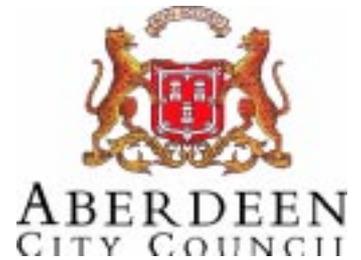


Carden House

and adjacent areas of land

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

October 1999



Planning and Strategic
Development Department

1.0 Site Description

1.1 The site is situated in a central city location on the north side of Carden Place/Skene Street opposite the junction with Victoria Street (see Plan 1). It lies directly to the south of Aberdeen Grammar school and to the east of a series of traditional detached granite properties most of which are used as offices at present. There is a traditional granite gate lodge to the east of the site and on the opposite side of Carden Place/Skene Street the houses are mainly granite tenements of differing styles. A modern development exists to the north west of the site, which is particularly visible from the rear of Carden House. The whole site slopes down considerably from Carden Place/Skene Street to a high granite rubble wall at the rear. Part of this is a retaining wall and part free standing. The site contains open and culverted sections of the Den Burn. The site itself can be split into three distinctly separate parts. See Plan 2 for the relevant boundaries.

1.2 Carden House (Site A) - This is the west most part of the whole site. Carden House itself is a traditional granite built two and a half storey (including exposed basement) bay windowed detached property set in a traditional rectangular feu. It retains various traditional features and follows the original building line along the remainder of Carden Place. There are approximately 17 car-parking spaces within the front garden serviced by existing access and egress arrangements onto Carden Place. Site A also includes a substantial granite and pitched slate roof coach house (now used as a garage) to the east and a large, partly derelict garden area to the rear. The feu is enclosed by high granite rubble walls on 3 sides and by lower granite wall and hedge to the front. The front garden contains a number of important mature trees. Carden House had until recently been used by the City Council Social Work Department as an office with a self contained residential flat at basement level.

1.3 Site B - This is the middle section of the whole site. Again set out in a traditional rectangular feu, all boundaries are high granite rubble walls except the boundary onto Carden Place/Skene Street, which has its original railings on top of a lower granite wall. There is an existing gateway into the site from Carden Place/Skene Street. This site contains the remains of a detached house including some of the front retaining wall and foundations. No part of these remains are above street level and cannot be seen from Carden Place/Skene Street. The front part of Site B is maintained as mown grass with some young but established lime trees planted in a formal manner. There are two important mature trees, one in each corner. The area behind the remaining retaining walls of the house is fenced off and has not been maintained. It contains a significant number of important mature trees to the southern end and around the edges of the site as well as an area of self seeded woodland and scrubland to the north that is generally overgrown. The Den Burn is culverted through this rear area. The whole of Site B has been identified as having wildlife value. It has in the past been used for flytipping but not to a great extent.

1.4 Site C - This is the east most part of the whole site. Again all boundaries are high granite rubble walls but there is no boundary enclosure onto Carden Place/Skene Street. Unlike the other two parts of the whole site this site is a less traditional 'L' shaped feu containing no built structures. A main sewer runs diagonally through this site (see plan 2). The site is maintained mostly as mown grass and includes an open area of the Den Burn and a significant number of important mature trees. There is restricted access from this site onto Site B and the rear boundary wall is a retaining wall below the level of Aberdeen Grammar School playground. Aberdeen Grammar School uses this part of the site for educational purposes.

2.0 Site History

2.1 Carden House (Site A) - Prior to its current use Carden House was most likely used for residential purposes.

2.1 Site B - Early maps confirm that this was originally the site of Glenburnie Cottage and was most likely used for residential purposes prior to demolition sometime between 1926 and 1947. The rear garden seems to have been formally set out. The site must have been vacant for some considerable in order for it to reach its current state.

2.3 Site C - Early maps confirm that this was originally the site of Glenburnie House, again most probably residential, the rear garden seems to have been formally set out. No evidence of Glenburnie House currently exists and it is unclear how long the site has been vacant. It will, however, have been vacant for a considerable time as it was last shown Ordnance Survey sheet NJ9306 in 1955.

3.0 Local Plan Policies

3.1 Carden House (Site A) - This is zoned as O1 West End Office (Class 4 Business (a)) in the existing Local Plan. This policy states that changes of use for commercial purposes other than office use will be treated on their individual merits but the new use should not conflict with the existing residential amenity of householders within and adjacent to the West End area. In addition certain maximum plot ratios exist within the O1 policy area. This particular site is in a Category 2 Area that has recommended maximum plot ratios of:

- ◆ 0.4 (external measurements)
- ◆ 0.35 (internal measurements)

2.2 Site B and Site C - These sites are zoned as R1 Residential Areas. Even though the R1 designation does look favourably on residential developments in these areas it states that areas of recreational or amenity open space and footpaths included in R1 areas should be retained for these uses and proposals to remove them will not be permitted.

2.3 In addition the current City Wide Local Plan contains a Tree Preservation policy which generally protects trees, emphasises that the Council will use Tree Preservation Orders where continued presence of trees is assessed to be at risk. Emphasis is on the retention of important individual trees and groups of trees by consulting with landowners and developers to encourage proper management and maintenance.

2.4 A replacement for the existing adopted Local Plan has now been prepared. It is not yet complete but is a material consideration in all planning decisions. The finalised draft of the replacement Local Plan strengthens the need to retain open space, protect trees and provide good quality design.

4.0 Other Designations

4.1 Conservation Area - The whole site lies within Conservation Area 4 (Rubislaw). In these areas the Council will expect a high standard of design for contemporary developments which will be required to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. There is a presumption against the removal of existing trees and no work to or removal of trees can take place without having given appropriate notice to or obtained the consent of the Planning Authority. Proper management of the substantial tree resource on this whole site will be required. Aberdeen's conservation areas are also protected by Article 4 Directions which require certain works which would otherwise be permitted development to apply for Planning Consent.

4.2 Listed Building - There are boundaries on two sides with the grounds of Aberdeen Grammar School which is a Category B Listed Building. Any works which would affect the character or setting of this listed building will require Listed Building Consent. All works on the site would require to respect the setting of this major listed building.

4.3 Open Space - The current Aberdeen City District-Wide Local Plan contains a policy on open space that commits the Council to protect open space areas within the urban area, such as the Sites B and C shown on Plan 1, from development other than that which is related to recreational usage. Within the older established inner areas the City Council has committed itself to increasing open space provision wherever possible. To support this policy an open space audit was undertaken and recent updates of this audit have identified Sites B and C as Local Amenity space. The Open Space Audit also identified this particular area of the City as being severely deficient in open space. It has one of the lowest levels of open space provision in the City.

4.4 District Wildlife Site - Sites B and C are recognised as part of a designated District Wildlife Site (District Wildlife Site number 3, North Burn of Rubislaw) which includes open access to the Den Burn on Site C. These sites, due to their association with the Den Burn, are also recognised as being part of an important wildlife corridor that should be protected. An initial inspection of Site B has indicated that it includes a valuable herb layer, including wildflowers and shrubs, and self seeded

trees all of which are important sources of food and shelter for wildlife and contribute to the biodiversity of the area. Conservation of habitat value is supported by SEPA's Habitat Enhancement policies.

5.0 Current Maintenance Regime

5.1 The grounds to the front and East side of Carden House, the front area of Site B and the whole area of Site A are currently maintained mostly as mown grass. This is undertaken by the Arts and Recreation Department. The other areas of Sites B and C are maintained as open spaces under the Central Grounds Maintenance Contract.

6.0 Future Uses and Potential

6.1 This site offers a number of possibilities for its future use. The West End Office and Residential Areas policies which apply to this site would not, in principle, prejudice further development of the Carden House site (Site A) e.g. to be extended for office use, residential use or even residential care facilities such as a nursing home. Any extension would however need to comply with plot ratio guidelines for the site.

6.2 Sites B and C offer less scope for development. They do however offer an excellent opportunity to protect and enhance the open space provision, informal recreational opportunities, wildlife value, environmental education resources and general amenity in this area of the City. These sites should continue to make a significant contribution to the amenity of the surrounding area, contrasting with the density of the urban form.

6.3 Site B will be protected from development. This area is recognised as having significant nature conservation interest and includes a large number of mature trees. These trees are important visual features in the conservation area. This rear area may look untidy and rubbish strewn at present but should only take a limited amount of investment/work (perhaps even voluntary) to create a valuable resource. New access and egress points will have to be introduced for safety reasons as well to promote better use of the area.

6.4 Site C will be retained as open space in its entirety and improved to allow easier and safer public access. A gate cuts off half of this site. This gate has only recently been closed, prior to this the whole area was open and maintained as mown grass. This is an important piece of usable open space not suitable for development and is protected by existing Local Plan policies. Notwithstanding the fact that

Aberdeen Grammar School still wish to use the Northern half of Site C as an educational resource, development of this site would lead to a greater deficiency of open space in this area which is already severely deficient in open space and would be contrary to existing policy. The treed character of this site is very valuable in terms of its contribution to the surrounding area.

7.0 Site Coverage

7.1 Any development will be limited to the rear area and East side of the Carden House site, Site A. The maximum recommended plot ratio for this site is stated in paragraph 3.1. More detailed guidance is available from the Strategy Section of the Planning and Strategic Development Department.

8.0 Development Type and Design

8.1 Carden House itself should be retained. No part of any new development (on Site A) should be forward of the established building line (shown on Plan 2) along this section of Carden Place and should compliment the existing character of both Carden House and Carden Place. Any new development should be of a scale and massing appropriate to that of Carden House. The garden to the rear slopes down from Carden House and this may offer the opportunity for a building with one or two extra storeys to the rear subject to normal development control criteria. Care should be taken, as any building on this site should not be detrimental to the amenity of the existing modern properties to the rear of Carden House by virtue of overlooking and siting, in accordance with current standards.

8.2 Development on this site may be of modern or traditional design but should compliment the existing building and surrounding area. The use of modern materials is not ruled out but many of the existing traditional features should be retained. This will mean the retention of boundary enclosures especially granite walls, cast iron fences and boundary hedges. This issue should be discussed in more detail with the Conservation and Design Unit of the Planning and Strategic Development Department.

8.3 It is anticipated that all trees on Site A will be retained and appropriate new landscaping introduced. More detailed discussion between the developer and the Environment Section of the Planning and Strategic Development Department on this matter will be required.

9.0 Access and Car Parking

9.1 Car parking and access arrangements will be subject to the requirements of the Council's adopted standards for car parking and will be related to the use and size of any new development. There should be only one access to these sites from Carden Place situated where it would not form a crossroads with Victoria Street.

9.2 Any car parking should be controlled and not open to the public.

10.0 Construction Arrangements

10.1 Any construction works needed to develop or improve these 3 sites must be carried out in such a way that no existing tree within or immediately outwith the sites are harmed. Regard must be given to the protection of trees in accordance with British Standard 5837 (1991).

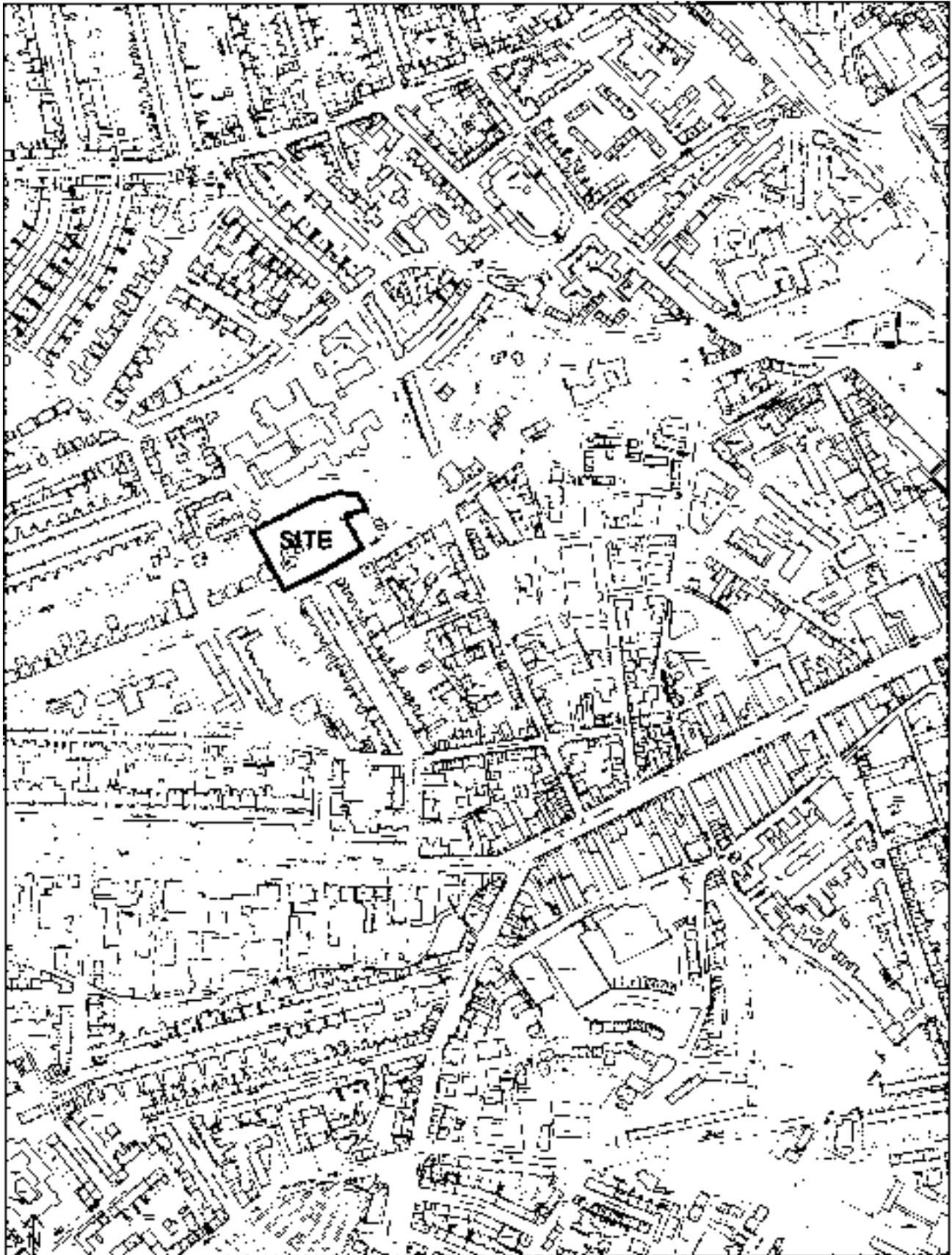
10.2 SEPA requires that any foul effluent from development must connect to the public sewer. Separate surface-water drainage systems should be established using Sustainable Urban Drainage and Best Management Practices.

Contacts

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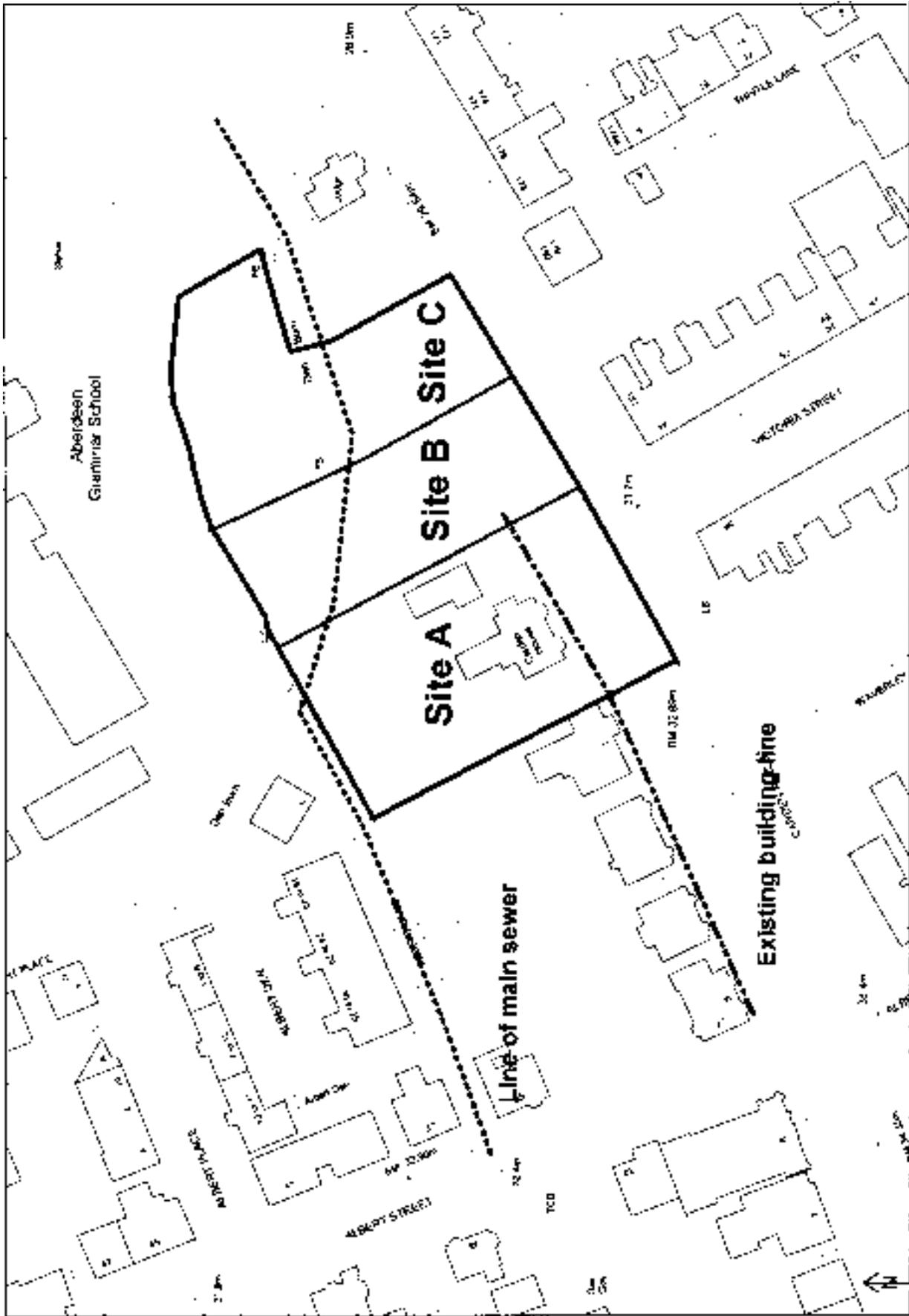
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PLAN 1



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PLAN 2



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