

REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - 16 OCTOBER 2006

REPORT ON: FORMER FIRE STATION, STRATHMORE AVENUE, DRAFT SITE PLANNING BRIEF

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 553-2006

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a draft site planning brief for the site of the former fire station, Strathmore Avenue as the basis of consultation with the local community and interested parties.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a approve the draft site planning brief for purposes of consultation;
 - b remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to consult with the local community and interested parties on the terms and content of the draft site planning brief; and
 - c remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to report back on the result of the consultation exercise.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As the site is Council owned and it is intended to sell the land on the open market, this brief has the potential to influence the value of the site.

4 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This site planning brief is considered to have a positive impact on the Council's Sustainability Policy as the proposals would meet the relevant key principles of the Policy. In this case the key principles are: Compliance with Environmental Legislation, Energy and Water, Transport and Travel, and Built Environment.
- 4.2 The current Building Standards require any new housing development to meet certain basic criteria in terms of the Sustainability Principles of Environmental Legislation, and Energy and Water use. The brief itself encourages sustainable construction.
- 4.3 The principle of retaining and converting an existing building and the surrounding brownfield land for housing in a location that is readily accessible by public transport and close to local services and amenities is considered to satisfy the sustainability principles of Transport and Travel, and Built Environment.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is the purpose of this report to consult appropriate groups on those issues, which affect them.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The site at Strathmore Avenue is currently owned by the City Council. The buildings were last occupied by the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Department. The site was recently declared surplus to requirements and consequently an opportunity has arisen for the sale and redevelopment of the site.
- 6.2 There have been a few new housing developments in this area. However work is presently underway at the Lawside Works site some 400 metres to the east to develop 47 dwellings. Other recent developments have been new community facilities in the form of a Young Persons Unit at 296b-e Strathmore Avenue and a new building for Dundee Disabled Children's Association at 9 Lawton Road. The neighbouring site to the east contains a vacant hotel building and car park.

7 DRAFT SITE PLANNING BRIEF

- 7.1 The draft site planning brief seeks to encourage a high standard of development in keeping with the surrounding environment. With this in mind the main points of the draft site planning brief are as follows:

- The redevelopment will either:
 - retain the main former fire station building in order to provide if possible a number of townhouses or otherwise flats, together with a development of houses to the side and rear, comprising a mix of types and designs in order to add interest to the development.

or;

- following the demolition and clearance of all buildings on the site create a small development of houses which will also comprise a mix of building types and designs.
- The redevelopment will have regard to the important view of the site from Lawton Road and the prominent position of the site on Strathmore Avenue either through retaining and converting the main fire station building or through the careful design and positioning of houses and landscaping along the front of the site.
- The standards contained within Appendix 1 of the Local Plan in respect of private garden sizes will be adhered to. All houses will have parking provided within the curtilage of each individual plot in accordance with the standards contained within Appendix 1. Given the challenge of providing curtilage car parking for townhouses in a converted main building the standards may be relaxed to allow the provision of some spaces outside the plot.

- 7.2 The draft site planning brief is attached to this report and will be the subject of consultation with both the community and interested parties.

8 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

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GH/AH/LD

19 September 2006

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APPENDIX 1

FORMER FIRE STATION, STRATHMORE AVENUE - DRAFT SITE PLANNING BRIEF

The decision by Dundee City Council to market the Former Fire Station site presents the opportunity to realise a high quality and imaginative development on this "brownfield site."

This site planning brief has been prepared as supplementary planning guidance to the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 providing guidance to prospective developers to arrive at an informed and comprehensive solution for the redevelopment of this site.

Further design guidance is also to be found within the Dundee Urban Design Guide.

The site lies north of the Inner City and contains excellent transportation connections, access to recreation facilities and primary and secondary schools.

The site is approximately 0.25 hectares in area and contains a vacant former fire station and ancillary buildings. Last in use as council offices, the buildings have recently been deemed surplus to requirements by the City Council. The site faces south onto Strathmore Avenue, a road linking Strathmartine Road with Harefield Road with a mixture of buildings in community uses and a mixture of public and private sector dwellings beyond. To the north are the leafy grounds and traditional buildings of Kings Cross Hospital, to the east a vacant hotel, and to the west areas of well established detached, semi-detached and flatted housing.

Constructed in 1932 the former fire station building is an interesting and prominent building on the streetscene of both Strathmore Avenue and Lawton Road. Positioned at the front of the site the building has a commanding view south along Lawton Street to Dundee Law. Although not Listed this distinctive building still retains the large station doors to the front and rear, and balconies across the front and rear elevations. The rear of the site contains some ancillary buildings and a large yard area.

The site is not allocated for housing in the Local Plan but is identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map as being within a Suburban area. In Suburban areas the Local Plan seeks the development of houses only, although the Local Plan does accept the development of flats through the conversion of buildings of merit where the conversion to houses is not suitable or achievable. In this case the former fire station building is considered to be of merit and worthy of retention. The Council would not disregard the conversion of this building to flats subject to sufficient evidence that it is not suitable for conversion into townhouses.

The Dundee Local Plan Review 2005, particularly at Policy 4, Policy 55 and Appendix 1, sets development standards to be interpreted regarding the site and the surrounding context. In accordance with Policy 55, the Dundee Urban Design Guide 2001 sets out the specific design principles for the formulation of an appropriate site layout and built form.

HOUSE TYPE/MIX

The Council considers two options for the redevelopment of this site. One is to retain and convert the main former fire station building and develop a small number of houses on the remainder of the site. The other option is to clear the site and develop it all for housing.

The option to retain and convert the main building is driven by the design and prominent position of the building on Strathmore Avenue and Lawton Road. If it is to be retained it should be converted into townhouses. A flatted conversion would be an acceptable alternative subject to evidence that it is not possible to convert into townhouses. Given the suburban location the remainder of the site shall be developed with detached, terraced or semi-detached houses only. To add interest to the development these should be of varying types and sizes.

The clearance of the site would allow the whole site to be developed. If this option were pursued only housing would be acceptable. This would be in the form of detached, semi-detached or terraced housing. Again the development should comprise a mix of dwelling types and designs.

Appendix 1 of the Local Plan requires 75% of housing in new developments to contain, as a minimum, 3 or more bedrooms or to have a minimum gross internal floor area of 100 square metres. Flats should have generous internal space standards and 2 or more bedrooms.

FORM

This is a prominent location and any development must be sympathetic to the form and layout of existing development in the surrounding area. The site lends itself to a small housing development to the side and rear of the retained and converted building or to a small housing development across the whole site. It is suggested that 2-3 bedroom houses may offer the best mix for this site; built as two-storey houses with potentially a third storey in the roof profile.

Dwellings to the front of the site should be set back at least 5m from the footway edge to allow space for landscaping in the interests of the visual appearance of the streetscene and to respect the prominence of the site. If retained, the distinctive main building shall be converted into townhouses or flats with the characteristic ground floor doors, and the front and rear balconies imaginatively incorporated into the scheme.

If the existing buildings are demolished the Council seeks a creative redevelopment of this prominent site. Given the views of the site from Lawton Road and out of the site towards Dundee Law any redevelopment must respect this important vista and developers should show how they have arrived at their design solution for this part of the site.

The Local Plan requires that in the interests of privacy houses are sited to ensure that there is a gap of 18 metres between facing windows of habitable rooms.

The developer should consult the Tayside Police Architectural Liaison Officer in order to achieve Secured by Design consistent with other requirements in this brief.

MATERIALS

If it is to be retained the materials on the main fire station building should influence those on the new buildings and be appropriate for the surrounding area. Any other form of development should use materials that are appropriate for this location. The use of sustainable construction systems and techniques will also be encouraged to promote good environmental practice with the redevelopment of this brownfield site.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Council actively promotes sustainable development and would encourage developers to embrace the principles of sustainable development. In this case developers are encouraged to site and orientate houses to maximise passive solar gain and where possible exceed the Building Standards in relation to energy efficiency and water use. To encourage recycling all dwellings should provide adequate space for the storage of recycling bins.

AMENITY GARDEN AREA

Appendix 1 of the Local Plan requires new housing development in suburban locations to provide a minimum private useable garden ground area of 120 square metres and for 40% of the whole development to have more than 160 square metres of private useable garden ground. If flats are created in the fire station building they should be served by a communal garden. This shall comprise a minimum of 100 square metres of private useable space.

PARKING

Appendix 1 also sets out the requirements for levels of car parking within new developments. All houses must provide 1 car parking space within the curtilage whilst houses with three or more bedrooms should have at least 2 car parking spaces. In addition 50% of houses should have a garage or provide space for a garage. Flats shall be provided with a minimum of 150% car parking. It may be difficult to meet the requirement for curtilage car parking in connection with townhouses in the converted main building and therefore it may be acceptable to locate some of these spaces outside of the curtilage.

ACCESS

The development will provide a single point of access from Strathmore Avenue. This will lead onto a shared surface driveway that will allow safe and easy access to the parking facilities for all properties. A separate pedestrian access may also be provided.

LANDSCAPING

Due to the prominence of the site on the streetscene of Strathmore Avenue and Lawton Road the development will be required to provide a high quality landscaping strip along the front of the site. In the interests of the amenities of the occupiers of the new dwellings and those in the existing neighbouring dwellings the landscaping along the western boundary of the site shall be retained and improved where appropriate.