**Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council**

Mr Matthew Easton 10 Craigiebuckler Drive Senior Planner Aberdeen AB15 8ND Development Management craigseacc@hotmail.co.uk
Strategic Place Planning
Aberdeen City Council Date 11th January 2023
Business Hub 4
Marischal College
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Dear Mr Easton

**Application Number: 221419/DPP The James Hutton Institute, Countesswells Road, Aberdeen, AB15 8QH Proposal: Formation of access road, amended car parking and associated drainage**.

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

The proposed access road is not in keeping with the character of the local area which is semi-rural and features an arboretum of mature trees, a greenspace, and a belt of woodland at the estate’s boundary with Countesswells Road.

The application, if permitted, will have a detrimental impact on this environment because, to form a junction with Countesswells Road, mature trees at the site’s southern boundary will have to be felled. Those trees are the subject of a tree preservation order (as acknowledged in the Applicant’s Planning Statement at paragraph 3.1).

It is our contention that the proposed road, if permitted, will cause the depletion of the wildlife habitat, resulting in the reduction in numbers (or the extinction on the site) of bats, deer, squirrels, badgers, foxes, and bees that feed on the heavy Linden blossom that flourishes on the open greenspace.

Public concern has been expressed about the impact the proposed access road will have on the wildlife in the area by removing the trees which support the nests of sparrow hawks, owls and many other bird species including woodpeckers. We have been informed that there have been pine martins observed in the grounds, and barn owls have been seen hunting, feeding, and resting regularly in the field where the new road is proposed.

The proposed access road will encourage motorised transport, contrary to Aberdeen City Council’s Local Transport Strategy which is to reduce the dependence on the private car in favour of sustainable forms of transport, the objective being to achieve a target of zero carbon emissions.

According to the site plan, the proposed access road will be close to the boundary of the houses of Macaulay Grange. In our view, traffic noise and fumes will degrade the amenity of their back gardens.

The proposed access road’s junction with Countesswells Road is located on a blind bend and close to its junction with a lane, which serves as the only vehicular access to residential properties. Therefore, we contend that the formation of a new junction on that bend, and near the lane’s junction, heightens the risk of RTCs involving vehicles travelling East to access the primary school, other public amenities, and the junction with Springfield Road.

Furthermore, the drivers of vehicles merging from the proposed junction may have difficulty doing so safely because they will not be able to see traffic approaching from beyond the bend.

In mitigation of the planning application, the applicant should include a statement that no motorised traffic accessing or exiting the premises and grounds of the James Hutton Institute will be able to do so via Macaulay Drive because the present internal link road will be restricted to pedestrian and cyclist traffic.

Countesswells Road has become increasingly busy with traffic generated by the new Aldi store, the Dandara housing development, and the growth of the new Countesswells Village to the West of the city. The junctions for all these new developments interrupt the flow of the thousands of traffic movements by functioning to determine their directions of travel.

The applicant proposes to add another junction to this complex mix of road engineering, thus increasing the risk of accidents involving school pupils who cross them on their way to Airyhall Primary School.

Considering its proximity to Airyhall Primary School and Nursery, the Applicant does not seem to consider the impact his planned access road would have on these establishments.

The traffic generated by the proposed access road will also add to the congestion at the junction between Countesswells Road and Springfield Road.

We noted from the transport statement that the traffic surveys were completed on 16th June 2022. Since this study was conducted a new Aldi supermarket has been opened at the top of Countesswells Road (July 2022) which has significantly increased the volume of traffic on that road. We consider this to be a fundamental change to the road usage and believe that the traffic survey is now outdated and irrelevant.

In addition to road safety concerns, the proposed junction will be against Aberdeen City Council (ACC) guidelines as it is proposed to be located within 15m of existing accesses to residential driveways as shown in Figure 4. As per section 6.3 Specifications of Aberdeen City Council Transport and Accessibility guidance [1] “Driveways should be a minimum of 15m from a junction, although there may be circumstances where this may be relaxed when not deemed a road safety issue. In no circumstances, however, will a driveway be permitted within 10m of a junction.”

We consider that, because of the volume and speed of traffic on Countesswells Road, a road safety issue does exist. Consequently, the 15m rule should not be relaxed.

Its proximity to the driveways of properties on Countesswells Road adds to likelihood of the occurrence of an RTC involving a resident who is attempting to park their vehicle on their driveway or enter the road from their driveway.

We conclude by submitting that the application does not take account of the inevitability of the environmental impact of the planned road on the eco system of the natural environment of the site. Furthermore, the Applicant has provided what seems to be an outdated traffic survey which, in the event of it being deemed credible by members of a Council Planning Committee, would have adverse implications for the safety of those who use Countesswells Road.

William Sell,

Chair.

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