

**Planning Matters**

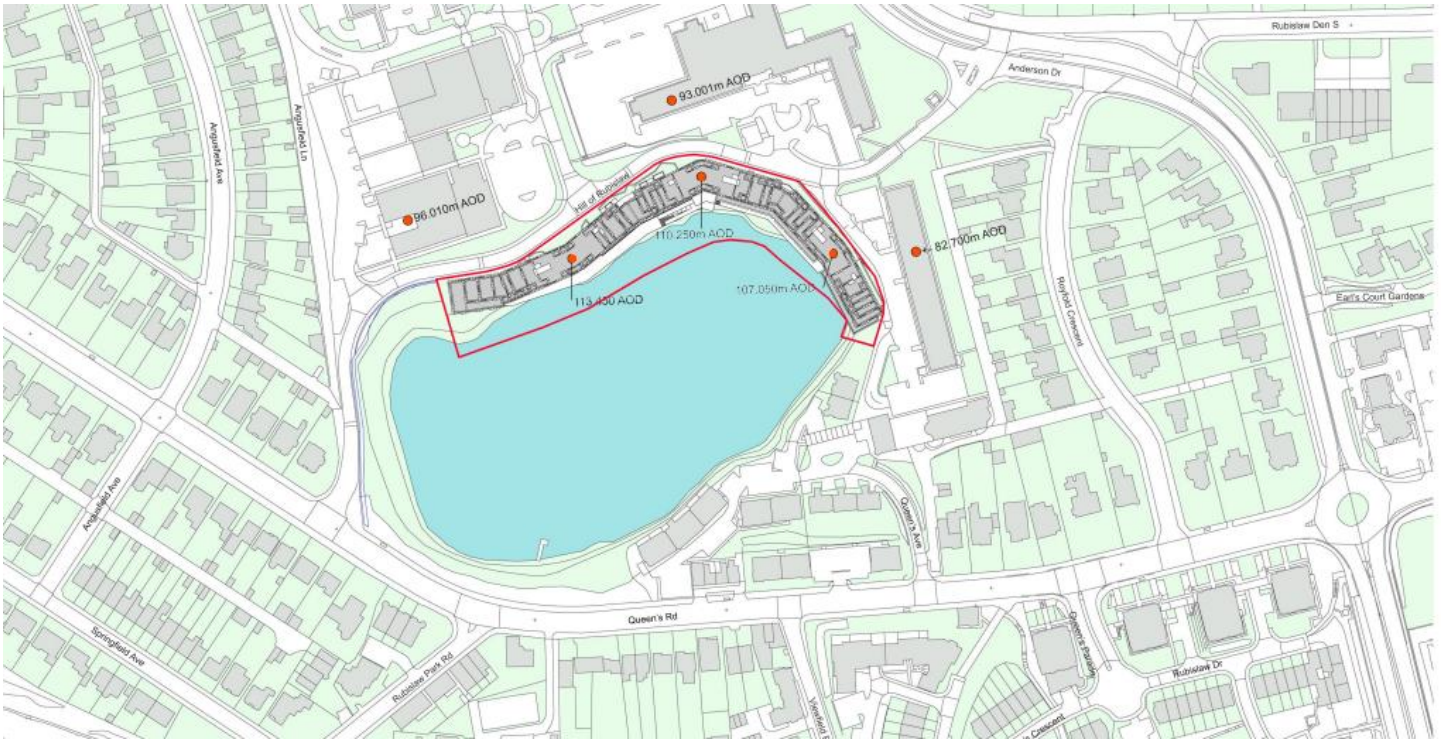
**Rubislaw Quarry Hill of Rubislaw Development for 300 Rented Flats**

**180368/DPP Residential development (across ten storeys and three basement levels) consisting of 299 private flats, gym, function room, public heritage bistro, promenade, car parking and amenity space**

Reference	180368/DPP
Application Received	Mon 12 Mar 2018
Application Validated	Wed 14 Mar 2018
Address	Land Adjacent To Rubislaw Quarry Hill Of Rubislaw Aberdeen AB15 6XL
Proposal	Residential development (across ten storeys and three basement levels) consisting of 299 private flats, gym, function room, public heritage bistro, promenade, car parking and amenity space
Status	Pending
Appeal Status	Unknown
Appeal Decision	Not Available







The building has been inspired by the rolling hills of Scotland and the granite history of the site. At its highest point it provides 10 storeys of accommodation.

The development will comprise: •

- 299 private rented flats with associated car parking;
- a new bistro, celebrating the granite heritage of the site;
- a residents' gym;

- a residents' function room;
- a public walkway with viewpoints to the quarry;
- residents' parking and parking for the bistro, including cycle stands and motorbike parking; and
- publicly accessible car club cars, including electric charging points.

**A public Meeting was held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March at Harlaw Academy:**

**Before the public meeting there were 130 objections submitted on the planning website, by the end of the week that rose to 245 and the final total was 377.**

**Letter of Representation:**

## **CRAIGIEBUCKLER AND SEAFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Mr Matthew Easton, Case Officer,  
Planning and Sustainable Development,  
Aberdeen City Council,  
Business Hub 4,  
Marischal College,  
Broad Street,  
Aberdeen,  
AB10 1AB

10 Craigiebuckler Drive,  
Aberdeen,  
AB15 8ND.

craigseacc@hotmail.co.uk

10<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Dear Mr Easton,

**Planning Application 180368/DPP – residential development at land adjacent to Rubislaw Quarry Hill, Aberdeen, AB156XL.**

We object to the above referenced planning application for the following reasons:-

- ⋄ This proposed residential development, which includes 299 flats, a heritage bistro and a viewing promenade, has given rise to 340 letters of objection and engendered the unanimous condemnation of residents during a well attended public meeting on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March which was hosted by our Community Council in conjunction with Queens Cross/Harlaw Community Council. The meeting was also attended by the Proposer's Representatives.

The plans, which were made available to view for the purpose of open public discussion, failed to cause a positive reaction in anyone present and we witnessed the anger (and distress) that the perceived adverse effects of this proposed development produced in such a large number of residents during the question and answer session with the Applicant's Representatives. Many left the meeting reaffirming their intentions to object to the proposed 10 storey residential development at the Hill of Rubislaw.

From the information that we gleaned from the residents attending the public meeting and the 340 letters of objection, we conclude that we have seen little evidence of public support for the planning application.

It is our considered recommendation that the Council should not reach a decision in respect of this planning application until it is the subject of a public hearing hosted by elected members of Planning and Sustainable Development.

- ⤴ We object to the design of the 10 storey residential development. It is apparent from the artist's impressions that it will contrast adversely with the local architecture. Furthermore, we predict that the development will form a concrete ring round the edge of the quarry – effectively closing it off. It is also our prediction that, at an intended 10 storeys in height and situated on raised ground, its irregular mass will be visible at a considerable distance from the site – an imposing pile of steel, concrete and glass which, in our opinion, will resemble boxes stacked on top each other. We also submit that it will overdevelop this sensitive heritage site as the plan packs a lot in - heritage bistro, promenade and museum.
- ⤴ The height of the development (10 storeys and 113.5 metres in height) is higher than the previous planning application. Policy D3 of the Local Development plan 2017 - “Big Building”- states that, "Proposals for big buildings that are considered to detract from their context and/or interfere with an established vista within the city centre will not be supported". This proposed building is not in the city centre, but may, because of its height, be visible from parts of it. It also is proposed to be constructed in a very sensitive and unique area of Aberdeen.
- ⤴ There are plans to apply for it to be designated as a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE - this would be a huge boost for tourism in the city and shire. Councillors certainly should take this into consideration. The entire quarry (because of its heritage value and the sensitivity of its natural environs) should be considered for protection, as a world heritage site, from any further development rather than looking at one part of it in isolation.
- ⤴ Drainage/flooding - The Developer whose site is at the southern edge of the quarry is responsible for controlling its water level, but more details need to be provided to ensure there will be no flooding and drainage issues in the surrounding area, especially as large volumes of spoil being dumped in the quarry, during the site preparation phase, will cause water displacement.
- ⤴ During construction there will be large volumes of spoil cleared from the site and we have concerns if this will be dumped into the quarry - apparently the Developer has permission, but we ask who granted that consent as we have seen no evidence of a study to determine how this activity could impact wildlife in the quarry?
- ⤴ We have a report of a badger sett at the quarry. They are a protected species who forage nocturnally for food in their territory which can be up to 120 hectares. I quote from a Scottish Natural Heritage Publication, “Badgers and Development”.

In the section, “The Planning System”, it is stated as follows:

“Developers should be aware that planning authorities are required to take account of protected species and habitat conservation when they consider planning applications. National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 14 defines Government policy on natural heritage and land use in “Planning in Scotland” and provides guidance to local authorities on how consideration of these interests should be reflected within the planning system. Where protected species are present the local authority should consult SNH at the earliest possible stage, and certainly before outline planning permission is granted.

Where badgers are present or likely to be present, the planning authority may require a survey to be undertaken, paid for by the developer. This will enable the authority to take account of the presence of badgers, by considering the importance of a sett and the implications of its loss or disturbance as well as the likely effects of any development on the occupants.”

In view of this report, we submit that the Council should contact Scottish Natural Heritage before making any decision concerning this application and also survey the entire quarry for the presence of badger setts.

- ⤴ Rubislaw Quarry was the source of most of Aberdeen's granite until almost half a century ago. Since its closure, it has never been marketed as a tourist attraction – even although it is one of Aberdeen's most famous and fascinating historic sites - the source of the building material for its best known and magnificent granite structures.

An estimated 6 million tonnes of granite were blasted from the quarry, giving Aberdeen the name of 'The Granite City'. But not all the granite remained in Aberdeen. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was used in the construction of Waterloo Bridge in London, the terrace of the Houses of Parliament and the Forth Bridge. It was also exported abroad. Therefore Rubislaw Quarry is historically associated with a number of famous structures, both in the U.K and abroad.

During the public consultation, hosted by the Applicant's representative, members of our Community Council were informed that the undulating profile of the planned 10 storey residential development was based on the Three Sisters of Glencoe. We submit that the proposed building has as little in common with the granite medium of Aberdeen's architecture as the Three Sisters of Glencoe have with Rubislaw Quarry and its history.

Therefore it is our contention that the design of the planned building has nothing in common with Rubislaw Quarry and (because of its enormity) the proposed residential development will be overbearing and intrusive on this famous historic area from which the city was born.

- ⤴ We believe that 299 flats, as proposed, have the potential to increase the volume of vehicle movements in the area's roads by 600 - including residents and visitors. Queens Road, from its roundabout junction with Anderson Drive to its intersection with Springfield Road is already congested by queuing traffic, particularly during the rush hours. We contend that the air quality, which is very poor at those times, will become so much worse if this development is permitted.
- ⤴ We do not believe that there will be sufficient parking at the proposed residential development for its residents and visitors – particularly because its plan includes a heritage bistro and a promenade. This could, in our view, result in a problem of overflow parking in the streets which are in the vicinity of the Hill of Rubislaw, for example, Angusfield Avenue, Springfield Avenue and Rubislaw Park Crescent.

We conclude by respectfully requesting you to recommend the refusal of this planning application.

Yours sincerely,  
William Sell,  
Secretary/Vice Chair,  
pp Aileen Brown,  
Chair



## Queens Cross & Harlaw CC Representation:

Queens Cross Community Council

5 Harlaw Terrace

Aberdeen AB15 4YU

Tel 01224319891

20th April, 2018

Subject : Planning Application Number: 180368/DPP

Address: Land Adjacent To Rubislaw Quarry Hill Of Rubislaw Aberdeen AB15 6XL

Proposal: Residential development (across ten storeys and three basement levels) consisting of 299 private flats, gym, function room, public heritage bistro, promenade, car parking and amenity space

Case Officer: Matthew Easton

We wish to object to the above Planning Application. There are several bases for our objection and I refer you to the Appendix below which gives a shortened list of the various planning criteria all planning applications should conform to. I will address each in turn.

However I must first highlight the missing relevant information which we think should be available to all objectors and to the public in order to be able to make comment with the pertinent facts.

Many citizens who have already objected had to do so on the basis of missing reports eg from Transport Scotland and others. We think ALL facts and Reports should be available before the cutoff date for comment.

Our Objection reasons are :-

On Policy D1 - "understanding of context" - This development proposes 10 Storeys 113.5 metres high - there are No buildings of this height in area - It's Massive - nothing else is more than 3 storeys - it dwarfs other housing and overlooks other houses and invades privacy

On Policy D2 - Landscape and Visual Impact - being on the **HILL** of Rubislaw it will seen for miles around and become a new (mainly non granite) blot on the Aberdeen skyline. As one resident comments that The structure will create a high point in the city, which will mean the white/grey cladding will be a dominant focus from wide areas of the city".

On Policy D3 - Big Buildings - This development is **BIG** - Policy states it should be in the City which it isn't - it definitely detracts from established vista and its silhouette is NOT in proportion.

On Policy D4 - Historic Environment - it does not respect the appearance and setting of this historic environment - We understand the Council is applying for UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE with a path to/from it as part of the Granite Heritage.

On Policy D5 - Granite Heritage - Although being built practically on top of our Granite Heritage Quarry it does NOT have an appropriate use of granite features (the question was asked at the public meeting what percentage granite would be used but the Developer was unable to give any clear answer)

Policy I1 - Infrastructure and Obligations - we suggest this large development is NOT accompanied by the necessary Infrastructure and facilities to support a much larger community - obviously Roads are a question (see below) but also what about GP's and other services.

Policy H1 - Residential Areas - We feel that 299 flats is overdevelopment - it must impact on the character of surrounding area and cause loss of open space and affect enjoyment of the existing tree area, an existing residential amenity.

Policy H3 - Density - The policy advice is higher densities should be in the city centre closer to transport modes - we (and many other objectors) do not think this development creates an attractive residential environment

Green Space network Policy NE1 including nature conservation and landscape enhancement and Policy NE8 - Natural Heritage and Protected species - from the Local Development plan we note this is a Local Conservation Site - according to these policies this development should not be allowed. In particular one objector Ms Marianne Inkson has shown photos of wildlife in the area which completely contradicts the Environmental Walkover Study (RQA-1803-EIS) which states there are no Badgers in the area. This must be taken into account and adhere to the Protection of Badger Act as amended by Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

The removal of more trees does not appear to abide by advice and it is reported by some residents that trees were removed prior to the Tree survey being carried out at the beginning of the year.

SuDS and Flooding - This is a very important aspect of this development which is highlighted by many residents and objectors who have great concern over the flooding dangers. New dangers will be created by the development which will apparently output the rainwater falling on the extensive roof area into the Quarry well as dumping 150 lorry loads of construction debris into it.

However it is not only residents but several experts who have shown they do NOT have confidence in the plans put forward by the developers. For example - ACC's own Flood Team "have concerns over the proposed SuDs scheme" SEPA **OBJECT** to the plans on the grounds of lack of information. We also note Scottish Water states "For reasons of sustainability and to protect our customers from potential future sewer flooding, Scottish Water will not normally accept any surface water connections into our combined sewer system."

For Pollution and Environmental Management - SEPA also require a Construction environment plan (CEMP) which includes construction phase drawings.

Policy T2 - Managing the Transport Impact of Development - there has been a very large number of residents voicing their concern at a Public meeting and via their online objections regarding the impact this development will have with only 322 parking bays available for the developments own residents PLUS visitors to the gym and other communal facilities. The latest report from the ACC Roads Group for Strategic Place Planning states "there is a shortfall of 97 parking spaces". Residents, Community and ACC Councillors will know how bad it is already with cars overspilling from the Hill of Rubislaw into other residential areas. To allow another development without appropriate parking facilities will undoubtedly lead to major problems for the area. We note Roads Group also voice concern over several aspects of the development from refuse collection to linking to the private access road to the Strategic Road Network. They suggest Transport Scotland Report should be reviewed BUT at the last time of asking Queens Cross Community Council were informed that that report has not yet been submitted. Queens Cross also asked if a Traffic Modelling Report would be coming and we understand one will be done **BUT** we have to submit this objection WITHOUT that vital information. There are already lines of backed up traffic down Queens Road and up Anderson Drive at the Traffic lights at the exit to Rubislaw Hill which must be exacerbated by new additional traffic from Rubislaw Hill.

We also believe this development will REDUCE opportunities for active travel because it does NOT have measures to minimise traffic generated.

Policy T3 - Sustainable and Active Travel - We do not understand how existing access rights, including core paths, rights of way and paths within the wider network will be protected and enhanced. For example the "Core Path" goes down Queens Road and this has already been a concern by Queens Cross community council. We do not understand how the black line (the core path) designated on the Local Development Plan can be viable as a meaningful recommended route into the city by cyclists and walkers. Already it is a very busy thoroughfare with dangerous roundabouts to navigate and even parking allowed on road on some stretches. This must get worse when more traffic from the new development is added to the already significant numbers. The Roads Report also seems to have some difficulty understanding how new paths etc will be created. I note the Roads Report ends by urging the applicant to contact them and states there are outstanding issues which the Road people can further comment on when they receive the information.

Policy T5 - Noise - We assumed a Noise Impact Assessment would be required but we cannot see one.

Finally we suggested there should be a Public Hearing with such a very large number (365) of objections but this was refused. Part of the basis for refusal was because ACC did not have a monetary interest **BUT** we contend as ACC will get £4 million pounds for social housing if this development does ahead it DOES have a monetary interest. The Planning Officer did explain why this wasn't the case but unfortunately we disagree with his conclusion.

We believe this development should not be given Planning Permission as it lacks so much detail on many aspects where even the experts and formal consultees have concerns and even objections.

Regards Ken Hutcheon Secretary Queens Cross Community Council

Appendix - Showing brief synopsis of most Planning Policies

Policy D1 - Placemaking by Design - design with a real understanding of context requiring distinctive, welcoming, safe and pleasant adaptable and resource efficient development.

Policy D2 - Landscape - a framework which improves and enhances the setting and visual impact and promotes biodiversity - enhance or restore existing landscape features - protect and enhance important views of the city landscape when seen from publicly available vantage points

Policy D3 - Big buildings - most appropriate within the city centre - if considered to detract from their context and interfere with established vista will not be supported - silhouette in proportion

D4 - Historic Environment - respects character appearance and setting of the historic environment

Policy D5 - Our Granite Heritage - appropriate reuse of granite features

Policy11 - Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations - development must be accompanied

by infrastructure, services and facilities required to support new/enhanced communities.

Policy H1 - Residential Areas - does not constitute overdevelopment - impact on the character of surrounding area - cause loss of valued areas of open space - cause conflict with or nuisance to enjoyment of existing residential amenity

Policy H3 - Density - have consideration of sites' characteristics and those of surrounding area - create an attractive residential environment - ADVISES higher densities should be in City Centre closer to transport nodes.

Green Space network Policy NE1 - nature conservation, landscape enhancement and providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness - developments not allowed otherwise.

Policy NE8 - Natural Heritage - Protected Species - species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) Developments should be planned to avoid, minimise or mitigate any potential harm it may cause; incorporate features into open space or sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) where appropriate;

Policy T2 - Managing the Transport Impact of Development - new developments must demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise traffic generated and to maximise opportunities for sustainable and active travel.

Policy T3 - Sustainable and Active Travel - Existing access rights, including core paths, rights of way and paths within the wider network will be protected and enhanced

Policy T5 - Noise - Noise Impact Assessment required.



**Planning Applications as per weekly planning list April 2018:**

Reference	180622/TCA
Application Received	Thu 19 Apr 2018
Application Validated	Fri 20 Apr 2018
Address	The James Hutton Institute Countesswells Road Aberdeen AB15 8QH
Proposal	Works to 14 Protected Tress as per schedule of works
Status	Pending
Appeal Status	Unknown
Appeal Decision	Not Available

Application Type	Works to Tree Preservation Order
Expected Decision Level	Not Available
Case Officer	Lina-Elvira Back
Community Council	Craigiebuckler And Seafield
Ward	Hazlehead/Ashley/Queens Cross
District Reference	Not Available
Applicant Name	Not Available
Applicant Address	The James Hutton Institute Countesswells Road Aberdeen AB15 8QH