

14th September 2016

By letter and e-mail

Development Management
Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4, Marischal College
Broad Street,
Aberdeen AB10 1AB

Dear Sir/Madam

Victoria Road School (161051 – new slightly modified application)

At our meeting held on Thursday 18th August 2016, the Community Council resolved to formally object to the latest planning application that involves the total demolition of the Victoria Road School buildings, and by agreement with the planning department, this submission is made within the protocol for objecting as we did not receive the full set of planning documents until after the public closing date.

We re-affirm our strong opposition to this latest proposal for total redevelopment of this site and are also very aware that written public objections to this application exceeds 560 submissions, which is more than double the number on the previous application. This must be the highest level of opposition to a planning application in many many year and cannot be dismissed

We object to this slightly modified planning application on the following grounds

Policy D4 – Aberdeen’s Granite Heritage

We have consistently maintained that the City Council, as the guardian of our granite heritage must stand up for Local Development Plan (LDP) Planning Policy D4 and should not approve any demolition of any substantial granite buildings of which these are beautiful examples, or for similar sites for that matter. It remains our stated view that the LDP must be strengthened to ensure that there is a default to retention of granite buildings so that attention is fully focused on restoration and introduction of new uses. There are numerous examples where existing granite buildings at Mile End School, Causewayend and Hanover Street have been retained and enhanced by sympathetic architecture. The City Council itself has demonstrated this sensitive approach itself so admirably at Marischal College where a world class example of the granite heritage fronts a new office building!

Policy R7 – Low and Zero Carbon Buildings

We re-affirm and strongly suggest that the more than adequate granite construction represents a structure that is sustainable and infinitely adaptable, which also presents a consider savings based on retention and adaption of the internal, and certainly will outlast any modern construction at a fraction of the cost.

The addition of heat- saving measures can be incorporated into a refit and this would ensure that the thermal performance of a granite building can come very close to those achieved in modern construction, notwithstanding that the granite will outlast any modern materials by many many generations

Policy D6 – Landscape and Policy NE5 - Trees and Woodlands

We remind the City Council that the Victoria Road school site contains a number of healthy, mature trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). We have photographs and records of this, and given the dwindling number of such trees in Aberdeen, then every one of them should be retained as they provide a sense of place and location to the present setting. We note that the revised housing proposal as submitted does seek to retain trees covered by TPOs although the remainder of open space proposed represents extreme blandness.