

Planning Development Management Committee

KEPPLESTONE MANSION, VIEWFIELD ROAD,
ABERDEEN

CHANGE OF USE AND PART DEMOLITION OF
MANSION HOUSE WITH ALTERATIONS AND
EXTENSION TO FORM FOUR APARTMENTS
AND ERECTION OF NEW BUILDING
CONSISTING SEVEN APARTMENTS WITH
ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AND
LANDSCAPING.

For: Stewart Milne Homes Ltd.

Application Type : Detailed Planning Permission
Application Ref. : P151056
Application Date: 01/07/2015
Officer: Jennifer Chalmers
Ward : Hazlehead/Ashley/Queens Cross(M
Greig/J Stewart/R Thomson/J Corall)

Advert : Can't notify neighbour(s)
Advertised on: 15/07/2015
Committee Date: 21/04/2016
Community Council : No response
received



RECOMMENDATION:

Refuse

DESCRIPTION

The site covers an area of approximately 0.22ha and is located alongside the western boundary of what was formerly the RGU Kepplestone Campus and which is now a residential development of townhouses and flats. The site contains the fire damaged remains of the category 'C' listed Kepplestone Mansion and is accessed from the north through the remainder of the Kepplestone development. The existing two storey buildings are all located within the north western corner of the site with the remainder of the site being predominantly soft landscaping.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P151057 – Listed building consent pending for 'Demolition of part of fire damaged building and the construction of a wall to enclose the east elevation of the remaining building'.

PROPOSAL

Detailed planning permission is sought for a change of use and part demolition of the mansion house with alterations and extension to form four apartments and for the erection of a new 3 storey building of contemporary design and consisting of

seven apartments. Car parking and landscaping are also proposed as part of the development.

Supporting Documents

All drawings and the supporting documents listed below relating to this application can be viewed on the Council's website at

<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/PlanningDetail.asp?ref=151056>

On accepting the disclaimer, enter the application reference quoted on the first page of this report.

- Report on Structural Condition (August 2015)
- Design Statement
- Design Statement Addendum

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because there has been an objection from Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council and 6 letters of objections to the proposal. Accordingly, the application falls outwith the scope of the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

CONSULTATIONS

Roads Development Management – have made the following observations:

- Request updated drawing showing bike store to accommodate 11 bikes
- Request 1 motorbike space is left
- Request drainage statement
- Strategic Transport Fund contribution is required

Environmental Health – No observations

Communities, Housing and Infrastructure (Flooding) – have the following observations:

- To provide full surface water drainage proposals for the development and drainage impact assessment.

Community Council – Object on the following grounds:

- Request a detailed structural engineer's report commissioned by Aberdeen City Council.
- No information provided about the routes of the service runs for drainage, gas, electricity, water supply etc.,
- No tree survey provided.
- That the proposal is to demolish the mansion house in its entirety
- Concerns that proposed location of replacement building would damage tree roots due to proximity of proposed replacement building.

REPRESENTATIONS

Six letters of objection have been received. The objections raised relate to the following matters –

- Demolition of historic buildings in Aberdeen portrays city as not being able to protect its heritage
- Property should be protected and restored

- Plans do not show position of new building in relation to proposed demolished mansion
- Proposed extension to Viewfield Road building not in keeping with existing building and would overlook neighbouring properties
- Materials not in character with existing buildings
- Little detail on conservation of existing trees and wildlife
- Concern over additions to on-street car parking as a result of proposal

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Policy D1 (Architecture and Placemaking)

Policy D2 (Design and Amenity)

Policy D3 (Sustainable and Active Travel)

Policy D5 (Built Heritage)

Policy D6 (Landscape)

Policy H1 (Residential Area)

Policy H5 (Affordable Housing)

Policy NE5 (Trees and Woodlands)

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design)

Policy D2 (Landscape)

Policy D4 (Historic Environment)

Policy H1 (Residential Areas)

Policy H5 (Affordable Housing)

Policy T3 (Sustainable and Active Travel)

Policy (NE5 (Trees and Woodlands)

Policy R7 (Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency)

EVALUATION

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) require that where, in making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the development plan and that determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Change of Use and Part Demolition of Mansion House

Overall, the general principle of changing the use of the premises to residential is considered acceptable. The application site was part of the wider Kepplestone Campus which has now been developed into residential properties varying from flats to large detached houses. The proposal also accords with Policy H1 of the development plan.

In relation to the part demolition of the fire damaged mansion house, it would be preferable to retain the building. SHEP states that there is a presumption against demolition or other works that would adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting. Given the listed status of the property, it was necessary to receive justification for the demolition of the fire damaged building. The applicant has provided a justification. It was acknowledged by Historic Scotland (now known as Historic Environment Scotland) that a strong case had been presented on structural stability and safety grounds. It is recognised that the Community Council requested that a detailed structural report was commissioned by ACC, however the report that was submitted was carried out by qualified engineers and the content and findings were considered acceptable by both ACC and Historic Scotland. The findings within the structural report concluded that demolition of the mansion house was required due to the extent of the damage and also due to the dangers to a workforce of trying to work within an uncertain environment. It should be noted that the actual consent for demolition is sought through the Listed Building Consent application, rather than this application.

Alterations and Extension to Remaining 'Farmhouse'

The remaining section of building is referred to as the farmhouse and dates back prior to 1867 where it sat alongside Kepplestone House. Within ten years it appears that the two buildings were joined, creating the mansion house that exists today.

The eastern elevation of the remaining section of the 'farmhouse' would be left quite visually exposed after the demolition of the main section of mansion house. The proposals are to alter and extend this section of building which, due to their scale and positions, would engulf the majority of the eastern and southern elevations. This in itself would be contrary to SPP which looks to preserve and enhance the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest. Further, it also seeks to keep any development to a minimum in order to achieve these aims. It is considered that the proposed alterations are not in keeping with the remaining building and would have a detrimental impact on the character and amenity of the listed building. The proposal therefore does not comply with SPP, SHEP and Policy D5 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

In terms of the proposed design of the redevelopment, it is recognised that the western elevation of the 'farmhouse' building which forms the western boundary adjacent to Viewfield Road would generally remain in its current form. However there are timber pod extensions designed to be built onto the eastern and southern elevations. More than 50% of the remaining building is proposed to be built onto, thereby greatly reducing the visible amount of the original structure of the listed building, consequently losing its identity and character. Especially poor is the eastern elevation which is considered to be of insufficient quality befitting the listed status of the building.

Replacement Building

It has been acknowledged that the principle of a replacement building(s) on the site is acceptable. The site is currently zoned as residential in the Local Development Plan.

The proposed new building would block the existing view down the avenue which currently looks towards the existing mansion house and the mature trees beyond which are located to the south of the site.

The proposed footprint of the new building does not respect or is it a worthy addition to the surrounding context, as the modern development at Kepplestone was designed to give prominence to the old mansion house at the end of a new street. This current proposal fails to achieve adequate siting, form and height and does not align itself so that it terminates the townscape that it is designed for. In isolation of other relevant determining factors, the design of the proposed replacement building is considered to be of sufficient quality. However, that in itself, would not justify approval of the application. First and foremost, any replacement building should be on the footprint of the existing mansion house. The design of the building would then need to be appropriate for that position, taking account of the context of the existing adjacent buildings, including the 'farmhouse'.

There are further concerns in relation to the proximity of the flats to the trees in terms of daylight, amenity and safety. In addition, there would be the potential for physical damage to be caused to the trees through the construction of the building, although without a detailed tree survey, it is difficult to quantify the extent of the harm. Further drawings and information would need to be provided in order to ascertain whether the trees would be physically damaged if the building were to be constructed. Safety has been mentioned as a possible concern due to the possibility of wind damage to the proposed building from falling branches. The proximity of the proposed building to the existing protected trees which are of a considerable height would be within approximately ½ metre of the tree canopy. There are concerns that the proposed new building would receive minimal amounts of sunlight and daylight as a result of being built too close to these trees and thereby impacting on the amenity of those living within. The trees are of a significant height and the Council's arboriculturalist has stated that the development should be outwith the calculated root protection area and that it should be set a reasonable distance away from the larger specimen trees in the area. This would be with a view to alleviating future concerns relating to the proximity of trees to buildings which often results in future removal due to safety fears of trees falling on the building, and the amenity of those living within due to reduced daylight and sunlight. It would then also ensure adequate space for the trees to grow into as they mature. The location of the replacement building does not allow for this.

Car Parking and Amenity Space

The main access onto the site would be from within the existing Kepplestone development. The current proposal has car parking which dominates the site in general and the setting of the building in particular and creates an unwelcoming

entrance. Policy D2 highlights that when it is necessary to accommodate car parking within a private court, the parking must not dominate the space and that a guideline of no more than 50% of any court should be taken up by parking spaces and access roads. Although the car park would occupy on approximately 50% of the application site (excluding the footprints of the buildings), the location, extent and juxtaposition of the parking area with the proposed flats would be such as to dominate the setting of the buildings and to adversely impact on residential amenity. Accordingly, the parking area is not acceptable, being contrary to Policy D2.

As a result of the position of the proposed building and the location and extent of the parking area, the amount of amenity/garden ground would be below the level expected. The location of the amenity/garden ground would be such as to be in the shade for significant period of time during the day because of the 3 storey building immediately to the east and tall trees to the south casting shadows across the area.

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

The Proposed ALDP was approved for submission for Examination by Scottish Ministers at the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of 27 October 2015. It constitutes the Council's settled view as to what should be the content of the final adopted ALDP and is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, along with the adopted ALDP. The exact weight to be given to matters contained in the Proposed ALDP (including individual policies) in relation to specific applications will depend on whether:

- these matters have been subject to representation and are regarded as unresolved issues to be determined at the Examination; and
- the relevance of these matters to the application under consideration.

Policies and proposals which have not been subject to objection will not be considered at Examination. In such instances, they are likely to be carried forward for adoption. Such cases can be regarded as having greater material weight than those issues subject to Examination. The foregoing can only be assessed on a case by case basis. In relation to this particular application, the policies in the Proposed ALDP substantively reiterate those in the adopted local development plan and the proposal is acceptable in terms of both plans for the reasons already previously given.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Notwithstanding that the principle of the change of use to residential use is acceptable, the proposal is not acceptable for the following reasons. The proposals to alter and extend the remaining 'farmhouse' and for the erection of the new building and associated car parking are not acceptable due to the scale and position of the proposed extensions to the 'farmhouse' as they would engulf the majority of the eastern and southern elevations, covering more than 50% of

the building thereby greatly reducing the visible amount of the original structure of the listed building thereby losing its identity and character. The replacement building does not respect the surrounding context and fails to achieve adequate siting, form and height and does not align itself so that it terminates appropriately the existing arrangement of buildings and the townscape. The proposal would also have a detrimental impact on the mature trees within the site due to the proximity of the new building to the trees. The proposed car park would dominate the setting of the development to the detriment of its appearance and amenity and result in insufficient amenity space contrary to the requirements of Policy D2 (Design and Amenity) of the Local Development Plan.

Overall, the proposal does not comply with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) or Policies D1 (Architecture and Placemaking), D2 (Design and Amenity), D5 (Built Heritage), D6 (Landscape) and NE5 (Trees and Woodlands) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.