

Planning Development Management Committee

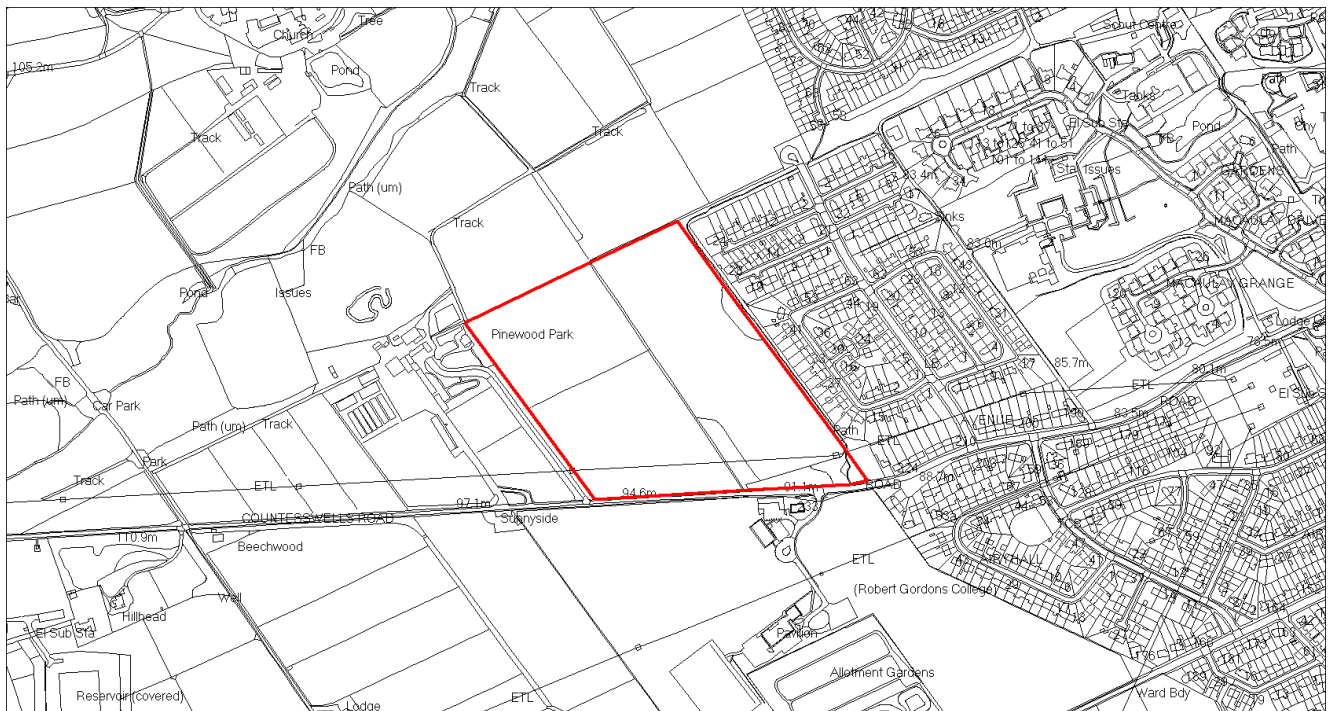
PINEWOOD, COUNTESSWELLS ROAD,
ABERDEEN

PINEWOOD RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
APPROVAL OF CONDITIONS 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 AND
10 OF PLANNING APPLICATION REF A7/2178

For: Dandara Ltd

Application Type : Approval of Conditions for
Planning Permission in Principle
Application Ref. : P131027
Application Date: 11/07/2013
Officer: Gavin Evans
Ward : Hazlehead/Ashley/Queen's Cross(M
Greig/J Stewart/R Thomson/J Corall)

Advert : Can't notify neighbour(s)
Advertised on: 24/07/2013
Committee Date: 16 January 2014
Community Council : No response
received



RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

DESCRIPTION

The application site is the OP57 Pinewood Development site, identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan for residential development, having been carried forward from the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008. The site, which comprises two fields on the immediate western outskirts of the Countesswells area of the city, is bounded by the OP52 Hazledene opportunity site to the north and Countesswells Road, to the south. The two sites combine to form a wider development area, L-shaped in plan view, with a combined site area of some 27 hectares, of which roughly 10.5ha is contained within the Pinewood site and 16.5ha within Hazledene.

The western part of the site is enclosed by dry-stone dykes and was formerly used for the rearing of horticultural plants (though currently in grass) related to the Ben Reid Nursery and Garden Centre, a short distance to the west. The fields to the north, within the Hazledene site, were also formerly in horticultural use. The site is bounded by mature woodland on the east and west sides and is subdivided by hedges and dry stone dykes.

Core Path 65 (Hazlehead to River Dee) runs north-to-south down the eastern edge of both the Hazledene and Pinewood sites, providing a connection from Hazlehead Park to Countesswells Road and beyond.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Planning Permission in Principle (PPiP) was granted for a development comprising a *'Proposed residential development and formation of access roundabout and access roads'* on the Pinewood site in August 2010, through approval of application A7/2178.

A subsequent application in January of 2012 sought approval of proposals relating to several matters specified in conditions attached to that grant of PPiP, including open space provision, landscaping, sustainable drainage, roads infrastructure works, archaeological investigation and the re-use of downtakings from drystone walling within the development site. At the August 2012 meeting of the Development Management Sub-committee (as was), members resolved to approve that application.

A series of further applications have now been made in relation to matters specified in conditions attached to the grant of Planning Permission in Principle. Some of those applications relate to outstanding matters, while others seek approval of alternative proposals in relation to conditions previously the subject of MSC approval.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks approval in relation to conditions 2 (open space); 3 (landscaping); 6 (construction method statement relating to surface water treatment); 7 (method statement relating to construction access); 9 (phasing programme); and 10 (scheme for use of downtaken drystone walling within development).

Supporting Documents

All drawings and the supporting documents listed below relating to this application can be viewed on the Council's website at - <http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/PlanningDetail.asp?131027>

On accepting the disclaimer enter the application reference quoted on the first page of this report.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

The application has been referred to the Sub-committee because 9 letters of representation have been received in relation to the proposal. Accordingly, the application falls outwith the scope of the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

CONSULTATIONS

Roads Projects Team – Notes the proposal to use of French drainage to deal with surface water run-off during construction, and that the Council's Flooding team have expressed satisfaction with the arrangement proposed. No objection stage to the proposal.

Environmental Health – No observations to make.

Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure (Flooding) – No objection. State that the proposals are sufficient provided the French drains are maintained properly during construction.

Community Council – No response received.

REPRESENTATIONS

9 letters of representation have been received. The objections raised relate to the following matters –

1. Removal of trees (specifically 86-116) is excessive.
2. Concern is expressed over the presence of a Core Path route between existing housing and new housing within the development site, with this route being identified as a source of concern in relation to reduced safety and privacy.
3. The land in question is particularly prone to flooding due to its poor drainage. Has this historic flooding been taken into account?
4. Is the drainage scheme proposed sufficient to ensure that the site can be adequately drained?
5. The site is understood to be part of Aberdeen's Green Belt
6. It appears that no survey was carried out in relation to wildlife using the area
7. Queries whether local schools can cope with additional pupils
8. Increased roads congestion
9. Conflict of interest for ACC as owners of the land
10. Too many houses are proposed on the site
11. Objects to Countesswells Avenue being used to access the development
12. Concern over proximity of trees to houses in Zone F and resultant pressure for pruning/removal

13. No details of how the proposal will meet the aims of the Water Framework Directive.
14. Objection to access being taken via Hazledene Road
15. Removal of green space used for recreational purposes
16. Queries whether land for road improvements will translate into an increased price for the site, reflecting additional land included.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy and Guidance

Designing Places

Designing Places identifies that the most successful places tend to have certain qualities in common. These include a distinct identity, safe and pleasant spaces, and an arrangement of space which is easy to move around, particularly on foot. Visitors feel a sense of welcome. These qualities are seen as being at the heart of good design, alongside adaptability and a good use of resources. Designing Places sets out the value of good design and the price of poor design.

Designing Streets

Designing Streets is Scotland's policy statement for street design, marking a change in emphasis of guidance on street design towards place-making and away from a system focused upon the dominance of motor vehicles. It sits alongside Designing Places in setting out the Scottish Government's place-making agenda.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

As regards the location and design of new development, SPP states that new housing should take account of its setting, the surrounding landscape, topography, character, appearance, ecologies and the scope for using local materials, with the aim of creating spaces with a distinct character and identity.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

T2: Managing the Transport Impact of Development

New development will need to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise traffic generated. Maximum car parking standards are set out in the relevant Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility.

D1: Architecture and Placemaking

This policy requires that all new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting.

D6: Landscape

Development will not be acceptable unless it avoids significantly adversely affecting landscape character and elements which contribute to, or provide, a distinct 'sense of place' which points to being either in or around Aberdeen or a particular part of it.

NE5: Trees and Woodlands

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

Supplementary Guidance

The Council's published supplementary planning guidance on 'Transport & Accessibility' is of relevance, as is the guidance contained within the Pinewood and Hazledene development brief.

Other Relevant Material Considerations

The allocation of the Pinewood and Hazledene sites in the ALDP, the previous grant of Planning Permission in Principle on both of those sites, and the previous approval granted in respect of the majority of Matters Specified in Conditions to those grants of PPIp carry significant weight in the determination of the current application, establishing these sites as locations for new residential development. The principle of housing on this site may not legitimately be revisited through assessment of this proposal.

EVALUATION

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) require that, 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.

Open space and Landscaping

The development of the Pinewood and Hazledene sites proposed is based around a central band of open space which progresses through the core of the site and is well-located for use by residents of all zones. The substantial open space proposed runs along the northern side of the primary distributor road serving the development before branching off to provide a green space connection to the north-western corner of the Hazledene site, forming a green space connection with the adjacent Hazlehead Park and augmenting the existing Green Space Network designation present on the site. The open space provision is central to the development and well located for all users, incorporating a series of pedestrian and cycle routes providing connections to other parts of the development and nearby Core Path routes. The open space includes a children's play area, comprising a safe play surface and a minimum of 5 items of play equipment.

The open space proposed would be extensively landscaped, as detailed in the submitted landscaping scheme. The primary distributor road would be lined with consistently placed new tree planting, distinguishing it from the surrounding, more intimate 'Homezone' spaces. In addition to regularly spaced planting emphasising the status of the main avenue through the development, the open space to the north would incorporate grass and shrub planting, with new trees incorporated into the mixed planting 'buffer zones' to the edges of the open space, where it borders residential plots. New tree planting would utilise specimens of a minimum 3.5-4m in height, in order to minimise the time necessary for the open space and landscaping to become established. An open

ditch running through the open space would serve as a feature, collecting water during periods of wet weather and leading to the open water detention basin at the south-eastern corner of the Hazledene site. Seating, litter bins etc would be incorporated within the open space, and the SUDS detention basin would be fenced and gated appropriately. Shrub planting adjacent to the fencing enclosing the basin would help to soften its appearance and reduce visual impact, integrating it with the open space.

Tree cover across the Pinewood and Hazledene sites is generally relatively limited, and confined to narrow belts and strips along field boundaries. The trees present are understood to be predominantly of planted origin, intended to provide shelter for the former nursery business. Generally those trees present are relatively young, and as such are of relatively small size and stature. The survey conducted demonstrates that the overall condition of the trees across the site is noticeably poor. The tree cover around the site is generally poor and scrappy, with little long term potential. Many trees appear to be in decline and dying, and consequently the tree and hedge cover within the site is assessed as being of low retention value.

A readily distinguishable tree belt runs north-to-south through the heart of the Pinewood site. The majority of the trees within that belt would be retained and protected during construction, to form part of the landscaped open space to the east of the main avenue as it progresses south to join Countesswells Road. These retained trees would contribute to the woodland character of the site, provide the landscape setting for homes facing westwards onto that main avenue, and contribute towards the woodland character of the development site. Of a total of 62 trees along this belt, 10 would be removed for reasons of poor health, determined through an arboricultural survey, and a further 7 would be removed directly to accommodate the development layout, generally at points where secondary streets and pathways would branch off from the main avenue and across the tree belt. In the context of the site, and the need to accommodate a coherent street layout, the level of tree removal is relatively minor, with the majority of healthy trees retained as part of the landscaping of the site. The retention of this number of trees, particularly in such a regular arrangement alongside the main distributor road serving the development, would assist in embedding the development into the surrounding landscape and establishing a mature landscape character from first occupation. As noted previously, the central area of open space would be extensively planted with shrubs and trees. In addition, a native planting mix, incorporating new tree and shrub planting, would be used alongside footpaths/cycle routes and in 'Homezone' spaces within secondary streets. An area to the south of the site, at its frontage to Countesswells Road, would be extensively landscaped, with grassland enclosed by shrub and tree planting, as well as the retained drystone walling referred to above. In addition to proposals for the initial landscaping of the site, an exhaustive landscape maintenance and management plan has been submitted for the site, detailing the measure to be undertaken in relation to the respective landscape elements and a timetable for actions, to serve as a guidance document for the factoring company to be appointed to undertake long-term landscaping works. Taking these matters into account, the proposal is considered to accord with policies NE5 (Trees and Woodlands) and would contribute towards the development demonstrating due regard for its context and making a positive

contribution to its setting, as required by policy D1 (Architecture and Placemaking) of the ALDP.

Surface Water treatment during construction phase

A scheme detailing the use of French drainage, involving the use of a series of trenches arranged in a herringbone pattern across the site. This approach has been accepted by the Council's Roads Projects and Flood Prevention teams as an appropriate temporary measure during construction and prior to the final implementation of the previously agreed scheme of sustainable urban drainage.

Construction access

The applicant's submissions in relation to condition 7 indicate that the spine road leading from Countesswells Avenue to Countesswells Road will be constructed at the outset, initially with a temporary surface finish, with the road surfacing being completed as each phase progresses. The route of construction traffic is shown as being from Countesswells Road, running northwards to a temporary site compound, located between zones A and B of the Hazledene site, on an area which will form part of the open space for the development. In taking access via Countesswells Road, undue disruption to the existing residential area in and around Countesswells Avenue would be avoided. This is considered to be satisfactory as a means of mitigating impact arising from construction traffic. It is noted that the detailed arrangements relating to any construction access are controlled by separate roads legislation, and are not a matter for consideration through this application.

Phasing programme

The details of phasing shown by the applicant indicate that Zone H of the Hazledene site would be the first phase of development, followed by Zone A, to the north of the Hazledene site and ultimately accessed via Hazledene Road. Phases 3 and 4 would incorporate the remainder of the Hazledene sites (Zones B and C) and the entirety of the Pinewood site (Zones D, E, F, G). As noted previously, it is the developer's intention to commence works on the main spine road immediately, with a temporary surface used during construction. The final surfacing and specification of the road would be completed in sections as construction on each phase is completed. Similarly, open space and landscaping will be carried out phase-by-phase following conclusion of the built development in each respective phase. The information submitted is sufficient to conclude that each phase of the development will be accompanied by the appropriate roads and open space/landscaping for that phase.

Drystone walling

The submitted plans demonstrate the location of existing drystone walls, and detail the extent of any dountakings and the location of any new walls to be formed using those dountakings. Within the Pinewood site, existing drystone walls would be retained and made good along the eastern and western boundaries. Similarly, an existing dry stone wall running north-to-south along an existing field boundary at the centre of the site would be predominantly retained and made good, to form part of the landscaped area running along the eastern side of the main spine road formed. Along the southern boundary, a section would be retained and made good to the eastern side of the new roundabout

junction with Countesswells Road, but at the site of the new junction and further west, walls would be taken down, with the materials utilised in the formation of new drystone walls at selected locations through the site, enclosing prominent areas such as foot/cycle routes and accessed to secondary streets off the main spine road. The extensive retentions and re-siting works proposed will assist in creating a sense of place and in embedding the development in its surroundings. Taking these matters into account, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable, and demonstrate due regard for their context, making a positive contribution to the setting of the proposed housing development, as required by policy D1 (Architecture and Placemaking) of the ALDP.

Matters raised in representations

It is noted that Planning Permission in Principle has been granted for this site, and so necessary roads infrastructure improvements, developer contributions and affordable housing have been established. As this application relates specifically to those matters specified in certain conditions, the planning authority's assessment will be limited to those matters and will not revisit matters previously addressed.

The access and roads arrangements for the site have been accepted by the Council's Roads Projects Team. It is evident that the character of Countesswells Avenue will be altered by it no longer being a cul-de-sac, however the Countesswells Avenue access has been well established through the granting of Planning Permission in Principle and the guidance contained in the Pinewood and Hazledene development brief. It is not appropriate for the principle of access via Countesswells Avenue to be revisited through assessment of this application. Access to the Hazledene site being taken via Hazledene Road has been considered through a separate application, ref P130994, relating to Zone A, and is also of no relevance to assessment of the current proposal.

It is acknowledged that an area of existing green space will be lost, however this must be considered in the context of the site's allocation for housing in the current Local Development Plan and the Aberdeen Local Plan previously. Meaningful open space is to be provided throughout the wider Pinewood and Hazledene sites. Core Path Routes exist at the edges of the site, and such routes may not be closed off or diverted without going through a legal process. It is noted that there is no longer any green belt zoning applicable to the Pinewood and site, nor the adjoining Hazledene site.

The Council's sale of the Pinewood and Hazledene sites is of no relevance in assessing the planning merits of this development proposal. Whilst there is provision in planning legislation for notification of applications to Scottish Ministers where a proposal involves Council interest and is significantly contrary to the development plan, that further procedure is not applicable in this instance.

The scale of development on the site and its arrangement have been established through approval of the layout in application P131055, balancing the efficient use of the site with appropriate provision of landscaping, open space and private gardens of appropriate size. Trees along the western boundary are acknowledged, and the retention of these trees, which lie outwith the application site, is of benefit to the woodland character of the site. Nevertheless, the

arboricultural impact of the proposal has been assessed, and this application extends only so far as assessing the new landscaping proposed and the means of protecting existing trees during construction.

No wildlife/habitat surveys are required in relation to matters specified in the conditions for which approval is sought.

Long-term drainage proposals have been previously agreed for the development, and minor changes to reflect changes to the layout do not warrant fresh application. Temporary measures to address surface water drainage during the construction phase have been provided and have been assessed as being sufficient for that temporary purpose by the Council's Roads Projects and Flood Prevention teams.

The Core Path route outwith the application site and adjacent to its eastern boundary is not relevant to any of the conditions for which approval is sought. That route provides north-south pedestrian access from Hazlehead Road to Countesswells Road.

The extent of tree removals is not considered to be excessive, particularly given the condition of many of the specimens on site. As many existing trees within the site are in poor condition, with little viable scope for long-term retention, it is concluded that those trees can be readily replaced through the wider landscaping of the development site.

Summary

Taking account of the points raised above, it is concluded that the submissions made have satisfactorily addressed the matters specified in conditions attached to the grant of Planning Permission in Principle (PPiP) ref A7/2178 in relation to the provision of open space, appropriate landscaping of the site, the means of access during construction and the means of ensuring surface water is adequately drained during construction and prior to operation of the final scheme of sustainable urban drainage. The submissions demonstrate accordance with the relevant provisions of the development plan in terms of policy D1 (Architecture and Placemaking), NE4 (Open Space) and NE5 (Trees and Woodlands) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The submitted documents detail an appropriate means of landscaping of the site and the provision of appropriate open space, along with measures for the long-term management and maintenance of those areas. The majority of dry-stone walling throughout the site would be retained and made good, with downtakings from any removals utilised in the construction of new boundary enclosures in prominent positions across the site, including adjacent to new pedestrian/cycle routes. The means of access during construction will ensure that there is no undue impact on the surrounding community. Appropriate measures for the management of surface water drainage have been proposed. A scheme of

phasing demonstrates that roads infrastructure and open space provision will be delivered phase-by-phase as construction is completed. The proposals made are considered to demonstrate accordance with the relevant provisions of the development plan, policies T2 (Managing the Transport Impact of Development), D1 (Architecture and Placemaking), D6 (Landscape), NE4 (Open Space) and NE5 (Trees and Woodlands) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. No material considerations have been identified that would warrant determination other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

CONDITIONS

it is recommended that approval is granted subject to the following conditions:-

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.