the constraints of converting the existing building, it is not possible for all flats to have an elevation facing towards a street. A total of 8 flats would face towards the rear of the site, over the car parking area. The remaining 24 flats would have an aspect towards one of the adjacent streets. A large garden area would be provided at the front of the building giving all residents an attractive sitting out area. Approximately 57% of the area surrounding the building would be given over to car parking and 43% to gardens/open space. The location and extent of the car parking would be such that it would not dominate the principal frontage of the site and in that regard complies with Policy D2. The constraints of converting the building limits the opportunities for taking full advantage of sunlight and views. However, many of the flats would face either south or west, thus making the most of the available sunlight. No details have been provided for the external lighting, but this matter can be covered adequately by a condition to the planning permission.

Proposed Alterations to the Servitor's Cottage

The proposed refurbishment of the servitor's cottage involves some internal alterations, none of which would undermine the essential character, integrity or listed status of the building. The proposed external alterations, involving the construction of dormers, installation of rooflight and the replacement of the windows, would not significantly alter the character of the cottage. Accordingly, this part of the proposal is acceptable.

Proposed Access Arrangements, Car Parking and Cycle Parking

It is proposed that all vehicular access and egress would be from an improved entrance on Beechgrove Place. The Council's roads officer has raised no public safety or road safety concerns with the location of the entrance. In addition, there are no concerns regarding the volume of traffic that would use Beechgrove Place or any of the other streets in the local area. It is considered that, taking account of the traffic associated with the previous use of the site as a school, the impact on residential amenity would not be substantial. The Community Council and a number of the objectors have suggested that access should be taken from Midstocket Road or Gordondale Road, which would reduce the volume of traffic on Beechgrove place. Those options were considered at the pre-application stage and were ruled out for a number of reasons. Midstocket Road is a busy main road into the City Centre and a bus route. It is also a classified road (B983). A new entrance would interfere with the free flow of traffic and cause a road safety hazard arising from vehicles stopping on the road in order to make right turns into the site. The existence of a road junction (Hosefield Avenue) directly opposite the site would make it difficult to form a new entrance in a safe location. In the interests of road safety, crossroads and slightly offset junctions should be avoided. There is also a continuous line of mature trees along the frontage of the site, which would prevent a new entrance being formed, unless a number of trees were felled. The trees are protected and felling could not be justified where an acceptable alternative access would be available. In addition, the ground level

inside the boundary is higher than street level, adding a further complication in providing an access at that point. Furthermore, the railings on the boundary, which are listed and thus should be retained, would be likely to interfere with the required visibility for any new entrance in that location. The provision of the large garden area to the front of the building, which would enhance substantially the setting of the listed building, would be lost if an access was taken from Gordondale Road. For these reasons, the vehicular access/agress on Beechgrove Place is the preferable and best option.

The Community Council and a number of objectors have drawn attention to the new entrance formed off Midstocket Road for the development currently under construction at the former Beechgrove Church, indicating that a precedent has already been set. However, that access relates to a car park with a capacity for 16 cars and thus the volume of vehicles entering/leaving would be substantially less than for the current proposal. Also, that access was the only achievable solution for that development, without which the church would not have been redeveloped. The current proposal does not need to have access off Midstocket Road, as there is a better and safer option on Beechgrove Place.

It is proposed to provide 72 parking spaces within the development. The Council's parking standards indicates that 73 parking spaces should be provided. A shortfall of one parking space is not significant and should not lead to overspill parking on adjacent streets. The location and arrangement of the parking spaces are acceptable. It is noted that the aisle width between some parking spaces is slightly below the expected standard, being approximately 250-300mm narrower. However, it is considered that the parking spaces would function satisfactorily with only minimal additional manoeuvring required for larger cars.

It is proposed to provide storage facilities for 38 cycles. Two enclosed and secure cycle stores would be provided within the car park area. The storage capacity complies with the Council's standards for cycle parking.

The site is close to the Rosemount area of the City and is within walking distance of the City Centre. It is located on a bus route (Nos. 3 and 23 run along Midstocket Road) giving access to the City Centre. Cycle storage facilities would be provided. Accordingly, the development would be accessible by sustainable forms of travel, in compliance with the structure plan objective and SPP on accessibility.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed development would not cause any significant loss of privacy for adjacent residents. There would be some additional overlooking of the rear gardens of properties to the east, but this would not be substantial and would be inevitable for any conversion of the building to residential use. In addition, those gardens are already overlooked from other existing properties.

The position of the buildings and the extension would be such that there would no measureable effect on the amount of daylight reaching the adjacent houses. In terms of direct sunlight, the only impact would be on the properties

immediately to the east of the site. It would be likely that a larger shadow would be cast over part of the gardens but only for a short period in the day when the sun would be in the west. During morning and afternoon hours there would be no impact. The proposal would not significantly affect the sunlight reaching other properties surrounding the site.

The amount of development proposed and the resultant activity arising from it, in particular the amount of traffic entering and leaving and movement of vehicles and people within the site would cause a degree of disturbance. However, it must be acknowledged that the previous use as a school caused a certain level of disturbance, be it noise from children in the playground or the vehicles of parents dropping off and picking up pupils. In that context the level of activity on the site and the traffic entering and leaving the development would not have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity. The adjacent residential streets, whilst experiencing an increase in the level of traffic and thus some increase in noise, would not be affected to the extent that residential amenity would be seriously compromised.

The occupier of a house on Beechgrove Place opposite the development has raised a specific issue regarding disturbance from the headlights of vehicles using the car park. In response to this concern, the applicant has proposed planting a hedge along the boundary which would prevent headlights of vehicles in the car park shining towards that property. The hedge would form part of the overall landscape scheme for the development.

Impact on Trees and Landscaping

The proposed development may require one medium sized tree to be removed on the Beechgrove Place frontage in order to facilitate the improvements to the entrance to the car park. The tree is at the end of a group of 5 trees and its loss would not impact significantly on the treed character of the site. Accordingly, the proposal complies with Policy NE5. It is proposed to provide a large garden area to the front of the building. Landscaped strips would also be provided along the Midstocket Road and Beechgrove Place frontages, the latter would include a new hedge. Details of the planting can be secured by a condition to the planning permission.

Affordable Housing and Planning Gain

The applicant has agreed to making a financial contribution in lieu of 25% on-site provision of affordable housing. It is acknowledged that the characteristics of the building, in particular the internal layout and the high costs associated with converting a listed building means that it would be difficult to achieve on-site affordable housing. Accordingly, the financial contribution is considered to be acceptable in this case. The applicant has also agreed to making a planning gain contribution, which would be used for education, community or sport/recreation facilities, improved library facilities and the Core Path Network.

Other Issues Raised by Objectors

The existing railings on the site perimeter should be retained – The proposal does not involve the removal of the railings. As the railings are an integral part of the listed status of the property, listed building consent would be required for their removal.

Approval of the proposal could set a precedent for allowing large extensions to other listed buildings - All proposals must be considered and determined on their own planning merits, taking into the account the specific circumstances and characteristics of the site and building. Approval of this application would not set a precedent.

Given the residential developments currently under construction at Oakbank and Beechgrove Church, there is no need for a further 37 flats – The site is allocated for residential use. The vacant listed building on the site needs to be brought back into use and residential is an acceptable alternative use for the property.

The number of flats and the large extensions are driven by the desire of the developer to maximise returns at the expense of the significant environmental cost of the proposal – This is not a relevant planning consideration. The application is considered and determined on the planning merits of the proposal.

Security fencing should be erected during the construction of the development and it should be placed inside the existing railings – This is not a relevant planning matter. However, it is likely that security fencing/hoarding would be erected during the construction of the development.

Conclusion

In conclusion the conversion of the former school to residential use is acceptable in principle. The number of proposed residential units is satisfactory and ensures the character of the original building is retained. The design of the proposal, both internally and externally, is of a good standard that would ensure the overall character and integrity of the listed building would be retained. The extensive use of granite on the extensions is particularly welcomed. The proposal would ensure that the building would be maintained in the longer term and brought back into active use. The proposal raises no significant residential amenity issues. Sufficient on-site car parking would be provided, the vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements are satisfactory and the proposal raises no road safety or public safety concerns. The proposal complies with Policies H1, D1, D2, D4, D5 and NE5 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and generally meets the guidance and principles set out in SPP and Designing Places and the objectives of the structure plan.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the application, subject to conditions, but to withhold the issue of the consent document until the applicant has entered into a legal agreement with the Council to secure the affordable housing and planning gain contributions negotiated between the two parties.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The conversion of the former school to residential use is acceptable in principle. The number of proposed residential units is satisfactory and ensures the character of the original building is retained. The design of the proposal, both internally and externally, is of a good standard that would ensure the overall character and integrity of the listed building would be retained. The proposal would ensure that the building would be maintained in the longer term and brought back into active use. The proposal raises no significant residential amenity issues. Sufficient on-site car parking would be provided, the vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements are satisfactory and the proposal raises no road safety or public safety concerns. The proposal complies with Policies H1, D1, D2, D4, D5 and NE5 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and generally meets the guidance set out in SPP and Designing Places and the objectives of the structure plan.

it is recommended that approval is granted with the following condition(s):

(1) that the development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the car parking areas hereby granted planning permission have been constructed, drained, laid-out and demarcated in accordance with Drawing No. 1000F of the plans hereby approved or such other drawing as may subsequently be submitted and approved in writing by the planning authority. Such areas shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose other than the purpose of the parking of cars ancillary to the development and use thereby granted approval - in the interests of public safety and the free flow of traffic.

(2) that no development shall take place unless a scheme of all drainage works designed to meet the requirements of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and thereafter no part of the development shall be occupied unless the drainage has been installed in complete accordance with the said scheme - in order to safeguard water qualities in adjacent watercourses and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained.

(3) that no development pursuant to the planning permission hereby approved shall be carried out unless there has been submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority a further detailed scheme of landscaping for the site, which scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and landscaped areas on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development, and the proposed areas of tree/shrub planting including details of numbers, densities, locations, species, sizes and stage of maturity at planting - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(4) that all planting, seeding and turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become

seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a size and species similar to those originally required to be planted, or in accordance with such other scheme as may be submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(5) that no development shall take place unless a plan showing those trees to be removed and those to be retained and a scheme for the protection of all trees to be retained on the site during construction works has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority and any such scheme as may have been approved has been implemented - in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development.

(6) that no part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied unless a plan and report illustrating appropriate management proposals for the care and maintenance of all trees to be retained and any new areas of planting (to include timing of works and inspections) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The proposals shall be carried out in complete accordance with such plan and report as may be so approved, unless the planning authority has given prior written approval for a variation - in order to preserve the character and visual amenity of the area.

(7) that any tree work which appears to become necessary during the implementation of the development shall not be undertaken without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority; any damage caused to trees growing on the site shall be remedied in accordance with British Standard 3998: 2010 "Recommendations for Tree Work" before the building hereby approved is first occupied - in order to preserve the character and visual amenity of the area.

(8) that no materials, supplies, plant, machinery, spoil, changes in ground levels or construction activities shall be permitted within the protected areas specified in the aforementioned scheme of tree protection without the written consent of the Planning Authority and no fire shall be lit in a position where the flames could extend to within 5 metres of foliage, branches or trunks - in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development.

(9) that the windows hereby approved shall be constructed in full accordance with the detailed cross sections submitted and approved with the application and that the visible part of the outer frame of the front windows hereby approved shall not exceed 25 mm in width at the top and sides of the window opening with the remainder of the frame being concealed behind the masonry window check, unless the planning authority has given prior written approval for a variation - in order to preserve the character of the conservation area.

(10) that, except as the Planning Authority may otherwise agree in writing, no construction or demolition work shall take place:

- (a) outwith the hours of 7.00 am to 7.00 pm Mondays to Fridays;
- (b) outwith the hours of 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturdays; or

(c) at any time on Sundays, except (on all days) for works inaudible outwith the application site boundary. [For the avoidance of doubt, this would generally allow internal finishing work, but not the use of machinery] - in the interests of residential amenity.

(11) that no development shall take place unless it is carried out in full accordance with a scheme to deal with contamination on the site that has been approved in writing by the planning authority. The scheme shall follow the procedures outlined in Planning Advice Note 33 Development of Contaminated Land and shall be conducted by a suitably qualified person in accordance with best practice as detailed in BS10175 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites - Code of Practice and other best practice guidance and shall include:

1. an investigation to determine the nature and extent of contamination,
2. a site-specific risk assessment,
3. a remediation plan to address any significant risks and ensure the site is fit for the use proposed.

No building(s) on the development site shall be occupied unless

1. any long term monitoring and reporting that may be required by the approved scheme of contamination or remediation plan or that otherwise has been required in writing by the planning authority is being undertaken and
2. a report specifically relating to the building(s) has been submitted and approved in writing by the planning authority that verifies that remedial works to fully address contamination issues related to the building(s) have been carried out, unless the planning authority has given written consent for a variation.

The final building on the application site shall not be occupied unless a report has been submitted and approved in writing by the planning that verifies that completion of the remedial works for the entire application site, unless the planning authority has given written consent for a variation - reason: in order to ensure that the site is fit for human occupation

(12) that notwithstanding the details shown on Drawing No. 1000F no development shall take place unless there has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the planning authority a further scheme for cycle storage facilities, which shall include the provision of Sheffield-type stands and lighting within the stores. Thereafter none of the residential units hereby granted planning permission shall be occupied unless the cycle storage facilities have been provided - in the interests of encouraging more sustainable modes of travel.

(13) that no development shall take place unless samples of all external finishing materials to the roof and walls of the development hereby approved have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the planning authority and thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details so agreed - in the interests of preserve the character and integrity of the listed building and the visual amenity of the area.

(14) that no development shall take place unless a programme for the required alterations to the existing Traffic Regulation Order on Beechgrove Placeill Lane deemed necessary to implement the development hereby approved has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the planning authority and thereafter the said measures shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the development

or any other such timescale agreed by the planning authority, the total cost of all works being met by the applicant - in the interests of road safety, public safety and the free flow of traffic.

(15) That no development shall take place unless a scheme for external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, and thereafter implemented in full accordance with said scheme - in the interest of public safety and the residential amenity of the area.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.