**MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

**Introduction**

1. **The Resources Management Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2001 considered a report on the future of Chapel Street Car Park and the Committee agreed that the Director of Planning and Strategic Development be instructed to prepare a planning brief for the Chapel Street area including the site of the car park.**

2. **Chapel Street Car Park is owned by the City Council and was designed and built in the 1970’s with a capacity of 505 spaces. The building is approaching the end of its useful economic life. The car park currently operates at around 50% capacity and it is considered appropriate to reduce the number of public car parking spaces to 360 to meet daily demand. The reduction of parking for Chapel Street relates to the balance of parking across the City Centre which will be provided collectively (1000 spaces) from the Denburn, Justice Mill Lane and Chapel Street Car Parks.**

**Site Description**

3. **The 5 storey car park is situated at the north-west corner of Chapel Street and Huntly Street, covering approximately 0.33 hectares. To the west is the 14 storey Thistle Court, separated from the site by a surface car park. Opposite the site, on the east side of Chapel Street, are a nightclub and public house. Immediately to the south of the site, planning consent was granted for 26 flats at 55-57 Chapel Street in May 2001. Construction on this site has now started.**

**Policy Background**

4. **At present the site lies within an area designated as Residential H4. However the West End Study identifies the need for policy change to allow the surrounding area to be promoted for modern business use. It is proposed the Draft West End area to the north of Union Street be re-designated in the emerging Local Plan. This will help facilitate the promotion of the area as the Chapel Street Business Development Zone in order to encourage more and diverse modern business uses in the City Centre.**

**Infrastructure**

5. **In association with new development on this site it is essential that the wider opportunities identified in both the West End Study and the Aberdeen Urban Realm Strategy are considered. In particular the introduction of a pedestrian link to the south of the site, providing a connection between Rose Street and Chapel Street, should be introduced. A landscaped buffer, incorporated a pedestrian route, should be introduced along the west boundary of the site. Where the two pedestrian links connect, the opportunity exists to create a new square.**

**Development Principles**

6. **As outlined in the Draft West End Study, further residential development in the area will be resisted. A car parking facility for a minimum of 360 cars must be provided on at least part of the site. The remainder can be developed for business use.**
7. Given that the site does not lie within a conservation area, there are fewer restrictions than would be expected in the civic core. It is essential that development opportunity on this site is maximised to allow significant modern business use appropriate for the City Centre. Consideration should be given to constructing the new car parking facility underground to achieve maximum use of the site on the ground. If the car park is to be constructed above ground it should be restricted to the north of the site, with a new office building situated on the south. The office building could take the form of a tower of up to 10 storeys in height.

8. The site lies adjacent to the 14 storey Thistle Court to the west. The introduction of a smaller tower on the site is not intended to reflect the existing tower of Thistle Court. Rather it is to set a new standard for architecture in the proposed Chapel Street Business Zone, as identified in the Draft West End Strategy. The opportunity to mirror this proposed tower elsewhere in the area may arise in the future. To alleviate the immediate impact of the tower, a pedestrian route should be introduced to the south of the site. This will allow for a potential link to Johnstone House, whilst at the same time creating the first link in a proposed network of pedestrian routes and spaces to improve the quality of the Public Realm.

9. Good quality, innovative modern architecture raises company profile and enhances corporate identity. It is expected that the quality of architecture on this site will be sufficiently high to be capable of providing a major attraction for forward investment in the area. It will not be acceptable to merely mimic the pastiche building style prevalent in the immediate area.

10. Proposed building design must avoid the pastiche grey mock-granite and dry-dash roughcast appearance. Materials must be appropriate to the architectural philosophy and design of the proposed building. There must be clear justification for their use. As this is expected to be the flagship building, instrumental in establishing future modern business use in the West End area, materials must reflect this.

11. Underground parking may extend across the whole of the site. Any part of the new car park proposed to be situated above ground should be restricted to the north of the site. Alternatively, if all of the new car park is proposed to be above ground, it should be provided to the north of the site. Any new car park should be accessed, as the existing is, from Huntly Street. No parking provision will be permitted to the south of the site in order to avoid conflict with any future pedestrian network and to allow any new office building to have an active street frontage. In addition, parking should be provided as required for the new office.
12. Site Plan

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