

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

ABERDEEN, 17 March 2016 Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM.
Present:- Councillor Milne, Convener; Councillor Finlayson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Cooney, Corall, Cormie, Greig, Jaffrey, Jean Morrison MBE, Nicoll, Sandy Stuart and Thomson.

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE NOTE

1. The Forum had before it the procedure note and guidance for members on the operation of Forum meetings.

The Forum resolved:-

to note the procedure note and guidance for members.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 14 JANUARY 2016

2. The Forum had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14 January 2016 for approval.

The Forum resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

ATHOLL HOUSE - 160046

3. The Forum had before it a report by Planning and Sustainable Development on submission of a Proposal of Application Notice by Halliday Fraser Munro on behalf of Atholl Square Developments, which outlined the Atholl House site for a major mixed use development.

The report advised that the applicant had indicated the proposed mixed use development could include a class 7 hotel of approximately 150 bedrooms, serviced apartments and residential (including student accommodation and flats) of approximately 500 units, retail, financial, professional and other services including food and drink, offices and other uses appropriate to an urban mixed use block, associated demolition as well as potential linkages to the Railway Station.

The Forum heard from Richard Woods and Malcolm Fraser, Halliday Fraser Munro, acting on behalf of the applicant. Mr Woods explained that they had held the first round of public consultation on 18 February and 20 people attended the event. It was heavily advertised and they received six written comments which were mainly positive, especially from the neighbouring properties. Mr Woods advised that the next round of consultation would be on 24 March, with engagement with the public ongoing.

Mr Fraser then addressed the Forum in regards to the development, whereby he outlined the proposal in more detail and responded to questions from members. Mr Fraser advised that the development brief was in two parts, which included making the area more open and to have better connectivity. Mr Fraser highlighted that the

PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

17 March 2016

development would be a positive contribution to the city, was an ideal site for student accommodation, and they envisaged an ambition for connectivity in the area. Various meetings had taken place with Network Rail in regards to the development and how the rail could be used to help with better connectivity throughout the development and the city.

In response to member's questions, Mr Fraser advised that in conjunction with Council officers they were investigating the possibility of pedestrianisation, and this would help with the principle of connectivity. They were also in discussions with the owners of the Trinity Centre to see how viable it would be to have an escalator connection to take pedestrians from the proposed application site, into the existing pedestrian connection over Wapping Street. Mr Fraser also explained that the development would be car free however an area on the development could be used for people with accessibility problems. There will also be an area for drop off. Mr Fraser also responded to queries about traffic congestion on Bridge Street. Mr Fraser advised that they would be having further discussions with road officers in regards to Bridge Street and also noted that they hoped to keep the historic granite setts on the road over the Category A Listed bow-bridge on Guild Street, after discussions with Historic Scotland.

Mr Paul Williamson, the case officer, then addressed the Forum, providing more detail regarding the planning aspects of the application and responded to questions from members. Mr Williamson explained that the existing building was approved in 1972 and the development would include the demolition of existing office block and the redevelopment of the site over the entire site area, and above the railway airspace. It was noted that the composition of the development had altered from the initial submission, in that the student accommodation now formed the dominant aspect of the proposal. Mr Williamson outlined that the land is currently allocated within the City Centre Business Zone within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, as well as being at the edge of the wider opportunity site OP132 for the Bon Accord Masterplan. The site also forms one of the intervention areas identified within the City Centre Masterplan which has recently been out for consultation. Finally Mr Williamson highlighted the various aspects to the application, namely:-

- The principle of the development and any potential conflicts with existing adjacent uses;
- The linkages with the aforementioned City Centre Masterplan and the associated aims and objectives;
- The retention of the listed building on site and the potential impact upon the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings and the proposals shall require to demonstrate how it complies or otherwise with Scottish Planning Policy and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy;
- Any potential transportation impact;
- The design and layout of the proposals; and
- Provision of appropriate infrastructure relating to drainage, and mediation of any potential flooding issues, together with potential mitigation to other infrastructure that may be deemed necessary.

PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

17 March 2016

In response to questions from members, Mr Williamson advised that dialogue was ongoing with officers in the roads department and they are undertaking an exercise in regards to connectivity etc, and any update can be fed back in due course. Also Mr Williamson explained that he would liaise with officers in building standards in order to consult with member of disability groups to ask for their input to the development.

The report recommended:-

that the Forum-

- (a) note the key issues identified;
- (b) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which it would like the applicants to consider and address in any future application.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to request that the applicant consider further discussions with the roads department to investigate the best course of action for the use of Bridge Street and College Street;
- (ii) to request that the applicant investigate a facility for parking for people with accessibility issues within the development;
- (iii) to request that the applicant liaise with Disability Groups within the city for feedback on the development, and that a poster be placed in Shopmobility in Union Square to promote the next public consultation; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the key issues.

MERKLAND ROAD EAST AND SITE AT CORNER OF PITTODRIE LANE AND STREET - 151945

4. The Forum had before it a report by Planning and Sustainable Development on submission of a Proposal of Application Notice by the Manson Architects, on behalf of the Watkins Jones Group, which outlined a potential application for the provision of student accommodation of about 20,000 square meters gross floor area, including ancillary facilities, and noted that all existing buildings on the site would be demolished.

The report advised that the proposed site comprised industrial premises located to the east of King Street close to Pittodrie stadium, currently occupied by Robertson stone centre and granite yard. The application boundary includes two distinct sites which are separated by Pittodrie Street. The northern site, which is the smaller of the two sites, is next to a four storey tenement housing which was constructed in the 1990's and fronts onto the street, with the southern site adjacent to industrial/commercial premises located to the east. To the south and west of the site lies a three storey Victorian tenement.

The Forum then heard from Craig Wallace from Jones Lang LaSalle, Lindsay Manson from Manson Architects and Jim Gray from the Watkins Group, who outlined the proposal in greater detail and responded to questions from members. Mr Wallace advised that they were having active dialogue about pre application consultation with a

PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

17 March 2016

target for submission of end of April 2016. A consultation event was held on 10 February with 30 members in attendance, which included people from the local community and Community Council's and a wide range of views were expressed. Lindsay Manson provided detail on the proposed development and advised that the development would comprise two sites.

Mr Robert Forbes, the case officer, addressed the Forum, providing more detail regarding the planning aspects of the application and responded to questions from members, Mr Forbes explained that the main considerations against which the planning application would be assessed were outlined as:-

- The site is zoned as a Mixed Use area (Policy H2 of the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan) and D1 (Placemaking) and D2 (Design and Amenity) were both relevant to the development.
- H3 of the Adopted Local Development Plan (Density) and NE4 (Open space provision) were both relevant
- NE6 (drainage) and Transport Policy T2 were also relevant. Mr Forbes noted that King Street had good linages with the rest of the city.
- Technical Advice Note: Student Accommodation.

Members then asked a number of questions of both the applicant/agent and of Mr Forbes. In response to a question about connectivity with Robert Gordon University and Aberdeen College, Mr Forbes advised that no detailed transport study had been carried out at present but this would be undertaken in due course. It was also noted that Site A would comprise 503 units and Site B 122 units however this number may vary as the development progresses. Mr Wallace also explained that regarding holiday periods, the accommodation could be used for people attending various things such as summer schools and they would be flexible based on student needs. Mr Wallace also identified that due to parking issues in the surrounding area, the development would be car free and this would be included in the terms and conditions of a students lease. Mr Wallace also explained that the use of the public space was flexible and discussions were still on going whether it could be used by the local community. Mr Gray also provided detail on what each student would have included with their room, and this would comprise an en-suite, a kitchen cupboard and a shelf on the fridge to name but a few. Members asked about security surrounding the student accommodation and it was noted that a member of staff would be on site 24 hours a day and explained that it was not envisaged that a gate would be used on the premises which makes it difficult to engage with the local community.

Finally members discussed the use of granite within the development from the former workshop on which the site is to be developed. Mr Gray advised that discussions were already ongoing with Robertson's in regards to the use of granite stones on the development.

The report recommended:-

that the Forum-

- (a) note the key issues identified;

PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

17 March 2016

- (b) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which it would like the applicants to consider and address in any future application.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the applicant consider the inclusion of heritage interpretation within the site in light of the historic use as a granite yard; and to
- (ii) to otherwise note the key issues.

- RAMSAY MILNE, Convener.