

Pre-Application Forum

FORMER DOBBIES GARDEN CRENTRE AND NURSERY, HAZLEDEEN ROAD
PROPOSAL OF APPLICATON NOTICE

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 55 FAMILY HOUSES, A NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INCORPORATING A RANGE OF FACILITIES INCLUDING POSSIBLY CONVENIENCE SHOPPING, RETAIL GARDEN CENTRE, CHURCH, VETERINARY SURGERY AND MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICE WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING.

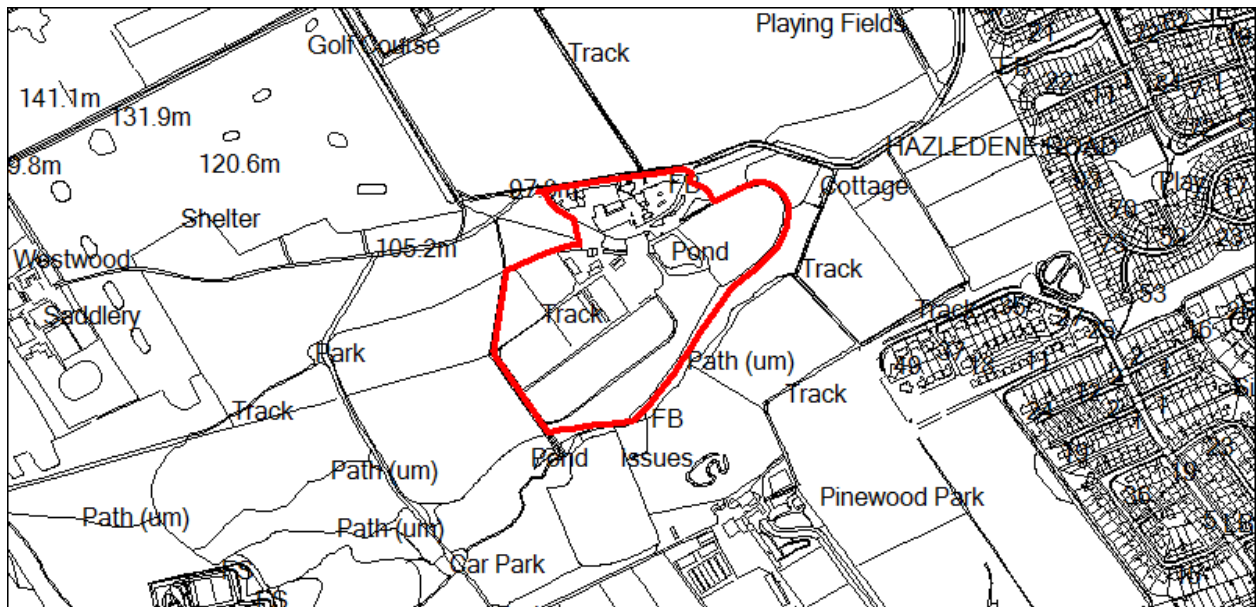
For: Aberdeen City Council

Application Ref. : P151526

Officer: Lucy Greene

Committee Date: 14th December 2015

Ward : Hazlehead/Ashley/Queens Cross(M Greig/J Stewart/R Thomson/J Corall)



SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

The main issues are that the site lies within the Green Belt and Green Space Network. Apart from the green belt issue, the appropriateness of the uses in this particular location; and any other material considerations, including whether there is a need for the uses proposed.

It is recommended that the Forum (1) note the key issues identified; (2) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and (3) identify relevant issues which it would like the applicants to consider and address in any future application.

DESCRIPTION

The site is 9.1 hectares in total and lies to the south of Hazledene Road. It contains the former Dobbies garden centre and nursery. The buildings are currently used on a temporary basis, by the 'Somebody Cares' charity.

Towards the northern site boundary there are a collection of buildings that were added incrementally over the years and have no particular coherence.

There are areas of car parking and hard landscaping within the centre of the site and the northern area. The area to east contains mature trees, immature self seeded trees, and areas of standing water and marshy grassland. The south and western areas contain grassland and areas of coniferous plantation.

The site takes access from Hazledene Road and at this point the road is a quiet country road, with no pavements. There are dry stone walls to each side, with trees and shrubs to the south side along the site boundary. On the other side of Hazledene Road are playing fields, with Hazlehead Park further to the north and west.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P101375 – Change of use on a temporary basis (3 years) from Garden Centre to form mixed use development incorporating retail, training facilities, storage, child's play area and on-site restaurant.

P131188 Hazlehead Nurseries, Hazledene Road, Aberdeen Renewal of Change of Use on a Temporary Basis (3 Years) from Garden Centre to Form Mixed use Development Incorporating Retail, Training Facilities, church services and meetings, storage, child's play area and restaurant, for: Somebody Cares Trust UK.

This latter application was a Section 42 Variation of application P101375 in order to extend the temporary period of the permission.

These permissions were granted based on a coloured up plan indicating the areas of the various uses.

Planning application P141026 is for planning permission in principle, for a proposed country house hotel of circa 200 bedrooms, spa, swimming pool, function and conference facilities, restaurants and equestrian centre on the Hayfield site, associated car parking / alterations to access roads, on the adjacent site to the west, was approved by Council in May this year. The permission is pending subject to securing developer contributions towards:

- upgrading of access roads and paths,

- recreational and wildlife enhancements to Hazlehead Park,
- public bus services and
- the Strategic Transport Fund.

Subject to further applications for Matters Specified in Conditions, implementation of the hotel application would result in an increased use of Hazledene Road as an access to the hotel and associated facilities.

PROPOSAL

The proposals produced for the pre-application public event, show the community buildings around the central and north area of the site, with areas of housing in the south west and north eastern areas.

There is an analysis of the existing site features and ecology, and an initial concept for fitting development within this context.

It is indicated that it would be proposed to take access from Hazledene Road.

CONSIDERATIONS

The site lies within the green belt in both the adopted and proposed Local Development Plans. It would be treated as a 'departure from the development plan', likely to be a 'significant departure'. The procedure for a significant departure is that there would be a 'pre-determination hearing' where those that have made representations may be heard by Elected Members. The application would then proceed to be determined by the full Council and referred to the Scottish Ministers prior to determination.

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

Green Belt

Green Belt policy indicates that:

No development will be permitted in the green belt for purposes other than those essential for agriculture, woodland and forestry, recreational uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting, mineral extraction or landscape renewal. The exceptions to this include:

1. Proposals for development associated with existing activities in the green belt will be permitted but only if all of the following criteria are met:
 - a. Development is within the boundary of the existing activity.
 - b. The development is small-scale.
 - c. Intensity of activity is not significantly increased.
 - d. Any proposed built construction is ancillary to what exists.
2. Essential infrastructure.
3. Buildings of historic or architectural interest.

4. Extensions of existing buildings as part of a conversion.

The main issue for consideration is the extent to which the proposal complies and conflicts with Green Belt policy.

Setting aside Green Belt policy is the question of whether the proposed uses would be appropriate on this particular site. Relevant matters include the relationship with other uses in the surrounding area, and access.

Also setting aside the question of compliance with the principle of development within the Green Belt, the issue of impact on the character of the green belt and wider landscape would be an important consideration.

Landscape and Ecology

The site also lies within the Green Space Network (GSN), which seeks the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the GSN for wildlife, access, recreation and landscape.

The extent of impact on trees, the natural environment and wildlife and any measures that could mitigate that impact would be material considerations. Any application would need to be accompanied by the necessary surveys in order to ascertain likely impacts. Proposals for mitigation would also be required.

Brownfield Development

The Strategic Development Plan welcomes, in principle, the provision of housing on brownfield sites. The site would be likely to be considered as partially on brownfield land. It should be noted that the issue of brownfield is not something taken into account in green belt policy.

It should further be noted that redevelopment of the garden centre would may partially comply with Green Belt policy in terms of 1. above: proposals for development associated with existing activities in the green belt.

Access, Traffic and Transportation

The Roads Development Management Team have confirmed that a Transport Assessment (TA) will need to be prepared by the applicants, to consider the transport impacts of the above development proposal. The applicants should contact the Roads Team in order to scope out the TA.

Pedestrian and cycle links to the site and between the site of the proposed hotel to the east and Pinewood and Hazledene to the west, as well as links to longer established residential areas and Hazlehead Park, would all be considered.

Public transport would be a further consideration.

Other Material Considerations:

Any recommendation on the application would be in accordance with development plan policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Other matters, that would be considered as material considerations, may be described in presentations from the applicant's agents.

Members are invited to highlight on any other issues that they consider warrant particular attention. These may include:

- The need or otherwise for community facilities, such as those indicated, in this area.

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 has been proposed within the Proposal of Application Notice. A public consultation event was held on 23rd November which was advertised in the local press.

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 Committee note the key issues at this stage and advise of any other issues.



Daniel Lewis
Development Management Manager