Tor-Na-Dee Hospital
Milltimber

Planning Brief

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tor-na-dee Hospital is located on the eastern edge of Milltimber, Aberdeen. Its setting can be described as urban fringe with predominantly residential use to the south and west and its rural setting to the north and east. Tor-na-dee Hospital was declared surplus to requirements by NHS Grampian in March 2002. The hospital is no longer in use and patients and services have been transferred elsewhere. Roxburgh House, a hospice and palliative care facility within the grounds, will be vacated by June 2004. When the Minister for Health approved NHS Grampian Board's recommendations to transfer the services and patients from Tor-na-dee Hospital to alternative locations he also requested that NHS Grampian carry out a comprehensive review of potential options for the future use of the site for health related purposes. It was required that the review involved the local community in determining any future use of the site.

1.2 This resulted in a Project Group being formed which involved representatives from STAR (the campaign to save Tor-na-dee), Grampian Local Health Council and NHS Grampian. The Project Group explored a range of potential options for future health related use at the hospital site. A shortlist of potential healthcare options was drawn up and formed the basis of a public consultation exercise in May/June 2003. The majority of respondents to the consultation were in favour of the redevelopment of the Tor-na-dee site as a nursing home and/or sheltered housing.

1.3 This planning brief has been produced by Jenkins & Marr on behalf of NHS Grampian, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council as future development guidance for the Tor-na-dee Hospital site. The guidelines contained in this brief will help utilise the site's full potential, fitting new development within the mature landscape features and promoting high quality development.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Tor-na-dee Hospital is located within the Milltimber area of Aberdeen, some 6 miles west of Aberdeen City Centre. The site is located immediately to the north of North Deeside Road (A93). Access to the site is taken from Binghill Road to the West of the site. The site is bounded by trees all of which are covered by a TPO. The surrounding land uses are residential to the west; agricultural to the north and east and low density housing to the south.
Fig 1: Tor-na-dee Hospital - location and boundary - Aberdeen City Council 100023401
2.2 The site extends to some 5.515 hectares (13.628 acres) in area and the buildings occupy a total floor area of 6757 square metres. The buildings on the site comprise the main hospital building, Roxburghe House and Roxburghe House Day Centre and various outbuildings including a boiler house, cottage, bungalow and gate house. None of the buildings on the site are listed by Historic Scotland.

2.3 The main hospital building was opened on 29 November 1899 as Deeside Hydropathic and the surrounding area was undeveloped. The east wing of the building was opening in 1920. Roxburghe House was opened in 1977 and an extension housing a day care unit opened in 1990. During this period residential development took place primarily to the west and south of the site. In general terms, the housing to the south of the site is low density and to the west is higher density housing.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 Tor-na-dee Hospital is now surplus to requirements and Roxburghe House will be surplus to requirements in June 2004. As required by the adopted Aberdeen City District-Wide Local Plan 1991, a planning brief is now being prepared setting out the parameters for its future development.

3.2 The site is located within the Green Belt and its future development should therefore be sensitive to its location. The Green Belt policy permits Institutional use and the expansion of existing uses within these areas and therefore the continued use of the site for healthcare use and/or nursing home is appropriate. The site also falls within the H1 Hospital and Healthcare uses of the adopted Local Plan which encourages the retention of existing facilities but where these are surplus to requirements new uses are permitted where they are compatible with adjoining land uses and any surviving healthcare uses on the site.

3.3 There is no doubt that the site is previously developed. Scottish Planning Policy and the approved Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan supports the appropriate re-use of such sites. The existing development is located
within a parkland type setting and any future development will be expected
to be sensitive to the existing trees, which are covered by a TPO, and the
area of open space to the south of the site. The granite Tor-na-dee Hospital
building should be retained although there may be scope to remove the east
wing of the building.

3.4 The site is suitable for a number of uses but is unlikely to be suitable for
large-scale retail or leisure use. The most appropriate uses, which also
reflect the uses identified by the Tor-na-dee Project Group are healthcare
uses that include a nursing home and residential use that includes sheltered
and close care housing. Business use, educational use and hotel and tourism
uses may also be appropriate under existing Local Plan policies, however,
these uses are likely to be restricted to the footprint of the existing buildings.
Community uses such as a café and/or small leisure facility e.g. bowling
green would also be appropriate if ancillary to the main use. These facilities
could also be used by the wider Milltimber community.

3.5 Scottish Planning Policy supports improved design in development as a
material consideration.

3.6 The Development Plan supports the reuse of sites such as Tor-na-dee
Hospital. It also supports the protection of the countryside and open space,
wildlife and landscape. Non-Green Belt uses such as those identified above
may be appropriate given the site’s close proximity to Aberdeen, surrounding
population and services, and public transport and cycle routes.

3.7 The design of and layout of the development shall aim to create a physical
environment which makes crime more difficult and reduces peoples’ fear of
crime. Regard shall be given during the preparation of development schemes
to PAN 46 ‘Planning for Crime Prevention’. Contact with the Architectural
Liaison Officer at Grampian Police at an early stage in the design process is
recommended.

4.0 DETAILED DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

4.1 The site can be divided into 4 main characters areas for the purposes of
analysis and these are shown in Figure 3. Despite this, it is likely that the site
will be developed as a whole. Figure 4 indicates the overall development
guidelines that apply to new development on the Tor-na-dee Hospital site.
The main issues are dealt with in detail below.
4.2 **Use of the Site**

4.2.1 Consultation following the preparation of a shortlist of healthcare uses by the Project Group formed to consider the options for the redevelopment of the Tor-na-dee site confirmed that respondents were in favour of the use of the site as a nursing home and/or sheltered housing facility. The Project Group wish to see the potential for a nursing home to link to the development of housing with care to increase the flexibility of care arrangements provided on site and maximise the choice for individuals. To summarise:

“The Project Group favours the development of the site as a nursing home in view of the current shortfall of high quality nursing home places in the City of Aberdeen. In particular, there is a shortage of places for people with dementia. The Project Group wish to explore the potential link of nursing home provision to the development of housing with care at Tor-na-dee which would increase the flexibility of care arrangements provided on site and maximise the choice for individuals. Any such housing scheme might be of mixed tenure incorporating a range of housing options for older people. The Project Group are keen to stimulate an innovative development which might also link to a wider range of health and social care..."
services and which could take full advantage of the quality and location of the site to enhance the local/community amenity.” This should be considered fully by developers and will be considered in further detail below.

4.3 Retention and Demolitions

4.3.1 The majority of the outbuildings around the site are of poor quality and could be demolished. It is suggested that the gatehouse at the southeast of the site be retained. Alternatively, it can be demolished and rebuilt respecting the character of the area. Additionally, the main hospital building should be retained. The newer east wing of the building may be difficult to convert and there is potential for its demolition. Modern additions to the rear of the main hospital building can be removed.
4.4  **Access and Movement**

4.4.1 The existing main access to the site is from Binghill Road and this should be retained. There may be scope to provide a secondary access from Binghill Road to the north of the site but the acceptability of this access must be demonstrated by appropriate assessment of visibility splays and impact on trees etc. Only one access should be retained from Oldfold Farm Road and this should be for emergency access/egress only. The informal paths around the grounds should be retained and enhanced where necessary. A pedestrian access should also be taken from the site to North Deeside Road. Footpaths should be designed for use by elderly and wheelchair users where possible. All planning applications should identify existing and proposed access routes and footpaths.

4.5  **Open Space, Trees and Boundaries (Area 1)**

4.5.1 A full tree survey for this site has been carried out. It indicates that there are some 1035 trees. All proposals must be based on the objective of minimising tree loss. As all the trees on site are subject to a TPO permission will be required from Aberdeen City Council prior to any cutting down, uprooting, topping or lopping. Reasoned justification for the need to remove any trees should be part of any planning application. The trees around the perimeter of the site to the south of the site should be retained and enhanced where possible. The trees to the immediate north of the exit separate the potential development areas and it will be useful to retain these in order to contain as much parking as possible within one area. Some of the trees may be removed if necessary subject to the requisite justification being provided.

4.5.2 Open Space is a key feature to the south of the site. This area should be retained as such. Additional paths could enhance this area and there may be scope for some outdoor leisure uses such as a bowling green or tennis courts. The trees should, however, be retained.

4.5.3 Any planning application should also be accompanied by a management plan to maintain areas of existing trees, open space and areas of new planting around the site.

4.5.4 In terms of wildlife and landscape enhancement, all proposals should have regard to national and local guidelines and relevant development plan policies in this respect. The Council’s landscape guidelines are available at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

4.5.5 Where the site is bounded by drystane dykes, these should be retained and enhanced where possible. It will however be possible to create limited
vehicular and pedestrian access through the walls subject to the relevant road standards being met.

4.6 **The Hospital Building and Roxburghe House (Area 2)**

4.6.1 The majority of the main hospital building is convertible to an alternative use. The east wing of the building may not convert easily and it may be appropriate to remove it. Any granite should be reused on other parts of the site where possible. Newer extensions to the building may also be removed (see fig 4). The building could be converted to apartments which may have a level of care attached to them or a nursing care home or indeed a mixture of these uses. There may also be scope for communal rooms within the building which could be used by all residents.

4.6.2 The area to the immediate front of the building should be laid out as a garden area and no car parking should be provided to the front of the building.

4.6.3 The existing Roxburghe House Day Centre may lend itself to conversion and could include a small newsagents and/or café, which could be used by the community of Milltimber as well as the new residents. Alternatively, there is scope to demolish the building to allow an element of new build. Any new build should respect the character of the area and respect the privacy of the houses opposite. It should be designed to complement the main hospital building. Any new buildings must fit comfortably into the landscape, their context, and be the subject of a design statement lodged at the time of the planning application. Any new buildings which are proposed to be taller than the existing Roxburghe House should respect the building line of the main hospital building. Pedestrian access through the site should be retained. Visibility splays at the access to the site should also be respected. Parking should be provided to the Council’s standards.

4.7 **Area 3**

4.7.1 This area is located to the north and east of the site and is generally well screened and secluded. The existing buildings on this part of the site can be removed. A nursing home with satellite residential uses (based on the concept of a retirement village with various levels of care) are appropriate uses for this part of the site. A high standard of design and quality of materials will be expected. Open space and car parking will be provided to meet Aberdeen City Council’s standards.

4.7.2 Footpaths should link this area to the remainder of the site, particularly the area of open space to the south of the main hospital building and North
Deeside Road. There is scope to take an access to this part of the site directly from Binghill Road. Planting along the eastern boundary should be provided to match that on the rest of the site.

4.8 Area 4

4.8.1 This area which is currently used for car parking is generally well contained and to ensure that parking does not occur in front of the main hospital building should be retained for this purpose. The trees in this area help separate the various sections of the site. Some of the trees could be removed to house further car parking subject to gaining the necessary consents from Aberdeen City Council to remove the trees.

4.9 Access, Transport and Drainage

4.9.1 Tor-na-dee Hospital is located next to one of the main transport arteries to and from the City of Aberdeen. This is well served by public transport and includes a cycle lane. It is also close to the route of the proposed Western Peripheral Route.

4.9.2 The main vehicular access should be from the established access to the site from Binghill Road as shown in Figure 4. A secondary access from Binghill Road to the area to the North of the site may be appropriate. One access point on Oldfold Farm Road should be provided for emergency and pedestrian use only.

4.9.3 A transport assessment will be required and should address the requirements of NPPG 17 with the primary aim being the delivery of accessible and sustainable transport to the site. A “Scoping Study” should be agreed with Aberdeen City Council’s Road’s Officials prior to proceeding. As part of the assessment, it will be necessary to assess the capacity of the affected network taking into account current and related developments that may affect capacity. A key point of impact will be the junction of Binghill Road and North Deeside Road (A93).

4.9.4 The potential for a pedestrian access from North Deeside Road, close to the bus stop, should be considered.

4.9.5 Surface water run-off should be dealt with using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs). This should be incorporated into the design of the proposals and surface water should be disposed of within the site using SUDs measures with any approved waterflow being discharged via a new surface water sewer to the nearest watercourse. The SUDS scheme must be
approved by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.

4.9.6 There is sufficient capacity for the provision of water supply to the site. A mains extension, however, is likely to be required to service any proposed development.

4.10 **Construction Arrangements**

4.10.1 Any construction works should be carried out in such a way that no existing tree that is being retained within or immediately adjacent to the site is harmed. Trees should be protected in accordance with a scheme of fencing and other required measures based on British Standard 5837 (1991) and be agreed with Aberdeen City Council. Consideration should also be made to protect other areas of open space during the construction period and a scheme for this should form part of any planning application. The scheme should consider the location within the site for the erection of site offices, building material stores, spoil heaps and the like.

4.10.2 Planning briefs are produced as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan. They do not have the statutory status of the adopted Local Plan. Proposals that adhere to the principles of the Planning Brief will normally be considered favourably by the Planning Authority.

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