

Application Ref: 160845

Application Title: Redevelopment of site, erection of student accommodation of max 635 bed spaces, up to 5 storeys with associated works

Application Site: Site at 9 Merkland Road East & 3 Pittodrie Place, Aberdeen

As owners/occupiers of a residential property immediately to the east part of the application site, we wish the following issues to be considered as the basis for our objection to the proposals as submitted (in no particular order of significance)

- A) We fundamentally object to the scale of the development on the basis of the number of occupants it is being designed for – that being 635 beds and staff. The existing sites are generally light industrial/workshop use, attracting minimal external vehicular traffic. While the accompanying reports to the application state that the proposals are based on a car free scheme, how would any of the associated tenancy agreements be monitored for compliance? Further, what penalties would the local authority impose if these are breached as material considerations in determining application? Our experience from recent student residential developments in the area, where occupants are required to sign an agreement for use of off street parking (for a fee) has resulted in a preference for on-street parking instead. Our observations from living close to student accommodation are that many students are car owners.
- B) Increase in vehicular traffic: the streets around this area in general and around the site in particular, are already very busy during university term-time in terms of road-use and parking. This is from a combination of staff and students making use of available resources out with the university campus. We are just outside the pay & display areas imposed when the new University library was opened. The surrounding roads from the Pittodrie/Linksfield area leading onto King Street are very busy with traffic generated by patrons of the highly successful Sport Village nearby. We expect that this proposed scheme will contribute in compounding this unfavourable situation.
- C) Increase in pedestrian traffic: the scheme would result in increased pedestrian traffic around the area – this would likely result in an increase in littering as already is the case during times of high use (university term time) as well as associated increase in accidents from vehicles. Pittodrie Lane is already busy with pedestrian traffic. In the morning, parents walk babies and toddlers to the Nursery. Many people choose to walk along the length of the lane simply to avoid King Street for a short while or as a preferred route to Tesco. It is a busy route for existing students in the area going to the Sports Village/Tesco – often late at night.

- D) Pittodrie Lane: This Lane (which runs between our property & the eastern edges of the proposed development site) is deemed to be an occasional thoroughfare rather than a principal commuter street. As such, this currently generally operates as a quiet lane onto which access to and from the adjacent properties is comfortably, and more significantly, safely gained. However, the No entry signs in Pittodrie Street direct vehicles along the lane so it is often busy with vehicular traffic – often travelling at high speed as drivers do not take into consideration the possibility of meeting any other users. The whole width of the lane is required by residents to access/leave their properties by their vehicles from garages/driveways. Due to the parking restrictions on King Street, any visitors and tradesmen visiting properties on King Street frequently park in the Lane. Residents routinely park in the Lane. This effectively reduces the width and large vehicles travelling along the lane are then forced to slow down (often to a crawl) when passing. We are concerned that the access doors to the bike storage area and refuse bin area in the Lane will be the preferred route for students when accessing the building rather than the main doors on Pittodrie Street. Redevelopment of the site would undoubtedly create increased risk of collision to existing users through expected increase in both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- E) Refuse Collection: Further, it is proposed that Pittodrie Lane is used for accessing the Refuse Stores for part of the proposed development – this generally is not the case at the moment (as properties fronting onto King Street are serviced from King Street), thus this again would introduce an increased risk to existing users. With regards to our own property, a refuse storage area is proposed directly opposite our access to our existing garage and garden ground, thus hindering access to our property, during collection.
- F) Design: The design Statement notes that Pittodrie Lane has a mews-like quality. Whilst some lanes in the city may be considered to be so by dint of their associated service accommodation, this narrow lane is essentially a minor thoroughfare for residents to access gardens/garages and any reference in the new designs to such are generally unfounded.
- G) Planting Scheme: In the area directly opposite our back gate the proposals include for installation of 3nr trees. Are these to be planted at full height (as shown) rather than expected to take an extended period of time to reach maturity, thus effectively not as prescribed on the application drawings/reports? How will these trees be maintained once they are installed? Will there be an enforceable maintenance agreement?
- H) Open ground: Also in the same area, the scheme shows an area of open ground off Pittodrie Lane, against a screen of railings (metal?) adjacent to a light-well serving a level of sunken accommodation. We are concerned that this could be a safety risk for passers-by and a potential litter point. Residents frequently see drug related activity in the lane when it is used as an exchange/pickup point by dealers. We are very concerned that this area of open ground is effectively

designing in a space which will encourage crime and potentially put residents and students at risk.

- I) Development layout: There would seem to be a discrepancy in the layouts in the area directly opposite our back gate. It would appear that the proposal is to erect a wall along Pittodrie Lane to flank the proposed bin stores – this appears to be of differing lengths when drawn on the site plans and the floor plans. Further, this wall does not feature on the elevational drawings to Pittodrie Lane, nor are there details of its construction (assumed to be similar to that on the landscaping layout, adjacent to the proposed trees?). As a development along the site boundary, should details of this not have been provided for your and our, consideration?
- J) Use of Streets: The Noise Assessment states that Pittodrie Street is restricted to one way vehicular traffic on match days at nearby Pittodrie Stadium. This is not correct so any deductions associated to such controls cannot be considered on this fact.
- K) Proposed users: Reference in the Transport Statement is made that the scheme is for users only to and from the University (item 6.4) as a student housing scheme. Is it proposed that this is exclusively for use by those attending the University of Aberdeen (ie not for Robert Gordon University nor any other educational establishments in the City & Shire?). If so, how would the associated tenancy agreement be monitored for compliance, and what penalties would the local authority impose if these are breached as material considerations in determining application?
- L) Car Parking: The Transport Statement also refers to directing vehicles to local car parks in the vicinity (item 7.12). No public car parks exist in this area (apart from on street parking, the capacity of which is already severely limited). We would like to know where these public car parks are, is it appropriate that they are related to this development, can they cope with the additional capacity and how will this be monitored – all against the limited availability of on-street parking in the area at present?
- M) Car Parking: The scheme includes provision for 7 dedicated car parking spaces – these have been created in the location of current free access on-street parking area – which effectively means a reduction of 14 spaces (7 for public use, plus 7 for additional use from the development). These should be created within the development site and not at the expense of existing public provision.

At present there are 712 residential student accommodation beds in this small area. They are as follows: Trinity Court – occupies a large area of Pittodrie Street, Pittodrie Place & Ardarroch Rd and immediately adjacent to the proposed development – 512 beds, Linksfield Road – 2 separate developments near the Sports Village, Pittodrie Lane and the streets above mentioned – a total of 204, King Street – new development at junction with Merkland Road – 77 beds.

On the basis that this proposed development would increase the number to 1428 beds, which can only be described as beyond saturation point for this area, and on the basis of the above points, we hereby submit this as our objection to the redevelopment of the site as proposed.

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