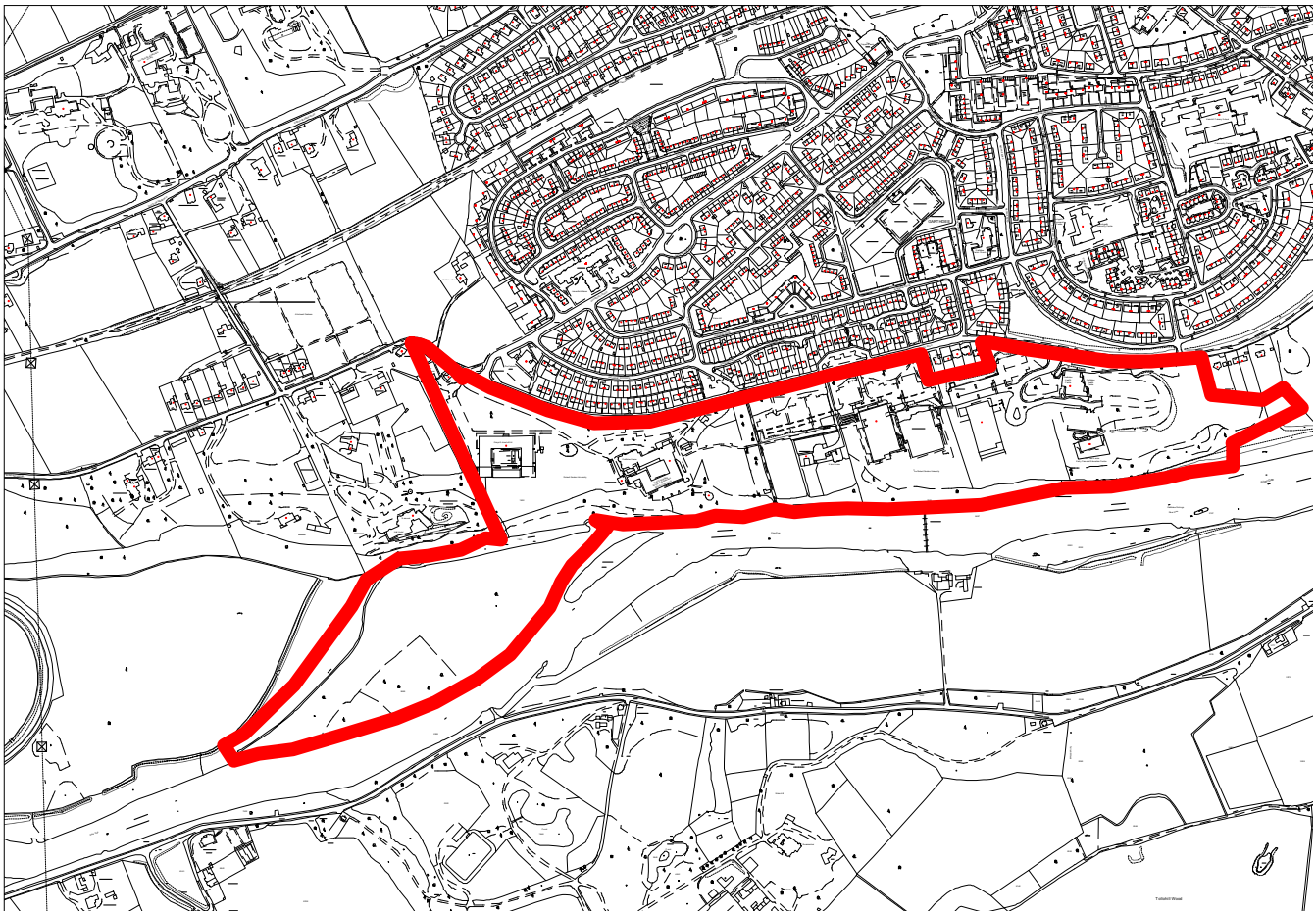
GARTHDEE ROAD, GARTHDEE CAMPUS

DEVELOPMENT OF CIRCA 35,000 SQ.M OF NEW TEACHING SPACE, SOCIAL FACILITIES AND STAFF ACCOMMODATION, ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING, JUNCTION, ROAD AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

For: The Robert Gordon University

Application Ref. : P091761
Application Date : 16/11/2009
Officer : Alex Scott
Ward: Airyhall/Broomhill/Garthdee (S Cassie/J Wisely/I Yuill)

Advert : Section 34 -Proj. Pub. Concern
Advertised on : 10/02/2010
Committee Date : 22 December 2009
Community Council : No response received



RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Legal Agreement

DESCRIPTION
The site of this application relates to the eastern, undeveloped, part of the RGU campus which extends in a linear form along the southern side of Garthdee Road and lies between the established housing area to the north of Garthdee Road and the River Dee to the south. The site slopes down towards the Dee which flows below a steep wooded embankment.

HISTORY
Components of RGU have been well established in the western part of the site which bounds with Norwood Hall in Pitfodels. This area includes Grays School of Art and the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture. The central part of the site has been more recently developed in the last 10-15 years and includes the new Business and Health Schools along with a Sports and Health Centre and a pre-school nursery (to be relocated). The eastern part which extends down to the David Lloyd Leisure Centre was a former touring caravan park and lay vacant for some 20 years prior to its purchase by RGU for a further phase of development at Garthdee, represented by this application. The approach by RGU has been to adopt a Masterplan to the development of the Garthdee Campus and there have been 3 design approaches over the last 15 years culminating in this current proposal.

The relocation of the nursery building, which will now be located along the western edge of the Campus, was granted consent under planning application 091038 on 14 September 2009 and work has recently commenced on the new facilities. The existing nursery building will then be removed to allow implementation of this current development.

Another recent development was the provision of a central facilities building directly to the south of the Scott Sutherland building in 2006 (Ref A6/1234 approved on 18 August 2006) and minor alterations to this new building are included as a small aspect of this new application.

PROPOSAL
This application was submitted on 03 November and along with the detailed drawings and formal application a suite of supporting information was provided. This material included a:

- Pre-application consultation report
- Design and Access Statement
- Tree survey report
- Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Report
- Flood risk report
- Drainage Impact Assessment and SUDS Strategy
- Environmental supporting information
- Green Travel Plan (GTP) together with a Review of Existing GTP

All this material has been made available in written form and on the planning website to enhance availability and consultative processes.

The proposal relates to the construction of a large academic building in the eastern part of the campus. This would take the form of a long, sinuous block built along the contour of the site in parallel with a second, shorter block further down the site. The building is arranged as two linear teaching blocks around an internal street and courtyard. There would be a link at lower ground level with the Health Faculty on its western edge. Two towers will define each end of the blocks and a third tower defines the transition half way along the development between the covered atrium and the external learning space. This new development is to accommodate the Schools of Life Science, Pharmacy, Computing, Engineering, Art and Architecture and the Built Environment. The building is developed around an internal courtyard space and the footprint of the building would be 60 metres at its widest.

The tower on the western edge will comprise a library and learning building, essentially a high round tower which will rise above the surrounding woodland and buildings to define the development in the wider landscape by the provision of 3 floors of accommodation in a high, naturally lit environment above the overall level of the main building. The situation of this iconic structure as a focal point for the campus relates to the location of a natural south facing fold in the riverside embankment which also corresponds to a glade in the woodland cover along the river's edge. This then offers an opportunity for the new building to benefit from the sheltered, sunny south facing aspect with an open outlook across the landscape. The main block would provide up to 6 floors of accommodation, with basement floors below the level of the main entrance and built into the slope. The lower levels of the library tower are also located at the hub which interlinks between the main entrance, the connection with the Health Faculty and the atrium within the main teaching blocks.

To explain the relative heights of each part of the development is difficult and does not easily represent the degree to which this large and extensive building is tied in with the changing contours of this site which both slopes significantly north to south and towards the east. However, in absolute terms the building will measure 240 metres in total length and have a maximum height above ground level along the north elevation of 18.5 metres adjacent to the main entrance. This relative height increases to 23.5 metres at the eastern end of Phase 1. The learning tower rises above the roof level of the main building and represents the highest point of the new development at 39.0 metres in height measured from the main entrance level. For comparison this will be 19.0 metres higher than the top of the existing Health and Social Care building directly to the west. Along the southern elevation the main building, which incorporates underbuilding, will be 23.0 metres in height above ground level. These bare measurements it is emphasised do not take account of the sinuous nature of the building or the varying land contours. It is also useful to note that, at Committee, a model will on display to more clearly illustrate the relationship of the proposal to existing buildings, to the landforms existing within the site and within the wider landscape.

The applicants also indicate that the development may progress through a number of phases though this current application is being dealt with on the basis of one large building operation and the maximum resultant final floorspace and scale of the full programme of works has been taken into account. The intended stages Phase 1/1A are to provide 20,287 square metres of floorspace which it is intended to construct by 2012. The Phase 1A stage specifically involves accommodation for the School of Computing. Phase 2 is to provide an additional 13,749 square metres to be constructed by 2015 and will accommodate the relocated School of Art, School of Architecture and Built Environment and the university administration hub. This will complete the new build development.

Whilst the design and layout of the building is being considered as one entity the relevance of the phases is more important in relation to traffic issues, which will be elaborated in the Evaluation, the critical point being that it is anticipated that the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will be open by late 2012 and therefore by 2015 when all the academic and administrative functions of RGU have been relocated from Schoolhill to Garthdee the traffic patterns associated with the AWPR require to be taken into account.

To the north of the new building the Health Centre will be retained and new parking facilities accommodating some 1050 spaces will be located in three large bays defined by existing tree belts. The extreme eastern part of the site will remain undeveloped though will contain a large SUDS pond integrated within new landscaping. The building takes maximum advantage of the views and amenity of the riverside situation.

The existing access into the site from Garthdee Road will remain but will be altered to provide a one-way system long the rear of the School of Health and Social Care, the Sports Centre and the Business School to exit by the existing point further west along Garthdee Road. A new public plaza space is to be located beside the existing Health and Social Care building and this will redefine and accentuate the main public entrance to the campus and the entrance into the new academic facility. This will be reinforced by the dominant height of the learning tower directly to the south which will act as a visual marker and a gateway feature.

The total accommodation amounts to 35,000 square metres of floorspace within a development site of 6.0 hectares and the total area of the RGU Garthdee Campus, including the developed areas as well as the site of this application totals 23.0 hectares. The undeveloped area of the former caravan park extends to some 3.6 hectares.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE
A development of this scale clearly constitutes a major development as well as having required public advertisement and attracting 56 letters of objection. It therefore requires to be determined by the elected members of this Committee.

CONSULTATIONS
ROADS SECTION – Do not object to proposal though do raise a number of concerns which will require to be covered by conditions and a legal agreement. The consultation response is annexed to this report for ease of reference.
SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE- required a detailed analysis of potential effect of site works on the adjacent River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and advise on appropriate conditions for site operations.
SEPA – No objection though new access road will require drainage connection to surface water treatment system. No flood risk to site immediately apparent.
SCOTTISH WATER – Do not object to application. Developer will require to submit a Development Impact Assessment regarding supply of water to site. A separate drainage system will be required with surface water discharge through SUDS measures.
KEEPER of ARCHAEOLOGY – A scheme of archaeological investigation will be required.
GARTHDEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL – No response received

REPRESENTATIONS
56 letters of objection and one letter of support have been received. All letters highlight roads, traffic and parking consequences for a development of this scale and nature as by far and away their main objection. The main points made are:

- The additional strain on an already inadequate local road infrastructure
- Pedestrian numbers along local roads will increase with greater student numbers leading to greater likelihood of individuals being injured as there are no footpaths along some roads in Pitfodels.
- A minimum requirement for this development should be that RGU contribute or provide a new link road from Garthdee to North Deeside Road across the allotments area.
- 1040 new parking spaces are not enough for a development of this scale.
- The traffic impact of proposal on local roads through the Pitfodels area, which suffers from high traffic volumes, has not been addressed adequately.
- The increased traffic through Den of Cults area will adversely affect residential amenity.
- Any increased parking restrictions in Garthdee as a result of this development would be unfair to local residents.

The one letter of support suggests that the developer should upgrade the currently incomplete footpath along the south side of Garthdee Road and ensure adequate control over site servicing and works to prevent disturbance of local residents by early morning traffic.

PLANNING POLICY

In the Aberdeen Local Plan, adopted in June 2008 the whole RGU Garthdee Campus site, including the area of this planning application is identified by Policy CF45 as Existing Community Sites and Facilities where proposals for new or extended uses of these types will, in principle, be permitted if consistent with other local plan policies. Large sites or sites in sensitive locations will be subject to a Planning Brief.

A linear part of the site along the northern river embankment is within designated Green Belt and protected by Policy GB28 though this part of the site is not subject to development works.

Other relevant local plan policies include:

Policy 1: Design and Policy 2: Landscape Design, these policies are closely related in consideration of this application within a sensitive site adjacent to the River Dee and containing extensive woodland. High standards of building design as well as close integration into the landscape are expected and for a scheme of this scale as Design Statement should comprise part of the application material and the use of a planning and/or Design Brief is advocated.

Policy 16: Archaeology and Planning reflects the pre-historic importance of the banks of the River Dee for early settlement.

Policy 23: Eco Development, where a development of this scale will require to incorporate sustainable and energy efficient technologies.

Policy 24: Planning and Flooding, regarding the control of surface water drainage from the site particularly with regard to water quality in the adjacent River Dee.

Policy 33: Protecting Trees and Woodlands where there is a presumption against development that will result in loss or damage to established trees and woodlands.

Policy 34; Natural Heritage, where any affect on wildlife in the adjacent River Dee SAC requires to be assessed and suitable remediation measures put in place in the course of the development.

In a development of this scale and nature there are a number of Transport policies which require to be considered, including
Policy 72: Use of Appropriate Transport Modes where access to a site by means other than the private car is to be encouraged through, for example, Green Transport Plans.
Policy 73a: Vehicular Access to New Developments where any adverse impacts will require mitigation
Policy 74: Pedestrian and Public Transport Access to Development
Policy 75: Transport Provision within Developments where adequate parking provision must be provided and internal use by pedestrians and cyclist encouraged and designed for.
Policy 77: Green Transport plans to include targets for minimization of travel and a reduction in reliance on private car trips. Such plans may be secured by condition or legal agreement.
Policy 78: Transport Assessments which should accompany all major applications.

Policy 82: Masterplans, which will be required for large scale sites where it is considered appropriate.

Policy 83: Developer Contributions, where developers are required to take steps to mitigate the costs arising from additional infrastructure as a result of their development, normally facilitated through a legal agreement.

MASTERPLANNING AND PRE-APPLICATION PUBLIC CONSULTATION

With an application of this scale, identified as a Major application in recent planning regulations, a process of pre-application consultation is required and has been undertaken. An earlier Proposal of Application Notice, Ref 090761, was submitted to establish the criteria for pre-application consultation with the community. At that time the applicants undertook a series of meetings with the local population and this is explained in their report of Pre-application Consultation which constitutes part of this application.

Also in parallel, and included in the pre-application round of consultation, was the preparation of a Masterplan for the site and this development. This Masterplan, known as the Garthdee Development Framework was reported to the Planning Committee on 18 June where it is was agreed as forming the basis for a detailed application for the development of a further phase of the RGU Garthdee Campus, now contained in this current application. The proposed development which now comprises this application has not changed significantly from that shown in the Development Framework.

As an integral aspect of the pre-application consultation an Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion confirmed that this planning authority did not require the submission of a full Environmental Impact Assessment relative to the submission of this planning application though a series of detailed studies would be necessary, for example, Tree Survey, Ecological Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment etc.

EVALUATION

Development plan

The application requires to be assessed against the development plan, the relevant Masterplan and other material considerations. The scope of this proposal complies with the local plan allocation of the site for community facilities which includes higher education provision and there is no direct tension with the provisions of the development plan in this context. The site is clearly allocated by Policy CF45 as Existing Community Sites and Facilities. In terms of this policy a Masterplan, equivalent to the required Planning Brief, and reconciliation with other policies have been the main components of consideration of this application. The development area is situated a minimum 50 metres from the waters edge and no works on the Green Belt strip along the banks of the River Dee is envisaged.

Masterplan

This was approved by the Committee at their meeting on 18 June 2009 and the current proposals closely follow the provision of the agreed Masterplan. In developing this Development Framework the applicants undertook consultation with the local community, public exhibitions of the design proposals have been on display and these events, in May and October 2009, have been publicised and held locally with senior staff on hand to respond to queries. Feedback from these events informed the final design and particular regard was paid to the value put on the Campus being open and accessible to the wider community. The main issue identified related to car parking and traffic with some concern about the potential loss of the Gray's School of Art building. Though referred to in the Development Framework, this is not part of this current application.

Landscape setting
A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken relative to this proposal to establish the degree to which the development will affect the wider landscape. From the landscape character assessment of Aberdeen undertaken by SNH the setting is categorised as within the River Dee Landscape Area, being on the northern wooded slopes of a major river. This is an important landscape in the context of the wider landscape setting of Aberdeen city.

In visual terms the new building will be more apparent, particularly the library tower which will rise above the level of adjacent buildings and woodland. Generally the new building will be viewed as an extension to the existing campus though the development of the eastern end of the site will be particularly apparent until new planting matures.

The initial development and loss of trees will be readily apparent from view from points on the south side of the river and from Garthdee Road though, with extensive planting, the initial raw nature of the new development will quickly mature. Whilst the main visual effect is from south of the river along South Deeside Road it is also recognised that a virtue is to be made of the learning tower. This tower is purposely designed to rise above the height of the adjacent buildings and woodland and function as a visual marker, a keynote feature, in the area and thus identify and define the RGU campus whose buildings will be distinctive and considered a beneficial addition to the landscape.

There will be an impact on the main approach to the city from south on the A90, Stonehaven Road, and the new development will feature as a long relatively low building set on the north bank of the River Dee. The tower will act, intentionally, as a marker in the landscape and will become a feature in the landscape. The landscape effect will be mitigated by the new planting proposed which will use planting stock chosen to produce immediate improvement. The land form naturally rises continuously from the Dee towards the Countesswells area and the physical bulk of the new development will remain below this rising skyline when viewed from the A90.

Trees
The development area is situated between two important areas of trees and woodland. There is mature high quality mixed woodland along the river's edge to the south of the new building and to the north there are remnants of the mature deciduous field boundary planting, largely high beech hedges. There is also lesser quality tree planting within the site which will be replaced to facilitate development and a shelter belt of particularly poor trees in the eastern corner of the area.

A tree survey and tree quality assessment has been submitted and makes recommendations with regard to those trees requiring removal for health reasons and trees of high and intermediate quality which contribute to the landscape setting of the site. The main characteristics of the area are the remnants of the mature beech avenues and their role in visually sub-dividing the site. Having been derived from overgrown beech hedges their dense planting that has restricted individual growth. There are also ornamental tree groups within the site largely based on Norway Maple. The third important tree grouping comprises the degenerated shelter belt along the top of the river embankment in the eastern corner. This largely comprises logepole pine with larch and is of low value.

In total there are 18 high quality trees within the development site and their retention is desirable. In addition 167 moderate quality trees provide a significant contribution, predominantly in the beech avenues. The largest category (349 trees) comprises trees of low though adequate quality which can be retained for their screening value. The final category

contains 276 trees, a large number of which are in the shelter belt. These trees should be removed to allow the retention of the relatively few moderate or higher quality trees within the groups.

Large parts of the shelterbelt are now in extremely poor condition or dead and require urgent management. Within the beech hedges there are good quality trees mixed with suppressed lower quality specimens which also require removal. 186 trees should be immediately felled on safety grounds and a further 90 to be removed within the following 10 years. This period of longer term management is to allow replacement trees to become established prior to the removal of the poorer specimens.

Within the footprint of the new building there is no avoiding the fact that a significant length of Beech Avenue and other woodland trees will require removal to allow the building work. In total some 120 trees will be lost, mostly from two large centrally located groups. However, a significant replacement planting scheme is proposed and whilst the immediate loss of existing trees will be noticeable, by the use of established replacement plants it will only require a short period of time before the new planting becomes apparent and adopts a role as functional replacement.

All the trees and tree groups which are to be retained will require robust protection from damage during construction works and there are a number of conditions advised, including a requirement for supervision of works adjacent to the trees. One particular aspect of the work which will require close scrutiny is the formation of car parking within the tree belts and it is important that root protection areas are established early in the construction phase. A Tree Constraints Plan should therefore be prepared to ensure that adequate protection measures can be implemented to protect those trees that are being retained and inform the preparation of the Tree Protection Plan and the Arboricultural Method Statement which are covered by planning condition. A specific condition is also advised regarding excavation works or ground preparation near tree roots where ’no dig’ methods should be used.

During Phase 2 of the development it is intended to alter the existing car parks adjacent to the Management School by removing some trees and shrubs within the internal margins of the car parking area. There will be slight increase in parking provision in these new areas and more robust planting will be undertaken to reinforce the edges of the woodland.

In summary 47% (382 trees) of the total 814 trees that have been surveyed are recommended for removal as part of the implementation of this proposed development. This includes those trees that have been highlighted within the tree condition survey that are required to be removed for reasons of safety, tree condition and as part of the long term management of the trees and woodlands on the campus. The 47% also includes 16% of the total trees surveyed that are to be removed as a direct result of the development proposals. In mitigation it is noted that many of the trees scheduled for removal are poor specimens and their removal will enable the surviving higher quality stock to thrive. An extensive programme of replacement planting is also proposed and use of mature stock will be made to ensure healthy planting which will result in a high quality landscaped site within a short time period following the unavoidable raw nature of the works during and for a short period following construction.

Replacement planting includes native woodland transplants at a density of 1 per square metre along the central and eastern boundaries, planting of native woodland transplants of alder, willow and birch to form carr planting as part of the SUDS scheme in the east of the site, semi-mature planting using rootballed or container grown species, primarily pear, in the orchard adjacent to the plaza, ,lime in the car park and areas off the plaza and birch in the courtyard

and the eastern corner of the site. Beech hedging is also to be planting around the edge of the car park using double row bare root transplants protected by rabbit proof fencing.

Landscaping
The riverside setting and outlook from the building is recognised and is to be a major feature of the development. External spaces of high quality are to be created in conjunction with an extension to and improvement of the pedestrian and cycling networks and connections through the site and to the river. The areas of high quality woodland will be retained and, as an example, the visual amenity of the car park will benefit from its setting between the retained beech hedges. The comprehensive landscaping works which are integral with the development also offer opportunity for habitat enhancement. This will also be achieved through the use of SUDS measures to form wetland habitats in and around the surface water drainage basin.

Four existing landscape elements are recognised and will be retained and enhanced as far as practicable. These elements are:

- The Garthdee Estate woodland
- Riparian woodland
- Beech avenues, related to former agricultural filed patterns
- Mixed woodland areas within site.

Existing specimen trees are kept and the river edge planting will not be disturbed. Whilst a significant number of trees within the site require removal to enable the development the context of the beech avenues and screening woodland within the site will be retained. New planting will replace trees lost in appropriate locations and will comprise semi-mature, largely native, planting for an immediate effect.

The distinctive design and layout of the buildings and the site has been based on sustainability principles. There will be well located, usable and inviting outdoor spaces and a clearly, defined entrance to and linkage between new and existing buildings. A key element is to focus on the main entrance and frontage with improvements to a reconstructed boundary wall, a new feature wall in granite at the main access point into the site and a new pedestrian entrance are which will be surfaced in granite slabs and setts, together with seating, to connect with the entrance plaza for the new building. Directly to the east of this feature a new lawn and orchard garden will be formed.

The internal courtyard will also benefit from appropriate indoor planting to soften the boundary between indoor and outdoor spaces.

The new car parking areas in the eastern area would fit in well to the established mature woodland and will be supplemented by new planting along the internal margins and the central aisles.

New planting will be based on local progeny using native (and semi-native) species whose flowering and fruiting will support wildlife. The SUDS pond will also support wetland species and, together with the use of durable materials and tree protection measures will result in a sustainable development and environment.

Along the south of the building impact will be minimised and the character of the river's edge retained. Low retaining walls adjacent to the building will provide outside seating in this sheltered south-facing area and there will be a 4.0 metres wide path along the outer edge of the building which will connect with a new flight of steps down to the river edge walkway.

Access to the site and buildings is well integrated to improved circulation in the wider campus.

All front door access points will be DDA compliant (Disability Discrimination Act). The east-west access road will provide improved cycling facilities and link with the Core Path network. This network will be enhanced by improved access through the site with links to the riverside path. The footway improvements along the south verge of Garthdee Road will also add to the footpath improvements through and around the site.

In overall terms the landscaping scheme complements the new buildings and includes improvements to the site frontage, the provision of a new plaza entrance adjacent to a lawn and orchard woodland. The impact of the building is minimised by retention of mature woodland and tree belts and the car parks will be contained within beech avenues. The provision of the SUDS area will provide wetland habitat. The combination of all these landscape measures will result in a varied, rich and sustainable environment within the site which will complement the undisturbed river edge.

Drainage and flooding
An assessment of potential flood risk at Garthdee was undertaken in January 2005. The worst recorded flood levels were some 6.500 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and it is considered that the 1 in 200 year flood level should be taken as 6.850 AOD. Allowing for freeboard the minimum level for development is reckoned to be 7.450 metres AOD. The lowest floor level in the proposed development is 17.760 metres AOD therefore flood risk is not an issue. The north bank of the Dee is steep and the river typically flows at a level of 4.000 metres AOD, as the development site is at 17.00 metres AOD or higher the building is raised well above the potential flood level.

Drainage is largely to separate systems. A sustainable drainage system is to be implemented and a SUDS scheme will allow surface water to discharge, following appropriate treatment, to the Dee. Water from roads and car parks will require two stages of filtration whilst surface water from rooftops can be discharged after one stage of treatment. An area to the east of the site shows evidence of limited contamination and surface drainage from this area will be to the foul sewer.

The SUDS pond adjacent to the eastern side of the building will be incorporated as a feature in the site landscaping and will also provide attenuation of the surface water during storm conditions. A temporary SUDS system will also be in place prior to commencement of construction works and will allow temporary filtration of surface water. This is also related to the requirement to maintain high water quality in the adjacent Dee and is covered by condition regarding the Construction Method Statement.

Assessment of Impact on SAC
The work which the applicants have undertaken constitutes an appropriate assessment of the potential impact of the development on the River Dee.

Following initial consultation Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) advised that the proposal was likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interests of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The release of silt during demolition and construction works could have negative impacts to both freshwater pearl mussel and Atlantic salmon. Light installations can disrupt the behaviour of salmon and the site is adjacent to one of the major holding pools in the Dee. Any effect on otters is not considered significant particularly as site work is located a minimum 50 metres from the waters edge. SNH specified a number of conditions requiring a rigorous Construction Method Statement, the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works and suitable control over site lighting and any works nearer the river. These conditions are included and, if not adopted by the planning authority, will require the application to be forwarded to the Scottish Ministers as, in the absence of these conditions, SNH object to the application.

In addition to their initial Environmental Assessment report the applicants have undertaken further work on specific items identified by SNH including more work on potential bat roosts in the area. The developers have agreed to undertake additional bat surveys prior to commencement of works to identify whether key buildings contain bat roosts and to establish a management approach to site works through the requirements of a Bat Licence rather than planning condition. Additional controls were also advised regarding the planting of indigenous tree species in the landscaping works and a pre-construction survey and mitigation plan for badgers and specific conditions have also been applied.

Bats use older trees with holes and cavities i.e. the ones more likely to be removed. However, no bat roosts were located in those trees to be felled within the site. The river and the woodland along its northern bank are important for bats foraging, commuting and probably roosting and this area is outwith the development site. Planting of new trees to replace those lost to development will help to replace bat foraging habitat that will be lost. On completion of the development wildlife interest within the site will be improved by provision of nesting and roosting bird and bat boxes on buildings and trees.

The assessment of the impact of the development on the SAC has confirmed that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC and that there will be no cumulative or residual impacts. The developers have identified a package of mitigation measures which will include a programme of pre-construction familiarisation leading to the preparation of a contactor's constraints plan. The details contained within the required Construction Method Statement will be subject to planning condition part of which will comprise an Environmental Management Plan which in turn will be linked to on-site monitoring and control through the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works

Archaeology
A planning condition requiring a scheme of investigation is advised for this development as it is located on the slopes of the River Dee which has, relative to other development, furnished evidence of early settlement. The condition is to ensure that any surviving archaeological remains in this potentially sensitive site are recorded.

Design and Materials
The design and layout of the proposal is derived from the principles set out and agreed in the Masterplan. The main building is a linear development along the site and having the same roof height as the existing adjacent Health and Social Care building. The elongated nature of the main building is punctuated by entrance features, access towers and, on the north-east corner, the art drum. The equivalent feature on the south-west corner is the library tower. This is circular in floor plan and rises three floors above the adjacent building. This tower provides the main focus for the development and will provide 7 floors of accommodation with 5 main levels, a double height ground floor, basement and roof mounted plant.

Running beneath the south-west corner of the development and built into the natural slope of the site, will be a link corridor to the Health and Social Care building. The main structure takes the form of two parallel buildings on a curving floorplan to emulate the meander of the nearby river, linked by a full height glazed atrium. The atrium has a shallow curved glazed roof whilst the buildings on either side will have shallow pitched aluminium standing seam roofs.

The site slopes gradually towards the east and, though the roof level remains uniform the building comprises 6 main floors at its eastern extremity whilst the western end accommodates 4 floors with basement levels built into the southwards falling slope.

The materials vary from the main wall finished in matt silver composite cladding with a basecourse in granite to use of copper cladding along with glass curtain walling in the teaching, arts and library towers, elements of timber cladding and the use of aluminium framed double glazing. These materials will impart a fresh light finish to the structure and will be similar to the finishes already employed in the adjacent modern buildings on the campus.

Roads, Traffic and Parking

The parking strategy for the Garthdee Campus is detailed in the Transport Assessment submitted along with this application. The approach is to strike a balance between provision of maximum parking and seeking to discourage unnecessary car journeys to the campus and address environmental sustainability. 340 new car parking spaces are to be provided on site though the parking guidelines in Scottish Planning Policy indicate that the maximum permissible level is 396 spaces. Though the parking provision on site will be lower than the maximum permissible it has to be viewed in combination with a revised Green Travel Plan and an extension to the time period within the Garthdee Controlled Parking Zone. The level of parking to be provided on site is considered to an optimum in regard to these factors.

The expanded campus is expected to accommodate an additional 2,810 full time equivalent students in Phase 1 and in Phase 2 an additional 418 staff will be located at Garthdee. The development includes new parking areas and a one-way traffic system connecting the existing buildings with the new development. The campus currently has 710 car parking spaces managed by permit and RGU assist the City Council in relation to a Controlled Parking Zone (CDZ) in the adjacent residential area. An additional 340 spaces are proposed on site (235 in Phase 1 and 105 in Phase 2). This will result in a total of 1050 car parking spaces on site with 58 retained specifically for the Health Centre and 14 for the Nursery (which is to be relocated) The university is keen to reduce parking demand in adjacent streets by provision of additional on-site parking. This will also benefit the intended marketing of the Garthdee Campus as a conference and event location.

One advantage of this development is that it will eliminate inter campus trips between Schoolhill and Garthdee by staff and students and the existing Green Travel Plan will be consolidated into a new Travel Plan to encourage alternative means of transport and to reduce the volume of car use.

Whilst the Roads Engineer in his detailed consultation response (included as part of this report) has not registered objection to the proposal a number of concerns have been raised. One issue relates to the level of parking provision on site as, if parking were readily available, this could act as a disincentive for use of green travel alternatives and a condition requiring this issue to be monitored is advised and included. There are also reservations regarding the proposed one-way system through the main part of the campus with particular concerns about the exit on to Garthdee Road. A condition has therefore been added regarding the future monitoring of this exit point adjacent to the School of Management with the proviso that, if the annual review process identifies the need for traffic light controls at this point within 5 years of the opening of the new development, then RGU will require to fund this facility. Similarly, a traffic order will be necessary to implement the one way operation at this exit point and the costs involved in the administration of this require to be borne by the applicant.

In planning terms it is felt that the setting of the main entrance to the new building benefits from the removal of the existing bus turning area which presents a large area of road surface adjacent to the entry point for the expanded campus. In removing this feature a much more welcoming and attractively landscaped entrance plaza is to be formed which is considered a visual benefit to the setting of the development. The applicants have agreed to undertake a

review of the traffic calming within their site and will install appropriate measures to control vehicle speeds on this main route through the campus. A condition has been applied regarding this detail.

The traffic impact of the development has been analysed and indicates that the junctions on the local road network will operate within capacity. The second phase of the development could have implications for traffic flows but the analysis does not take account of the AWPR which is anticipated to reduce commuter traffic flows along Garthdee Road with the net result that on completion of the development in 2015 the level of delay along this corridor will be similar to that currently experienced. It should also be noted that the implementation of a robust Green Travel Plan will also reduce traffic levels though this has not been taken into account in the traffic impact.

The pedestrian access point to the campus is from Garthdee Road and to address the road safety implications associated with the increase in use from the new development a controlled pedestrian crossing is advised at a location to the west of Craigievar Road. As part of the off-site mitigation works related to the impact of their development, RGU have agreed to fund the provision of a pedestrian crossing adjacent to this main access into the site. The specific design of this crossing and its relation to the existing traffic light controlled junction on Garthdee Road requires to be finalised and a suspensive condition is advised.

Similarly, there is not a continuous footway along the site frontage on the south side of Garthdee Road. It would be a major advantage if such a footway could be provided to link up with the bus stops located along this length of road and would form part of the public realm network in relation to the development. RGU have agreed to fund these works and a suspensive condition is also advised regarding this detail. This path will function as a valuable addition to the Core Path network serving the site and local community.

Green Transport Initiative
RGU has implemented a Green Travel Plan since 1999 with the aim to give staff and students a wider choice of travel modes to and from the Garthdee site and to effectively manage and reduce the use of the private car. Monitoring results indicate that there has been a 16% reduction in students travelling to Garthdee by car and a reduction of 8% of staff travel by car. Car parking charges were introduced in 2002 as part of a car park management scheme. Over the same period there has been an increase in the percentage of students travelling by bus, from 36% in 1999 to 49% in 2008. A shuttle bus was originally used but this was superseded in 2004 by a commercial service (Number 9) operated by First Aberdeen and services 1 and 2 are routed along Garthdee Road. There have also been initiatives to promote green travel including facilities for cycle use, encouragement of walking and raising the awareness of travel alternatives.

The revised GTP refers to the upgrading of bus stops along the south side of Garthdee Road and this is covered by condition. This draft plan does not currently include a full range of future mode share targets, a monitoring regime, provision for a review of GTP performance or a fully committed profile of implementation of sustainable travel measures. As RGU currently employ a Travel Co-ordinator who administers the existing GTP it is well placed to take forward the delivery, promotion and implementation of the revised Travel Plan. A legal agreement is advised to covers aspects such as mode share targets, monitoring regime, programme of implementation and a review process.

Sustainability
The buildings have been positioned to minimise energy consumption and use passive environmental strategies to advantage. This will include the use of exposed concrete for

thermal mass, a high degree of thermal insulation, façade engineering to maximise daylight but control solar gain, the use of natural ventilation and air-tight buildings. The floor plans are relatively narrow depth with a classroom depth of 7.5 metres which allows natural ventilation and light penetration. The low energy design makes use of the natural environment using passive energy solutions and energy efficient plant. The main building is to utilise ground source heating, ventilation will use openable windows with anti-sun glazing which reflects excessive solar gain. The structure is designed to facilitate natural ventilation up through the building with heat recovery prior to discharge of the air.

These measures in combination will drastically reduce the carbon emissions of the new buildings compared to a fully air-conditioned development of a similar scale. Experience has shown with other developments that an air conditioned building which utilises 15% Low and Zero Carbon technologies would still emit 50% more carbon emissions than a purpose designed sustainable building, such as this proposal, without any LZC technologies. It is estimated that the heating and ventilation techniques to be adopted in this development will achieve a minimum of 16% of the energy demand of the building. Current policies require a 15% reduction therefore this target is exceeded and will comply with the policy requirements as set out in PAN84. It is expected that the sustainability of the development as a whole will be very good. Particular conditions are advised to support the sustainable initiatives demonstrated in this proposal.

Legal Agreement
A legal agreement under the terms of Section 75 of the planning Acts is advised as the most appropriate mechanism to inform the performance of the revised Green Travel Plan with regard to setting targets, monitoring and review of various initiatives and likely funding packages to aid the delivery of a meaningful modal shift in the utilisation of the transport network with an emphasis on public transport facilities. The financial aspects of provision of the required pedestrian crossing on Garthdee Road with particular reference to future maintenance should also be included in the legal agreement.

CONCLUSION
The emphasis of this project has been to create a modern learning environment that mixes educational provision with public amenities resulting in an attractive location for students, staff, the local community and visitors. This is a development incorporating the highest quality of building design and landscape integration together with a sustainable approach to the use of the site and buildings. The traffic impacts of the development have been assessed and are acceptable subject to appropriate conditions and Green Travel Plan targets tied in to a legal agreement. Subject to these and other conditions as detailed this development for enhanced educational facilities at Garthdee along with the applicants overall approach to their submission is strongly supported and recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION
Approve with Legal Agreement

with the following condition(s):

(1) that no development shall take place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work which shall include post-excavation and publication work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority - in the interests of protecting items of historical importance as may exist within the application site.

(2) that no development shall take place unless a scheme of all drainage works designed to meet the requirements of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and thereafter no part of the development shall be occupied unless the drainage has been installed in complete accordance with the said scheme - in order to safeguard water qualities in adjacent watercourses and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained.

(3) that the development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the car parking areas hereby granted planning permission have been constructed, drained, laid-out and demarcated in accordance with drawing Nos. 7155_631/01A, 02A and 03A of the plans hereby approved or such other drawing as may subsequently be submitted and approved in writing by the planning authority. Such areas shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose other than the purpose of the parking of cars ancillary to the development and use thereby granted approval - in the interests of public safety and the free flow of traffic.

(4) that no development shall take place unless a plan showing those trees to be removed and those to be retained and a scheme for the protection of all trees to be retained on the site during construction works has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority and any such scheme as may have been approved has been implemented -
in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development.

(5) that any tree work which appears to become necessary during the implementation of the development shall not be undertaken without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority; any damage caused to trees growing on the site shall be remedied in accordance with British Standard 3998: 1989 "Recommendation for Tree Works" before the building hereby approved is first occupied - in order to preserve the character and visual amenity of the area.

(6) that no materials, supplies, plant, machinery, spoil, changes in ground levels or construction activities shall be permitted within the protected areas specified in the aforementioned scheme of tree protection without the written consent of the Planning Authority and no fire shall be lit in a position where the flames could extend to within 5 metres of foliage, branches or trunks - in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development.

(7) that, except as the Planning Authority may otherwise agree in writing,
no construction or demolition work shall take place:
(a) outwith the hours of 7.00 am to 7.00 pm Mondays to Fridays;
(b) outwith the hours of 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturdays; or
(c) at any time on Sundays,
except (on all days) for works inaudible outwith the application site boundary. [For the avoidance of doubt, this would generally allow internal finishing work, but not the use of machinery] - in the interests of residential amenity.

(8) That no development pursuant to this planning permission shall commence unless a detailed site specific Construction Method Statement for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The method statement must incorporate the principles as contained in the draft statement submitted as part of the Environmental Supporting Information relative to this application. The agreed Method Statement should take into account SEPA's Pollution Prevention guidelines and all works on site shall thereafter be implemented and remain in full for the duration of works on the site in strict accordance with the Construction Method Statement as agreed unless the planning authority has given written

consent for a variation - in order to prevent potential water pollution and to maintain the integrity of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation.

(9) that no development pursuant to the planning permission hereby approved shall be carried out unless there has been submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority a further detailed scheme of landscaping and hard landscaping for the site, which scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and landscaped areas on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development, and the proposed areas of tree/shrub planting including details of numbers, densities, locations, species, sizes and stage of maturity at planting - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(10) that all planting, seeding, turfing and hard landscaping comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a size and species similar to those originally required to be planted, or in accordance with such other scheme as may be submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(11) Proposals for any lighting to be located between the main construction zone (which for the avoidance of doubt is defined as being a minimum 50 metres distance from the water's edge) and the River Dee shall require the formal approval of Aberdeen City Council (in consultation with SNH) prior to implementation - in the interests of the integrity and to minimise disturbance to wildlife within the river Dee SAC.

(12) Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority, prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant shall appoint an independent full-time Ecological Clerk(s) of works (ECoW) acceptable to Aberdeen City Council. The terms of the appointment shall be submitted for the approval of the Council. The Ecological Clerks of works shall have the authority on and off-site to halt operations or to alter construction methods should day-to-day observation, monitoring or other means identify that these operations are having adverse impacts on the natural heritage. An emergency procedure for site workers to follow should be put in place if bats, otters or badgers are found during the course of works - in the interests of protection of wildlife and the integrity of the river Dee SAC.

(13) unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority, in the event that any works are proposed within 10 metres of the riverbank, such works as are necessary will not be carried out within 2 hours of sunset or sunrise and at any time during the night to avoid disturbance to otters - in order to minimise disturbance to wildlife and to maintain the integrity of the river Dee SAC.

(14) Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority, throughout the duration of all site preparation and construction works the following precautionary measures are recommended and must be adhered to: -

- All stored or trench pipes with a diameter greater than 200mm. should be capped at the end of each working day.
- open trenches or pits of a depth greater that 1 metre should have escape ramps provided and must be checked at the beginning of each day for potential entrapments.
- Any subsequent action involving a trapped badger should be referred to a local badger expert

reason - in view of badger activity in the wider area and to ensure that risks to local wildlife are minimised during site construction operations.

(15) That no development in connection with the permission hereby approved shall take place unless a Finalised Energy Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority, including the following items:
1. full details of the proposed energy efficiency measures and/or renewable technologies to be incorporated into the development
2. Calculations using the SAP or SBEM methods, which demonstrate that the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions rates for the development, rising from the measures proposed, will enable the development to comply with the Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance on Carbon Neutrality in New Development. (in this case a reduction in the predicted carbon dioxide emissions by 15% beyond the 2007 Building Regulations Carbon Dioxide Emissions Standard)
The development shall not be occupied unless it has been carried out in accordance with the approved details in the Energy Statement. The carbon reduction measures shall be retained in place and fully operational thereafter.
reason - to ensure this development complies with the on-site carbon reductions required in Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - Carbon Neutrality in New Developments.

(16) that prior to the commencement of any work related to the implementation of this consent the developer shall submit and have agreed in writing by the planning authority a Method Statement relating to contractors access to the site which shall avoid as far as is practicable the use of any highway or access road through an existing residential area. No construction vehicle shall subsequently access the site other than by the route hereby agreed which shall be implemented for the duration of works unless otherwise as agreed in writing with the planning authority – in the interests of residential amenity.

(17) No development shall take place unless there has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the planning authority
(i) a scheme for the supervision of the arboricultural protection measures and works to include the time and method of site supervision, record keeping including updates and that this supervision is administered by a qualified arboriculturalist approved by the planning authority but instructed by the applicant.
(ii) a plan and report illustrating appropriate management proposals for the care and maintenance of all of the trees to be retained and any new areas of planting (to include timing of works and inspections) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority.
The proposals and scheme of supervision shall subsequently be carried out in complete accordance any information thereby approved in writing by the planning authority and development shall not be carried out unless the approved scheme of supervision is being complied with. – in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development and in order to preserve the character and visual amenity of the area.

(18) that no part of the development shall take place until this planning authority has approved in writing a method statement for the construction of the car parking close to trees. This Method Statement will follow the principles as described in the Tree Advice Trust’s Arboricultural Practice Note Number 12 :’Through the Trees to Development’ and shall utilise, as far as is practicable, a no dig method of construction. – in the interests of the health of the trees to be retained within the site.

(19) Prior to the commencement of work on site the applicants shall have prepared and have formally agreed with the local planning authority a Tree Constraints Plan which shall include all information relating to the implementation of a Tree Protection Plan as required by condition 17 all of which measures shall be in place prior to and throughout the duration of the development. All agreed measures shall be incorporated into an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and all works shall thereafter be carried out in full compliance with the recommendations and provisions of the agreed AMS – in the interest of the long term health of the trees on site.

(20) That, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the planning authority, prior to occupation of any part of the development hereby approved the footway along the south side of Garthdee Road adjacent to the site (which for the avoidance of doubt shall include the whole of the Garthdee Road frontage of the RGU Campus) shall be upgraded to the formal requirements of the local planning authority. In conjunction with the above works and prior to the opening of the development as hereby approved the bus stops along the south side of Garthdee Road will be upgraded to include bus shelters and real time passenger information unless the planning authority has given written consent for a variation – in the interests of pedestrian safety.

(21) That, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority, prior to the occupation of any part of the development hereby approved a controlled pedestrian crossing facility shall be provided at a allocation to the west of the existing outbound stop on Garthdee Road west of Craigievar Road. The exact location of this crossing together with a full technical specification of the works involved, which may include alteration to existing site boundary wall, and the requirements for future maintenance, will require to be agreed and formally accepted by the local planning authority prior to implementation of the works unless the planning authority has given written consent for a variation – in the interests of the safety of all road users.

(22) That the development hereby granted planning permission shall be not be occupied unless a scheme detailing cycle storage provision has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the planning authority, and thereafter implemented in full accordance with said scheme - in the interests of encouraging more sustainable modes of travel.

(23) That on full implementation of the car parking provision as shown on the approved development layout the site operators shall prepare and have agreed with the local planning authority a revised Parking Monitoring Policy the recommendations of which shall be applied to agreed Green Travel Plan for the campus – to ensure the efficient operation of on-site parking provision.

(24) that prior to completion of the development hereby approved the developers shall prepare a scheme of additional traffic calming measures within the campus which shall be agreed with the local planning authority and the agreed scheme implemented prior to the occupation of the development – in the interests of the safety of all road users and to restrict vehicle speeds within the campus.

(25) That following completion of the development hereby approved the developer shall undertake a review of the junction safety requirements with regard to operation of the site exit on to Garthdee Road. Such a review shall be carried out annually and the recommendations of the review shall be implemented as agreed with the local planning authority. Should, within a 5 year period following the opening of the development, the review indicate a requirement for a traffic light controlled junction at this location the necessary works shall be carried out by and all costs borne by the site operator to the requirements of the local planning authority – in the interests of traffic safety.

(26) That the one-way exit from the site onto Garthdee Road shall not be brought into operation until the applicants have funded all work, including administration costs, in relation to the necessary Traffic Regulation Order – in the interests of the safety of all road users.

Dr Margaret Bochel
Head of Planning and Infrastructure

MEMO

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

To	Alex Scott Planning & Infrastructure	Date Your Ref. Our Ref.	04/03/2010 P091761 (ZLF)
From Email Dial Fax	Roads Section andrews@aberdeencity.gov.uk 522840		

Roads Service
Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
1st Floor
St Nicholas House
Broad Street
Aberdeen, AB10 1BY

Planning Application No. P091761
Garthdee Road, Garthdee Campus
Development of circa 35,000 sq.m of new teaching space, social facilities and staff accommodation, additional car parking, junction, road and environmental improvements

I have considered the above planning application and have the following observations :

1.1 A Transportation Assessment (TA) has been submitted in support of the application and has identified two phases of development that will have differing impacts on accessibility and transportation matters related to the proposed development.

1.2 The first phase, which is programmed for opening in 2012 /2013, will see the relocation of all teaching to the Garthdee campus with accommodation for an additional 2810 fulltime student equivalents being constructed. Within the initial phase an element of the administration staff will move to the Universities existing city centre location with an overall reduction in staff at Garthdee at that time.

1.3 The second phase will see a relocation of all administration staff from the city centre offices to Garthdee with a resulting increase of some 418 staff on the campus. The TA indicates that the second phase of development would immediately follow the phase 1 works, however, from recent discussions with RGU representatives it is understood that the second phase will be unlikely to proceed before 2015.

1.4 The development proposals include an increase in parking of 339 spaces with 113 spaces constructed as part of phase 1 with a further 226 being implemented as part of phase 2.

1.5 The TA has considered all of the travel and transport modes to the campus and examined both sustainable travel modes and travel by the private car. The campus has seen progressive redevelopment since the introduction of the Faculty of Management and Faculty of Health and Social Care to the site and RGU have been

seen to be proactive in the delivery of sustainable travel to the campus through Green Travel Plan initiatives. The Green Travel Plan (GTP) has been supported by reasonably robust onsite car park management regime and off site by the implementation of the Controlled Parking Zone within the local residential area of Garthdee. Whilst the CPZ has assisted in the delivery of sustainable travel it is suggested that the controlled parking zone would better support the GTP initiatives promoted by RGU through a review of on street parking charges to reflect the travel costs for competing modes with the objective that parking on street be seen as a financial disincentive when compared to travel by public transport.

1.6 The Transportation Assessment has been audited in detail and I would firstly consider travel by sustainable modes.

2.0 Walking / Cycling

2.1 A survey of travel modes to the campus has indicated that some 9% walk whilst a further 3% of students and 6% of staff cycle to the site representing an increase of approximately 2% on the base survey year of 1999. RGU have supported walking by the provision of safe crossing facilities and connecting to the local path network where possible. The proposed site development indicates adequate connections to the existing footway network and in particular connections to river walkway .

2.2 The development proposal is generally located to the east of the site and will encourage pedestrian movements towards an the existing bus stops to the west of Craigievar Road . This pedestrian access point from Garthdee Road provides access to both the campus and the Health Centre within the site and is currently well used both the public and students. Recent observations would indicate that pedestrians currently experience difficulties crossing Garthdee Road at this location and any intensification in use raises road safety concerns. Too address the road safety implications associated with the proposed development due to the potential increase in use of this access a controlled pedestrian crossing should implemented as a condition of any approval and a payment for the capitalised maintenance of the installation be included within a legal agreement. The crossing would be located to the west of the existing outbound bus stop and require a section of the existing wall to be relocated and set back to provide access to the crossing point.

2.3 With respect to cycling, advisory routes to the site have been introduced previously by the University and they continue to support cycle initiatives through the GTP. It is noted that secure cycle parking is to be provided as part of the development proposals and should be agreed with officers. A condition in respect of the cycle parking requirements should be attached to any approval if given.

3. Public Transport

3.1 The University campus is served by the No. 1 red line and the dedicated No. 9 bus services. These bus services are seen to provide a frequent service to the campus and form excellent links to the city centre and a significant level of the universities student accommodation. At present the No 9 service penetrates the site with a bus stop and turning circle adjacent to the Facility of Health whilst the No.1 service is accessed from Garthdee Road.

3.2 The development proposals indicate improved penetration of the No. 9 service extending bus access through the site and will act as an incentive for use of this service. Whilst there are excellent public transport links with the city centre and the extended King Street / A956 corridor along the route of the No 1 / 2 service, public transport to city wide destinations has limitations and is to be considered further within the Green Transport Plan.

3.3 Robert Gordon University continue to work with the bus operators to provide improved services and nominally subsidise discounted public transport fares and is a measure that should be expanded within a future revision of the GTP. Since the introduction of the GTP the percentage of students travelling to the campus by public transport has risen by 13% with the percentage of staff rising by 2%. This level of use of public transport requires too be consolidated and improved in order to mitigate the traffic impact of the development proposal which will be discussed in detail in a following section.

3.4 The draft GTP submitted has indicated that the bus stops on the south side of Garthdee Road are to be upgraded to include bus shelter and real time passenger information and a condition should be attached to an approval if given for this work to be carried out prior to opening.

4 Parking Provision

4.1 The existing parking provision for the Garthdee campus amounts to a total of 710 spaces with an allocation of 71 spaces to the Health Centre and the remaining 639 spaces available for staff, students and visitors to the university. A car parking assessment was carried out as part of the TA and has considered the current parking provision and impact within the campus and on street in the adjacent local residential area.

4.2 The application indicates an increase in parking of 339 spaces with the additional parking implemented over two phases with some 113 spaces introduced in phase 1 and the remaining 226 introduced with phase 2 taking the total parking spaces on site to 1049 spaces.

4.3 The parking analysis has included surveys of existing parking practice and would indicate that in excess of 79 vehicles use vouchers to park within the residential controlled parking zone with the majority of these likely to be associated with the university. Within the University campus the existing parking is well used but surveys results have indicated that the car parks do not fill to capacity and surplus spaces are available.

4.4 The University have a parking policy which restricts on site parking to permit holders only, with annual charges made for the issue of permits. The parking charges at present, both on street and for permits within the campus, would not be seen to encourage travel to the site by public transport with the cost of parking being lower than travel by bus. The issue of parking restraint, has to a degree, been noted within the draft GTP but requires stronger application to support the sustainable travel initiatives. Similarly the on street parking charges within the residential area should be revised to encourage use by public transport and support the GTP. However with regard to the on street parking charge structure this is an initiative / measure that can

only be addressed by Aberdeen City Council and it is suggested the matter is the subject of a future report to the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure committee.

4.5 The proposed level of parking contained within the application is significantly below that of the national parking standards and in those terms is acceptable. However it is felt that the most robust tool available to restrict private car travel is the availability and control of parking spaces and I would raise a concern over the level of parking that has been proposed given that parking on site is not currently at capacity. Should the application be approved I would request that a condition be attached that the level of parking proposed be supported by a revised robust Parking Management Policy and Green Transport Plan to be agreed with the Planning Authority.

5. Green Travel Plan

A comprehensive draft Green Travel Plan has been submitted in support of the application and addresses the principles of sustainable transport but at present does not provide for a full range of future mode share targets, monitoring regime, review of GTP performance and fully committed profile of implementation of sustainable travel measures.
Robert Gordon University currently employ a full time Travel Co-ordinator who administers the Green Travel Plan issues and is well placed to take forward the promotion and implementation of a revised Travel Plan and programme of delivery.
I would request that should the application be given approval that a legal agreement be attached that includes future mode share targets, monitoring regime, programme of implementation and a mechanism for the review of the mode share targets and measures to be implemented.

6. Site Access and Internal Layout

6.1 Vehicular access to the campus is to be maintained from the existing junctions. However it is proposed to introduce a new internal road and one way system between the Faculty of Management and Faculty of Health and Social Care. This is further supplemented by a proposed exit only from the access junction currently providing two way access to the substantial parking areas associated with the Faculty of Management. The junction analysis has shown that there are no significant capacity issues arising as a result of the proposed access and traffic management proposals, however, I have some road safety concerns with the one way operations proposed.

6.2 With respect to the internal management of the campus I would raise a concern with the introduction of the one way system between the Faculty of Management and Faculty of Health and Social Care. This will effectively force significant levels of vehicular traffic movements to exit onto Garthdee Road via the proposed uncontrolled one way junction and remove the ability of drivers to exit under traffic signal control from the easterly access. The traffic management arrangements within the campus are a matter for the university but it is recommended that they be revised to remove the one way operation and that consideration be given to additional traffic calming measures to restrict vehicles speeds within the campus.

6.3 Observations during the evening peak period would indicate that vehicles can reasonably exit the access to the Faculty of Management at present. However whilst the introduction of traffic signals on Garthdee Road would be detrimental to movement of traffic on the main road a future installation may be required for safety reasons. In this respect I would ask that should the application be approved a condition that a review of the junction safety requirements be carried out annually and if necessary traffic signals be introduced at the cost of the applicant within five years of the opening of the development

6.4 A Traffic Regulation Order will be required to support the proposed one way exit onto Garthdee Road and the applicant would be liable for all costs for this work should approval be given and a condition should be attached to reflect this need.

7.Network Traffic Considerations

7.1 The traffic impact resulting from the development proposals has been assessed and given detailed consideration. The traffic impact analysis has included the assessment of individual junctions on the wider network using appropriate junction modelling techniques with the extended network of Garthdee Road and the A90 assessed by way of a micro simulation Paramics model.

7.2 The junctions to the west of the developments site on Inchgarth Road and the North Deeside Road were individually modelled for both phase 1 and phase 2. A robust traffic distribution exercise was carried out at the request of officers and whilst traffic volumes are shown to increase at the junctions on the Inchgarth Road and North Deeside Road links the detailed analysis would indicate that the junctions will operate within capacity with a very nominal increase in traffic queues or delay at the junctions. It will ne noted that traffic calming is to be introduced in Inchgarth Road and Pitfodels Station Road in the very near future.

7.3 All of the access junctions into the campus were modelled and have indicated that they will all operate satisfactorily and within capacity. However it will be noted that the existing east most junction on Garthdee Road, providing access to the Health Centre will be close to practical capacity values with the implementation of the second phase of development but priority would be given to the main road traffic with any additional delays contained to traffic exiting the campus.

7.4 As noted above a micro simulation Paramics model was utilised to test the Garthdee Road network and to consider the interaction of the junctions along the network.
The model results have been considered on the basis of journey times over the network extents and have indicated nominal changes with the additional traffic generated by the first phase of the application. However for the second phase of development the journey time for traffic using the Garthdee Road corridor is shown to increase by some 4 minutes and would be considered to have significant implications for the traffic on this corridor.

7.5 The modelling that has been carried out has not taken account of the implications of the construction of the AWPR when it could be reasonably anticipated that commuter traffic flows along the local network of Garthdee Road will be reduced in both the morning and evening peak periods. The developer has indicated that due

to changing circumstances for the University that the second phase of development is unlikely to be in place prior to 2016. If taking into account the changes in traffic patterns and flows along Garthdee Road that will result following the construction of the AWPR it can be anticipated that the level of delay along the corridor on the completion of phase 2 will be similar to that currently experienced.

7.6 The traffic generation figures used in the modelling have been derived from existing use of the site and does not account for reductions in traffic generation that can be expected from the promotion and implementation of a proactive GTP. The implementation of a robust and active GTP would reduce car traffic too the site and assist in the delivery of improved junction performance and journey times through the network.

7.7 In concluding the traffic modelling assessment I feel that given the timescales for the delivery of the second phase of the application and the anticipated timing of the AWPR that if the proposed application is supported by a proactive GTP, tied to targets and monitoring through a suitable legal agreement, that the traffic impact of the development could be accommodated on the network.

8. Conclusions

Whilst the development proposals raise some concerns it is felt that subject to the provision of suitable conditions with respect to road safety matters and the delivery of sustainable transport the development impact could be accommodated on the road network. Should approval be given a legal agreement to cover matters relating to Green Transport Plan provisions and the future capitalised maintenance for a signalled controlled pedestrian crossing on Garthdee Road should be a requirement.

Andrew Smith
Principal Engineer Developments and Traffic

15 Westerton Road
Cults
Aberdeen
AB15 9NR

4th December 2009

The Planning Department
St Nicholas House
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1FY

Attn: Mr. Alex Scott

Dear Sirs,

Re: Proposed Development at RGU Garthdee Campus
Application number P091761

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposal for further development of the RGU campus at Garthdee Road.

My concern is not with the specific proposals on the campus but relate to the effect that any further development in this area will have on the local infrastructure, particularly on local roads. There has been significant piecemeal development in the Garthdee area (retail, sports facilities, RGU, etc) which have resulted in the local road system becoming overloaded. In particular, roads between Garthdee and the North Deeside Road (Pitfodels Station Road, Westerton Road and Inchgarth Road) are all hazardous due to excessive volume and speed of vehicles.

I therefore believe that no further development should be permitted in the Garthdee and Cults areas until the fundamental infrastructure shortcomings are addressed. As a minimum a link road should be provided between Garthdee Road and North Deeside Road in the vicinity of Auchinyell Road (area designated 11/03 in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan)

Yours faithfully,

A.C.Pyle

From: <webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
To: <pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 26/11/2009 12:05
Subject: Planning Comment for 091761

Comment for Planning Application 091761
Name : Jean Henderson
Address : Clachnaben
135 Garthdee Road
Aberdeen
AB10 7AT

Telephone :
Email :
type : General Observation on the application
Comment : In principal I support the proposal. However I would be grateful if the planning committee would consider imposing conditions with regard to the footpath on the Robert Gordon University side of Garthdee road. Large parts of the footpath are not made up. There is a section between the entrance and exit at Gray's School of Art/Scott Sutherland which is not tarred/paved and where it becomes very muddy in wet weather. More importantly however is the section between the entrance to the RGU Sports Centre and the new David Lloyd sports centre. The majority of this section is not tarred/paved and from my house at 135 to the David Lloyd building it is less than 3 feet wide - in some places only 2 feet wide. This makes it impossible to walk on this side of the road, although some people (to their endangerment) do attempt it. I would request that in the environmental improvements section of this application the planning authorities impose a condition that all of the pavement from Gray to David Lloyds is paved/tarred and that the section of pavement from 135 Garthdee Road to David Lloyds is widened to the width of the section from 137 Garthdee Road up to Grays. As well as being of considerable benefit to residents, this would also be beneficial to students on foot who at the moment have to cross to the opposite side of Garthdee Road at either Sainsburys or David Lloyds and then cross back again at whichever entrance to the University they require. Because they have to do this, traffic flows is impeded unnecessarily. The footpath to the health centre would also become more accessible. Implementation of this condition could be achieved by moving back the wall of my garden and the wall between my house and the entrance to Health and Social Care. Moving garden walls further down the road may not be acceptable to the property owners but the large grass expanse opposite those houses should allow the carriageway to be moved without undue difficulty to accommodate the wider footpath. I hope the Planning people will consider and approve this suggestion.
Could I also ask that a condition is imposed on the time at which vehicles arrive at the building site. I believe that contractors are banned from working before 7 am. However, from past experience heavy lorries etc arrive at the site half-three quarters of an hour before this and the noise of the vehicles creates quite a disturbance at 6 am! As building projects like this go on for many months restrictions on making any kind of noise before 7 am would be appreciated.

From: STEPHEN SHEAL
To: <pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 06/12/2009 19:57
Subject: Planning Application P091761

1 Westerton Road
Cults
Aberdeen
AB15 9NR

6th December 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application P091761

I object to the abovementioned planning application for the further development of RGU's Garthdee campus, on the basis that the local road infrastructure cannot support further traffic without the road infrastructure itself being developed. This has not been addressed in the planning application.

Inchgarth Road, Pitfodels Station Road and Westerton Road are already experiencing exceptionally high traffic volumes. Both the volume and types of traffic on these roads are compromising safety in the area, whilst turning a residential area into a very busy, dangerous commuter route. Further development at Garthdee will serve to put incremental pressure on all these roads, which is not acceptable.

In order to fit with the Aberdeen Local Plan's cited Strategy for Transport, the developer "will also be expected to provide appropriate measures to mitigate the adverse traffic and transport impacts arising from development". This planning application fails to address this.

The further development of RGU's Garthdee Campus should only be considered when there is an appropriate, fit for purpose "commuter road" built between Garthdee and North Deeside Road. The building of such a road would be an appropriate measure to cope with the volume and type of traffic which needs to travel from West of Aberdeen to Garthdee, Altens and beyond.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Sheal

PI - Objection to RGU Garthdee Extention

From: <
To: <pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 05/12/2009 13:14
Subject: Objection to RGU Garthdee Extention

Dear Sirs,

I write to you **to object to the proposed extension to RGU Garthdee** which will include 1,040 additional parking spaces. My objection is based on the current inadequate local road infrastructure and the additional strain that this will place on the 3 roads that link the North Deeside Road to the south including Garthdee and Bridge of Dee.

The Council has a proposal to introduce additional traffic calming measures on Pitfodels Station Road thus slowing traffic on all 3 roads but not reducing the volume of traffic on roads that are already congested and dangerous. The extent of risk to individuals is clear given the increase in traffic volume and general speed at which drivers drive their vehicles.

The risk to pedestrians which includes a number of children is further exacerbated by the fact that there are no foot paths or only very limited sections along the extent of Pitfodels Station Road. Pedestrian numbers increase from September to May when RGU students attend college, which can only add to the likelihood of individuals being injured.

A logical solution is to introduce a new link road that will take the traffic, speed commuting and ease the risk to people and vehicles on the small roads that were never designed to cope with the level of traffic that they now receive. Personally, I think the best location for the road is across the vacant land located east of the Garthdee Allotments and would link the North Deeside road and Garthdee roads.

I ask that the RGU planning application **only be granted if RGU contribute to the new link road.**

Yours Sincerely,

Martin McKenzie

Middleton Lodge,
Pitfodels Station Road,
Cults,
Aberdeen,
AB15 9PJ

301 North Deeside Road

Cults

Aberdeen

AB15 9PA

2nd December, 2009

Dear Sir,

Re Planning Application P091761

Development of new teaching space Robert Gordon University

I am writing to object to the above planning application on the grounds that the increased traffic that will be accessing the campus from the west of the university site will greatly impact on already overburdened and inadequate road systems, namely Pitfodels Station Road, Westerton Road and Inchgarth Road.

The green initiatives put forward by the developers of this site take into consideration only those who will be accessing the campus from Aberdeen City. These initiatives will be impractical for those students and employees who live to the west of the City.

There have been numerous developments in the Garthdee /Bridge of Dee area over the past ten years or so, with negligible consideration given to the impact on the surrounding roads infrastructure. Pitfodels, Westerton and Garthdee Roads are at breaking point, as are their residents. No developments in and around Garthdee should go ahead until a link road has been installed between the North Deeside Road and Garthdee.

Yours sincerely,

Dawne Adams (Mrs)

Linn Cottage
5, Westerton Rd
Cults
Aberdeen
AB15 9NR

Sunday 6th December 2009

Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Aberdeen City Council

Re: RGU planning application no. P091761

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to object to the planned £160 million extension to RGU, because the extra commuter traffic to and from it will have a large negative impact on Westerton Road and other roads in the area which are currently used to link the North Deeside Road to Garthdee. RGU's planning application should not be granted until a new link road has been built between Garthdee and the North Deeside Road on the undeveloped land between the allotments and Auchinyell Road. This will enable the roads further west to be returned to a quiet residential status. RGU should be required to contribute to the cost of such a road.

Yours faithfully,

Kathleen M. Burgess