

## PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

ST MACHAR, DRIVE, BEDFORD ROAD, OLD ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT TO CREATE 18,700 SQ.M NEW SCIENCE BUILDING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING MESTON BUILDING

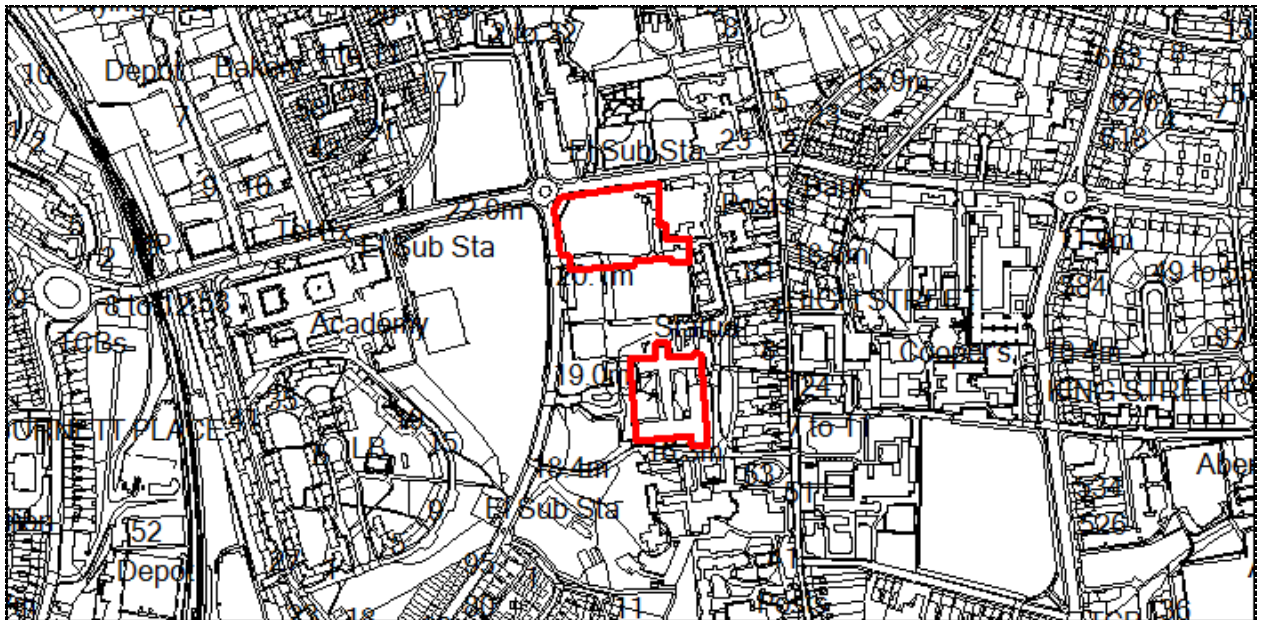
For: The University of Aberdeen

Reference No: 141787

Officer: Gavin Clark/ Garfield Prentice

Pre-Application Forum Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Ward: Tillydrone, Seaton, Old Aberdeen (R Grant, R Milne and J Noble)



## SUMMARY

This is a report to the pre-application forum on a potential application by the University of Aberdeen for a major development to create a 18,700 sqm science building in conjunction with the demolition of the existing Meston Building.

In accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended, the applicant submitted a Proposal of Application Notice on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014. The earliest date at which an application can be submitted is the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**It is recommended that the Forum (i) note the key issues identified; (ii) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and (iii) identify relevant issues which they would like the applicants to consider and address in any future application.**

## **DESCRIPTION**

The application site incorporates both the existing Meston Building (which is proposed for demolition) and an area of land to the south of St Machar Drive, to the east of Bedford Road, to the north of the existing Fraser Noble building and to the west of the existing Hub Building. The application sites extend to approximately 0.72ha (Meston Building) and 1.04 ha (new building). The surrounding area is predominantly occupied by the University, with buildings to the south west and north and by an area of open space to the west.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

There have been a number of minor applications in relation to the existing building, and a number of applications relating to other buildings within the ownership of the University of Aberdeen, including the formation of a new library on an area of land to the south-west of the proposed building.

## **PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing Meston Building and the formation of an 18,700 sqm new science building.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

The main considerations against which the eventual application would be assessed are outlined as follows:

### Principle of Development

The site is zoned as an existing community site and facility (Policy CF1 – Existing Community Sites and Facilities) within both the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the emerging local development plan. This policy states that proposals for new or extended uses of these types (further education and research facilities) on these sites will be supported in principle. Where land or buildings become surplus to current or anticipated future requirements, alternative uses which are compatible with adjoining uses and any remaining community uses will be permitted in principle.

## Design and Layout

The layout of the building, along with its height, design, impact on the surrounding Conservation Area, townscape setting and surrounding streetscape, car parking and landscaping would be determined at application stage. A high standard of design is expected for all applications within the City Council area.

As the proposal also includes the demolition of the Meston Building, the Council also needs to consider the demolition of this building, the resultant loss of granite and whether the building complies with the general principles of Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP).

## Transportation

The traffic impact of the development would be assessed as part of any application submission. Access to and from the site would also be examined. A suitable level of car, cycle and motorcycle parking would be agreed and the proposals would be expected to accord with transportation policies within the LDP and the Council's Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility.

## **PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

The Proposal of Application Notice application detailed the level of consultation to be undertaken as part of the Pre-Application Consultation process. Consultation with the local community council (Old Aberdeen) has been proposed within the Proposal of Application Notice. A public consultation was undertaken on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the University Hub Building on Elphinstone Road, Aberdeen. A further consultation event is proposed in February 2015.

The developer has also indicated that further parties have received copies of the Proposal of Application Notice including Old Aberdeen Heritage Society, Tillydrone Community Council, Froghall, Powis and Sunnybank Community Council, Historic Scotland and the local ward Councillors (Grant, Milne and Noble).

In addition to the above, it has been suggested that a letter drop should be undertaken with neighbours in the locality and that posters should be provided at the application site boundary and at various other locations in the surrounding area.

## **CONCLUSION**

This report highlights the main issues that are likely to arise in relation to the various key considerations of the proposed development. It is not an exhaustive list and further matters may arise when the subsequent application is submitted. Consultees will have the opportunity to make representations to the proposals during the formal application process.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that the Forum (i) note the key issues identified; (ii) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and (iii) identify issues which they would like the applicants to consider and address in any future application.**

**Dr Margaret Bochel**

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development