

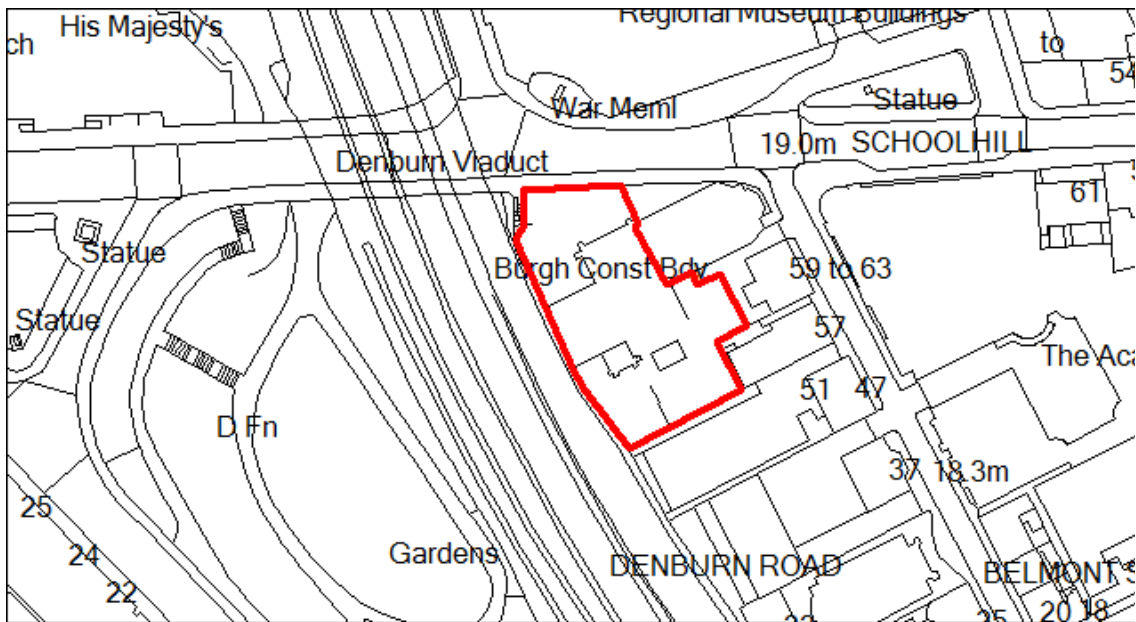
Pre-Application Forum

FORMER NORTH AND EAST KIRK, 61-71
SCHOOLHILL, ABERDEEN
PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE

CREATE CIRCA 450 UNITS OF STUDENTS
ACCOMMODATION, ASSOCIATED FACILITIES
AND CAFE

For: Aberdeen City Council

Application Ref. : P150445
Officer: Nicholas Lawrence
Committee Date:
Ward : George Street/Harbour (A May/J
Morrison/N Morrison)



SUMMARY

This report to the Pre-Application Forum (the Forum) is in respect of a potential detailed planning application promoted by Dandara Limited (the Applicant) for the provision of student accommodation, associated works and facilities, together with a café at the Triple Kirks (former North and East Kirk), 67-71 Schoolhill, Aberdeen (the Application Site)

In accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the Applicant submitted a Proposal of Application Notice (the Notice) on the 23rd of March 2015. Consequently, the earliest date which an application can be lodged with the Council is the 15th of June 2015.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development that the Forum:

1. Note the key issues identified at this stage;
2. If deemed necessary seek clarification, amplification or explanation on any particular matters; and
3. Identify relevant issues that they would like the Applicant to address in any future application

APPLICATION SITE AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Application Site

The site is roughly a rectangular shaped parcel of land, save an eastern protrusion, on a north-south axis totalling some 0.14 hectare in area.

The Application Site was formerly occupied by the North and East Kirks, the only remaining element of which is a steeple that is a category 'A' listed building. The balance of the subject land is now cleared of its former structures and landforms. However, there are on-going works associated with an extant planning permission for the office development (see relevant developmental history below).

In terms of delineation, the western boundary is marked by the Denburn Road dual carriageway, thereafter the railway line and then the Union Terrace Gardens; to the south is the Belmont Cinema; whilst to the east is the Triple Kirks public house and the Army Careers offices.

The northern aspect is marked by Schoolhill/Denburn Viaduct, which in effect produces a platform standing some 10.00 metres above the cleared area abutting Denburn Road. Built development at the Schoolhill level is referenced by the Triple Kirk, Cowdry Hall, Art Gallery including war memorial, Robert Gordon's College Archway and the former Gray's School of Art building. Whilst further to the west there is His Majesty's Theatre and the Central Library. A set of stairs, that abuts the north-east corner of the Application Site, provides a pedestrian access from Denburn Road to Schoolhill.

Relationship to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Under the scope of the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan the site constitutes an Opportunity Site (i.e. OP123) where office, retail, residential and hotel uses are deemed to be appropriate. This same designation is carried over within the proposed

replacement Local Development Plan, which is currently out to public consultation, albeit designated as Opportunity Site OP95.

RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Forum members may be aware that planning permission (Application Reference 110303) was granted in August 2011 for the erection of an office development of up to 9 providing some 6,750m² of net floor space. Aside from the associated car parking the consented development, in part, incorporated the restoration of the listed steeple. Listed Building Consent was granted on the 26th of June 2012, under application reference 111796 for the demolition of the exterior walls of the North Kirk and works to the steeple.

In practical terms allowing for the purification of the pre-commencement conditions attached to the 2011 planning permission and the on-going site works the Applicant has 'protected' the existing permission.

PROPOSAL

Whilst the Notice describes the proposed development as encompassing some 450 units of student accommodation this was based upon an initial concept design of a building with singular height, mass and appearance, set over some 14 storeys - from the Denburn Road level.

It is the understanding of Officers that there will be no further works to the steeple and that it would not be brought into active use or be accessible to the occupiers of the development or the public.

Since the production of the Notice the Applicant has been engaged in a number of design workshops with the Council considering the overall mass, scale, and context of the proposed development. Whilst this process continues, there is limited clarity at this juncture on either the number of student units to be provided, appearance of the proposed scheme, amenity spaces for the development, servicing / parking arrangements and how it integrates with its surroundings, and listed buildings (including the steeple).

CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that the main issues raised by the potential application are likely to be:

- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable;
- If acceptable in principle, whether the application in its detail represents a sustainable form of development allowing for its location, proposed uses, design, form, adaptability, presence, amenity, and relationship to the character, cityscape and historic assets of the immediate and wider area;
- Impact upon amenity of surrounding uses;
- Physical and social infrastructure impacts / requirements; and
- Impact upon highway network, parking, servicing.

Aspects of the planning policy framework against which the application is likely to be assessed, include at the national level - the National Planning Framework 3, Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Government policy *Creating Places* as well as the emerging Low Emissions Strategy for Scotland.

In terms of the extant and emerging Aberdeen Local Development Plan a suite of relevant policies were forwarded to the Applicants on the 17th of March 2015.

Whilst the emerging replacement Aberdeen Local Development Plan does not form part of the statutory development plan it has been adopted by the Council as constituting a material consideration in the decision-taking process.

The planning policy schedule, which is not exhaustive, included:

Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan:

- C2 - City Centre Business Zone and Union Street
- T2 - Managing the Transport Impact of Development Transport Assessments and Travel Plans required also Supplementary Guidance (SG)
- I1 - Infrastructure delivery and Developer Contributions
- D1 - Architecture and Placemaking
- D2 - Design and Amenity
- D3 - Sustainable and Active Travel
- D5 - Built Heritage
- NE4 - Open Space Provision in New Development
- NE8 - Natural Heritage
- R6 - Waste Management Requirements for New Developments
- R8 - Low and Zero Carbon Buildings

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan:

- D1 - Quality Placemaking by Design
- D2 - Landscape
- D3 - Big Buildings
- D4 - Historic Environment
- NC1 - City Centre Development
- T2 - Managing the Transport Impact of Development

- T3 - Sustainable and Active Travel
- T5 - Noise
- NE4 - Open Space Provision in New Development
- NE6 - Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality
- NE8 - Natural Heritage
- R6 - Waste Management Requirements for New Developments
- R7 - Low and Zero Carbon Buildings
- C11 - Digital Infrastructure

The Applicants will be required to submit sufficient information to demonstrate that the site can be developed having regard to the identified mains issues, including:

- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Planning and Sustainability Statement
- Design Statement
- Urban Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
- Green Travel Plan/Access Statement
- Heritage Asset Statement
- Noise Assessment / Report
- Protected Species Report
- Management Plan for the operation of the development
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Archaeological Report
- Energy - Zero/Low Carbon Energy Statement
- Waste Management Plan
- Vertical Sky Component and Average Daylight Factor Report

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

The Notice described the proposed Pre-Application Consultation approach and this was deemed appropriate by the planning authority. In this regard the Applicant has undertaken two public consultation events at the Thistle Caledonian Hotel on Union Terrace, on the 27th of April and 18th of May 2015 between 15:00 and 20:00 hrs. These events were publicised via advertisements within the Press and Journal and Evening Express newspapers, as well as individual notifications to neighbouring businesses and residences. In addition, invitations were extended directly to the Rosemount and Mile End Community Council, Queens Cross and Harlaw Community Council, together with local ward councillors.

CONCLUSION

This report highlights the main issues that are likely to arise during the decision-taking process. This list is not exhaustive and further matters may arise when the application is received, and consultees and the public have the opportunity to comment.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee note the key issues at this stage and advise of any other issues.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.