



Kingswells
Community Council

15th February 2013

Response to planning application 121759 -

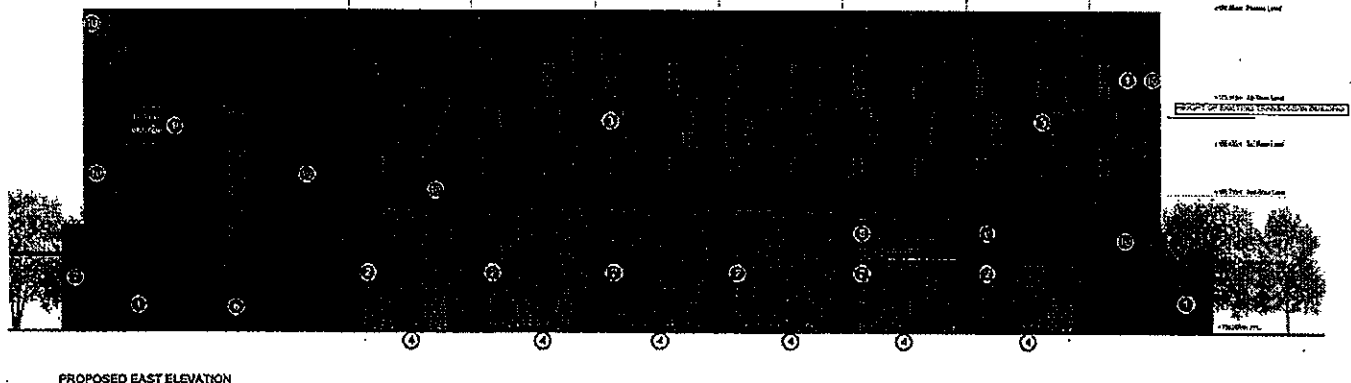
Hotel and associated conference facilities,
Phase 2, Prime Four Business Park
Kingswells Aberdeen

Mr Ian Cox
Secretary
Kingswells Community Council

[REDACTED]
Kingswells
Aberdeen
[REDACTED]

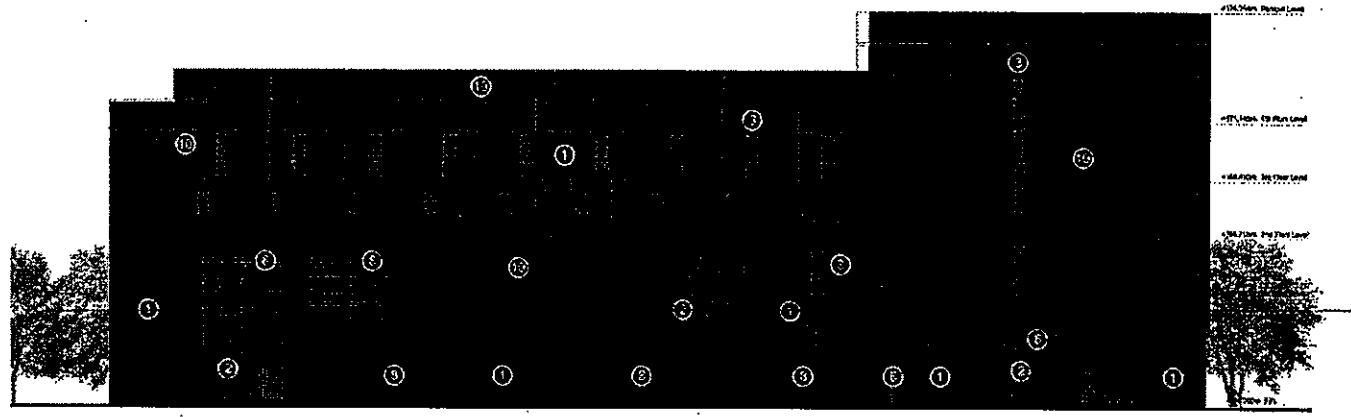
Kingswells Community Council welcomes the concept of a hotel within the Hub of Prime Four development. However, the proposed development is effectively a six storey building on the crest of a hill and towers over a historic monument and nearby homes. The black box has few architectural merits and does not represent an iconic building.

Drum are aware KCC is concerned about height / visual impact issues and have tried to pacify KCC by describing the building as one storey + 4 floors of bedrooms, but the ground and top level are extremely high. KCC are not pacified.



KCC have discussed their concerns with De Vere with a view to address some concerns but were presented with no compromise. The De Vere's CEO openly describes the hotel as a black box.

De Vere have several other hotels of this type, but most of these are in flat neighbourhoods in the midst of built-up areas beside business/retail parks and do not look particularly out-of-place. This is not the case in Kingswells where the setting is much more sensitive. The Masterplan recognises this and has placed restrictions on the height of buildings (2 storeys) on the northern edge of the development. The proposed hotel will have at least 5 storeys above the sky line.



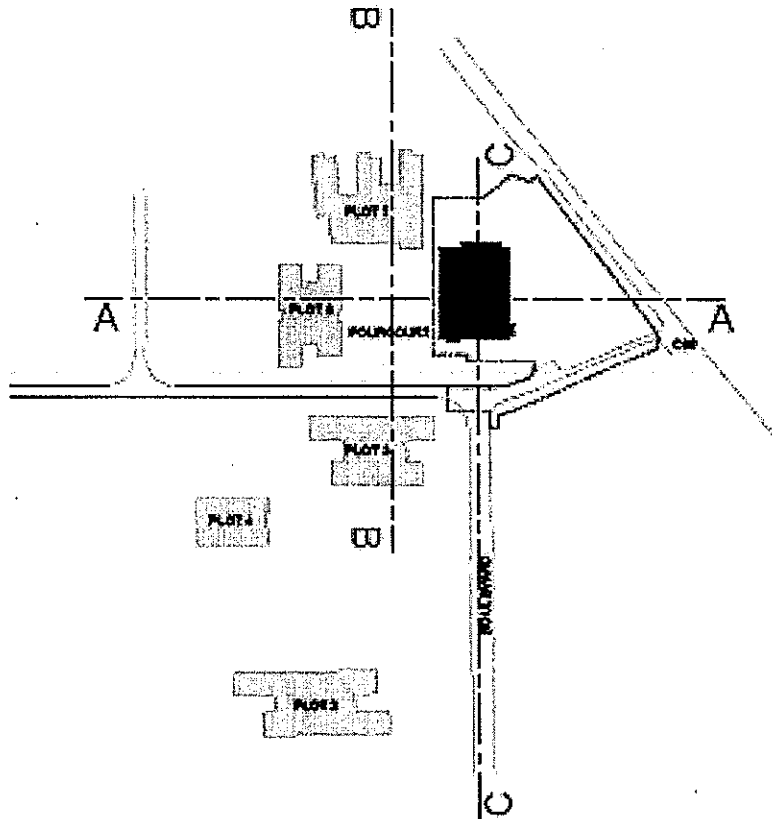
PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

Negatives

- o The hotel planned for Kingswells is 60 ft tall and will sit on the highest part of the site
- o The shiny black appearance does not blend nicely with the surrounding countryside. Some residents are likely to find it offensive and could adopt negative feelings about De Vere as a result.
- o The hotel will be highly prominent on the skyline as you drive past the consumption dyke on the perimeter road as well as from various viewpoints (eg. Brimmond Hill and Kingshill Wood).

The Current Situation

The site layout is shown here.



Plots 2, 3 and 4 are currently under construction.

Plot 6 and 7 are future developments and no plans are currently available.

The view looking from the north should be onto buildings with max 2 storeys; but Plot 7 appears to have 3. The profile is also supposed to be narrow side on to minimise the visual impact. Plot 7 is actually wider than it is long. It would appear to disregard 2 of the criteria for buildings on the northern boundary.

Plot 6 and the proposed hotel are about the same distance from the Consumption Dyke. Plot 6 is also 3 storeys.

Plots 6 and 7 are both effectively on the crest of the hill and are 1 storey higher than permitted by the masterplan. They effectively form a solid wall when viewed from the north. The hotel is 1 storey higher than both. It would appear that the hotel is being surrounded by buildings that are taller than permitted by the masterplan to make it appear more acceptable. If plots 6 and 7 complied with the masterplan then the proposed hotel would be 2 stories higher than the surrounding buildings. Having a hotel that sticks out like a sore thumb would not be acceptable to Kingswells, nor would having all buildings on the crest of the hill taller than that permitted by the masterplan.

Plot 3 is the Transocean building. Although it is built on the south side of the hill, currently the upper 2 storeys can be seen from the North. According to the plan for the hotel 3 storeys will be seen after the earthworks for the hotel are complete.

The height of the hotel should not be used as a precedent to determine the height of the surrounding buildings. The intention of the masterplan is clear. The visual impact from the north is important to maintain some degree of a 'sense of place' for the consumption dyke. Limiting the height of the buildings on the northern edge of the development to two storeys is good in principle, but if the buildings behind are taller than the perimeter buildings then the intention of the masterplan is lost. Tall buildings can only be accommodated where there is no visual impact from the north.

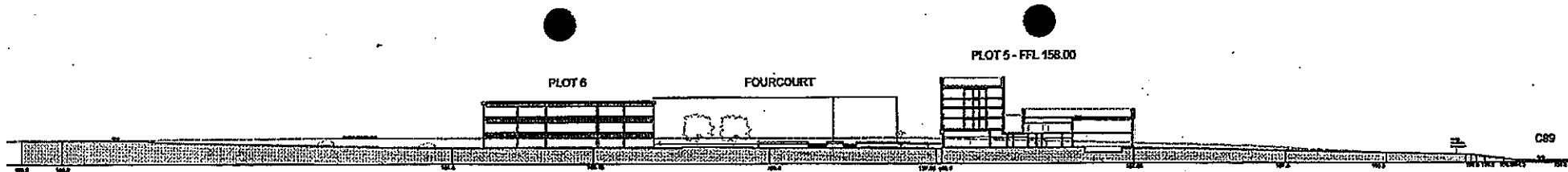
The table below includes some excerpts from ruling documentation to justify KCC views.

KCC request that the planning application is refused, and the developer be asked to resubmit after taking account of the limitations imposed by the Masterplan and other planning documentation. KCC would welcome De Vere, but not at any price. The visual impact the hotel has on the surrounding area needs to be addressed.

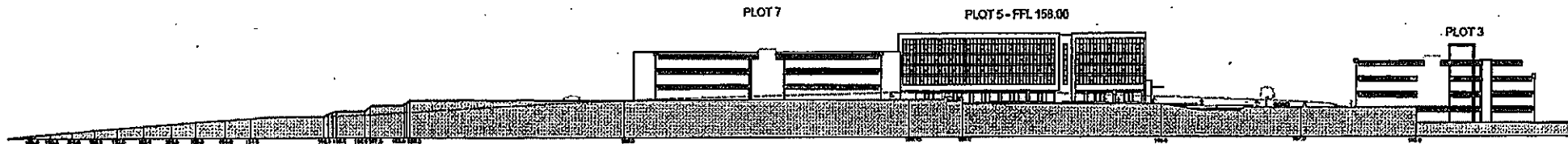
The architect has supplied KCC with additional images of the hotel from the north, but these were merely photographs with an image of the hotel superimposed. As there is nothing on the photographs to provide scale the accuracy of these images is in doubt.

It is difficult for all (KCC, councillors and planners) to visualise the completed development. KCC request that those involved in deciding this application visit the site and look at the impact the development is having on the area. Have a look at the Transocean building and then imagine the ground level 1 storey lower. The hotel will then be 60 ft above ground level, and 20 ft above the top of the Transocean Building. The development is certainly a lot more exposed than KCC imagined when talking to the developer. This development is having a significant impact on the local area. Consequently, it is important to ensure that there is no further damage done and that any existing damage is mitigated where possible.

Aberdeen City Council has a duty of care to protect our ancient monuments. It is essential that Aberdeen City Council seeks guidance from Historic Scotland to find if they deem this planning application in keeping with such a sensitive site and whether the impact it will have on a nationally important ancient monument - the consumption dyke - is acceptable. It is essential that Aberdeen City Council seeks guidance from Historic Scotland to find if they deem this planning application in keeping with such a sensitive site and whether the impact it will have on a nationally important ancient monument is acceptable



Section A-A



Section B-B

Reference	KCC Comment
<p>Master Plan</p> <p><i>"The Hub will include opportunities for 'Landmark Buildings' to act as focal points"</i></p> <p>However....</p> <p>4B.1.8 Buildings Building Heights <i>Buildings within the northern extent of the Northern Zone will be restricted to two storeys, whereas the southern extent of this Zone may accommodate slightly taller buildings. With the exception of the Landmark Buildings within the Hub, buildings in the Central Zone will generally be three storey. Where topography allows, additional top floors of buildings could be treated as 'penthouses' which could be achieved by recessed walls and lightweight materials.</i> As a general principle all buildings must demonstrate that they are sympathetic to setting and relate to the scale of surrounding landscape features.</p> <p>Materials <i>The palette of materials should be complimentary to setting and take due consideration of those materials approved via the Phase One developments, and those outlined within the Development Framework. This pallet will be flexible to allow for different architectural expressions, but must be of a high quality. A considered approach to colour is necessary, and must respect the rural location of the site, and surrounding landscape features.</i></p>	<p>The concept of a Landmark Building does not necessarily mean the tallest building. It could mean a building with Architectural merit.</p> <p>The concept of placing the tallest building at the highest point of the development and the selection of black materials demonstrates that this part of the development does not respect the rural location of the site, or the surrounding landscape features.</p> <p>The proposed building is not sympathetic to setting and does not relate to the scale of surrounding landscape features.</p>
<p>OP 40 Kingswells Masterplan</p> <p><i>The key objectives for the Development Framework are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create a landscape which reflects the rural character of this area of Aberdeen; relates to the surrounding area and takes its references from the natural heritage;</i> • <i>Create settings for buildings which are sympathetic, balanced and mitigate their visual impact on the landscape;</i> 	<p>This reinforces the above comments.</p>

Reference	KCC Comment
<p data-bbox="136 188 1111 225">"Local Plan Policy D1 – Architecture and Placemaking. Page 23</p> <p data-bbox="136 264 1518 328"><i>Landmarks or high buildings should respect the height and scale of their surroundings, the urban topography, the City's skyline and aim to preserve or enhance important views"</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1541 169 1977 193">This reinforces the above comments.</p>
<p data-bbox="136 395 741 432">Page 25 ALPD - "Policy D6 – Landscape</p> <p data-bbox="136 469 748 496"><i>Development will not be acceptable unless it avoids:</i></p> <p data-bbox="136 539 1518 603"><i>1 significant adversely affecting landscape character and elements which contribute to, or provide, a distinct 'sense of place' which point to being either in or around Aberdeen or a particular part of it;</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1541 373 1977 397">This reinforces the above comments.</p>
<p data-bbox="136 635 1193 671">Supplementary Guidance, Topic: Landscape Guidelines, March 2012</p> <p data-bbox="136 708 1021 735">Supplementary Guidance, Topic: Landscape Guidelines, March 2012</p> <p data-bbox="136 778 1518 1059">6.5 The planning policies and supplementary guidance applying to the green belt will highlight the types of development which will and will not be acceptable there. Attention to design principles will be required in all cases to ensure that local landscape setting will not be compromised. Proposals for siting and designing new buildings in rural areas shall normally be the subject of landscape and visual assessment to ensure that they are compatible with local landscape character, will not be obtrusive, and will enhance the local landscape. (See the <i>Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, Scottish Natural Heritage Review No. 80 and 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', SPON 2002.)</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1541 612 1977 636">This reinforces the above comments.</p>
<p data-bbox="136 1102 1518 1378">6.6 For good landscape and visual design reasons, to maintain public safety, to reduce climatic exposure, and to ensure developments are sustainable, buildings shall not be sited on the tops of exposed hilltops, the bottoms of river valleys, close to shorelines, or in areas liable to flood. Wind turbines, radio, television and telecommunication masts which require to be at some height shall avoid locations at the highest points or brows of hills. Elsewhere they shall be sited in close association with other features like trees or large buildings so that their presence in some views can be masked or screened. The landscape impact of proposals will need to be individually assessed on their merits.</p>	<p data-bbox="1541 1102 1977 1126">This reinforces the above comments.</p>

From: <webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
To: <pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 18/12/2012 16:25
Subject: Planning Comment for 121759

Comment for Planning Application 121759
Name : Derek Williams on behalf of Aberdeen Cycle Forum
Address : 24 Loanhead Terrace
Aberdeen
AB25 2SY

Telephone : [REDACTED]
Email : [REDACTED]
type :

Comment : The Aberdeen Cycle Forum objects to this application.
Reason: The cycle path that runs alongside the southern boundary of the development (the Westhill cycle path) is significantly narrower than the required safety standard as set out in Scottish Government Cycling by Design guidance. Cyclists currently find it difficult to pass oncoming cyclists or to overtake pedestrians safely. The development will result in increased use of the cycle path, which will heighten the safety concerns. The narrow section of cycle path is not 'fit for purpose' and will not support more sustainable travel choices. This conflicts with local and national policy.

From: <webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
To: <pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 04/01/2013 12:53
Subject: Planning Comment for 121759

Comment for Planning Application 121759
Name : Chris McDonald
Address : 11 Callum Park
Kingswells

Telephone :

Email : [REDACTED]

type :

Comment : What is nearly a 6 storey building, totally out of character with the area and height of other proposed buildings.
AND at the top of a hill too, totally ridiculous.