

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 2 June 2015. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Milne, Convener; Councillor Finlayson, Vice Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Jaffrey, Lawrence, Jean Morrison MBE, Sandy Stuart and Thomson.

Also present:- Councillor Donnelly.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found at:-
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=348&MId=3919&Ver=4>

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

SITE VISIT

1. The Committee conducted a site visit prior to the Hearing. The Committee was addressed by the Senior Planner (Mr Williamson) who summarised the proposal for the overall site, explained that all of the buildings currently on site were proposed to be demolished and replaced with four residential blocks, the proposed locations of which were highlighted. There being no detailed questions from members, the Convener explained that the Committee would return to the Town House to commence the Hearing.

HEARING

34-40 ABBOTSWELL ROAD - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AND THE ERECTION OF A 100 UNIT FLATTED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUSIVE OF 24 AFFORDABLE UNITS, ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING - 150343

2. The Hearing was opened by the Convener who welcomed those present and advised that the first person to speak would be Mr Williamson.

The Committee heard from **Mr Paul Williamson, Senior Planner, Aberdeen City Council** who addressed the Committee in the following terms:-

As outlined within the circulated report, the purpose of this Pre-Determination Hearing is for elected members to hear the views of the applicant, and if desired, those who have made representations to this planning application. As such, there has been no evaluation or recommendation made at this time.

The proposal of 100 flatted properties would include the redevelopment of this industrial site located on the northern side of Abbotswell Road, West Tullos. The site is relatively slender in nature and leads to the north towards the River Dee. Adjacent uses include further business and industrial properties, some residential properties, a sports centre, and a nursing home.

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The proposal is for the demolition of the four existing buildings and erection of a flatted residential development with associated access, car parking and landscaping works. The form of development would be over four separate blocks, of between 4 and 6 storeys high. The proposal would also see the provision of a total of 142 car parking spaces on site, with provision also made for cycle, motorcycle, and refuse storage. The applicant shall also describe the proposals in greater detail, and provide further illustrations of their proposals.

As outlined within the report, the land is currently allocated as Business and Industry within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the Proposed Local Development Plan. The adjacent land to the east is allocated as Green Space Network and Urban Green Space.

As noted within the report, the principle policy considerations relate to:-

- the principle of the development given the existing business/industrial policy allocation within the existing and proposed Local Development Plans
- the design and layout of the proposal in relation to Policies D1 (Architecture and Placemaking), D2 (Design and Amenity), H3 (Density), NE4 (Open Space Provision in New Development), and R6 (Waste Management Requirements for New Development)
- the provision of an adequate mix of housing and delivery of affordable housing in line with Policies H4 Housing Mix and H5 Affordable Housing
- any potential transportation impact in respect of Policy T2 Managing the Transport Impact of Development, and D3 Sustainable and Active Travel
- provision of appropriate infrastructure relating to drainage, and mediation of any potential flooding issues in respect of Policy NE6 Flooding and Drainage

In respect of consultee responses, the Roads Development Management Team have no objection. They have however asked for some minor amendments to the internal layout. Contributions would be required towards the Strategic Transport Fund and the city car club. A new bus shelter would also be required on Wellington Road.

Following the preparation of this report, the Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that should planning permission be granted, further information would be necessary in respect of noise mitigation from the adjacent road, and air quality to protect future residents.

SEPA currently object to the application on Flood Risk grounds, although ongoing investigations are underway by the applicant to try to resolve this objection.

An objection has also been received from a family in an adjacent property - the issues raised are the impact on the local traffic network and the potential impact on views.

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The remaining consultees do not object to the proposals, and the necessary contributions sought from the Developer Obligations team have been outlined to the applicant.

One point of clarification that I would like to point out in the report is in respect of the final section on 'Next Steps'. While the application shall be reported to the meeting of the Full Council in August, if approved it would require notification to Scottish Ministers, on the basis of the objection from a statutory consultee. If, however, this objection is resolved, it would not require referral.

The Committee then heard from **Mr Mark Wilkie, Senior Engineer, Roads Projects, Aberdeen City Council**, who made the following statement regarding transportation and accessibility issues:-

I have considered the aforementioned planning application (with the additional information submitted) and have the following observations:

Development Proposal

An existing access would be upgraded to provide a suitable access to the proposed development, on the north side of Abbotswell Road. The proposed access onto Abbotswell Road, internal road and car park would need to be designed to Aberdeen City Council standards. These roadworks would be subject to a Section 21 Roads Construction Consent procedure.

Walking and Cycling

Minor improvements would be made to widen the remote footway on the west side of the proposed access off Abbotswell Road. Otherwise, pedestrian and cyclist linkage to the site is quite good.

Public Transport

The nearest bus stop to the development is on Wellington Road, south of its junction with Abbotswell Road. Since this is for northbound (city-bound) services, the applicants have agreed to upgrade the stop to have a shelter and accessible kerbing for easier boarding.

Parking

The following parking provision has now been agreed with the applicants:-

- 142 car parking spaces (including 8 mobility spaces)
- 2 electric car parking spaces (with active charge point)
- 100 cycle parking spaces
- 12 motorcycle parking spaces

The car parking standards require 171 spaces for the proposed flats, so there would be a shortfall of 27 spaces. The applicants have agreed to contribute towards the provision

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of a city car club vehicle, so one of the electric vehicle spaces (or one of the normal car spaces) would need to be marked for this purpose.

Provided that an appropriate contribution is provided, to support the provision of a car club vehicle in the first three years of the development and thereby reduce parking demand, the car parking shortfall could be overlooked.

Development Vehicle Access

A new access would need to be constructed under Section 21 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. My colleague Colin Burnet should be contacted regarding the required construction details.

The applicants have agreed that they would continue the remote footway arrangement which is present on the west side of their site frontage, as far east as the proposed new access. This would provide the minor improvements mentioned, and have the added benefit of removing the hardstanding area where up to three cars can currently park. So, the visibility sightline would be kept clear for cars exiting the development and looking to the right.

Internal Road Layout

This has been reconfigured to meet the requirements of Waste Management colleagues in terms of refuse storage and collection. The traffic calming measures would need to be agreed for the roads construction consent.

Local Road Network

A Strategic Transport Fund contribution of £99,467 has been approved by the NESTRANS sub-group which is responsible for agreeing reductions (in this case, a reduction of £65,733 was allowed for the extant use of the site). This, in effect, would address the cumulative traffic impact of the development on the local road network.

Residential Travel Plan Framework

The above framework, supplied in the Transport Statement by Messrs Fairhurst, would provide a sound basis for producing Residential Travel Packs (RTPs). A condition would need to be applied to any consent you may wish to grant, to ensure that RTPs would have been submitted to, and approved, by the planning authority prior to occupation of the first unit. The first owner/occupier of each new property would need to have an RTP presented to them, to encourage greater use of sustainable means of transport.

Conclusion

I have no objection to this application subject the issues mentioned above being conditioned.

Officers responded to various questions from members and the following information was noted:-

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- that the granite from the frontage of the house currently on site could be used elsewhere on site - specified by condition if desired
- that the materials used for the boundary fence could also be specified by condition at the determination stage if desired
- that officers would investigate the feasibility of requesting funding for a school bus service as part of the new secondary school in the south of the city

The Committee then heard from representatives of the developers for the proposal, namely Mr John Findlay of Ryden LLP, Planning Consultants, Mr Andrew Thompson of Mackie Ramsay Taylor Architects, and Mr Raymond Edgar of Stewart Milne Homes.

Mr Findlay explained the context of the site, and highlighted the following facts:-

- Site area approximately 1.05 hectares (ha) or thereby
- Comprises four vacant buildings and associated yard space
- Previously used for manufacturing and storage purposes
- Evidence of previous residential use on site
- Single access from Abbotswell Road
- Predominantly mixed use area including residential, care home and recreational as well as business and industrial

In terms of planning context, Mr Findlay advised that the site was currently zoned under Policy B11 as Business and Industrial Land for Class 4 Business, Class 5 General Industrial and Class 6 Storage or Distribution uses. Zoning had been carried forward within the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) published in March 2015. Mr Findlay questioned if this remained appropriate given the nature of adjoining uses, the bad neighbour element and the lack of demand for the site. He stated that the loss of 1.05ha of employment land would have no impact on the strategic land supply with 196ha allocated through the 2012 LDP. Representation had been made to the Proposed LDP 2016 seeking the site's inclusion as an opportunity site for residential development.

With regard to the proposed development, Mr Findlay highlighted:-

- that it comprised 100 flatted units inclusive of 24 affordable units
- that it was an efficient re-use of a vacant brownfield site with a development sympathetic to the setting
- that it was an opportunity to deliver contemporary residential dwellings in an attractive landscape setting compatible with adjoining residential and care home uses
- that there had been residential use previously on site
- that the area would be enhanced by a development of high quality design, layout and landscaping
- that the site was close to a range of amenities, services and employment centres promoting sustainable mixed communities

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Mr Thompson summarised the design analysis with the aid of visuals depicting the view west along Abbotswell Road towards the site entrance; public open space and blocks D, C and B; public open space, car parking and blocks A and B; and the development looking south across the River Dee from Riverside Drive.

Mr Findlay then outlined the following with regard to progress of the planning application:-

- Proposal of Application Notice submitted and Pre-Application Consultation held
- Application submitted on 5 March 2015
- No objections received from Community Councils
- One public representation received
- Regular meetings held with officers in accordance with Process Agreement
- Transportation Assessment submitted and agreed
- Site layout been refined with electrical car charge point and two dedicated 'Club Car' spaces incorporated into layout at request of Roads department
- Stage 1 Environmental Audit and Bat Survey submitted - no issues arising
- Flood Risk Assessment submitted - further analysis taking place in consultation with Aberdeen City Council Flooding Team and SEPA
- No further objections from statutory or internal consultees

Mr Findlay concluded that the existing premises did not meet current market expectations, which was evident in the lack of demand; the small loss of employment land would not prejudice the overall land supply given current greenfield allocations throughout the city; the development would result in the removal of a bad neighbour use from existing residential and care home properties; there was evidence of the site previously being used for residential purposes; the proposal had the potential to regenerate a vacant brownfield site which possessed limited development potential under extant policy; and a residential development was wholly compatible with mixed use surroundings which included occupied dwellings and a care home.

Mr Findlay, Mr Thompson and Mr Edgar responded to various questions from members and the following information was noted:-

- that the burn at the edge of the site was not within the ownership of the developers, however discussions were ongoing with the landowner in an effort to resolve the objection by SEPA
- that use of the granite from the house currently on site was already being considered and discussed with planning officers
- that evidence of the extensive marketing of the site, which yielded no positive interest for business and industrial use, had been provided as part of the submission.

There being no further speakers, the Convener thanked everyone for their contributions and noted that the planning application was due to be determined at the Council meeting on 19 August 2015.

- RAMSAY MILNE, Convener.