

News

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Marischal Square consultation begins

People living and working in Aberdeen can have a major influence on the shape of the city's new civic and commercial space when the first phase of the consultation process for the redevelopment of the former Aberdeen City Council headquarters building begins on Wednesday (October 30th).

Muse, is leading the consultation process and working with Aberdeen City Council on the £100 million Marischal Square project which will transform the shape of the former St Nicholas House site in the city centre over the next five years.

The first of three planned public consultation phases ahead of the detailed planning application for the development being lodged with Aberdeen City Council next year, begins with a four-day public exhibition in Aberdeen Art Gallery on Wednesday where key project executives from Muse and the Council will be on hand to listen to the views of those looking to have their say on the new development.

In addition, a special project consultation bus will tour key areas of the city on Friday and Saturday to gauge the opinion of those not in a position to attend the Art Gallery sessions.

The plans for the mixed-use development include office, hotel, restaurant, leisure and civic space, along with public access, landscaping, car parking and public realm improvements.

Both parties are already involved in positive discussions with leading hotel providers keen to get involved in the project and Muse regional director for Scotland, Steve Turner, said he expected significant interest in every aspect of the development from those living and working in the city.

"These public exhibition events, along with the regular update and consultation meetings we are holding with the Aberdeen City Council team, ensure everyone – including community council groups and other stakeholders – will have a major say in the way the space is developed in the year ahead," he added.

"In structuring our earlier suggestions to the Council, the objective was to deliver a development which is vibrant, respects the heritage of the location and the city, and opens the area to wider public use.

"Both we and the Council want the people of Aberdeen to be fully involved in every element of the project from the start and we are here to listen to their views on what they want from an area which will play a vital role in the city's future."

Deputy leader of Aberdeen City Council, Councillor Marie Boulton said: "The proposed Marischal Square development is a very exciting project for the whole of Aberdeen.

"The redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed-use development with a significant amount of civic space is something which I am quite sure everyone in Aberdeen will have a view on.

"Muse is keen to hear your views and talk about plans for the site. I would encourage everyone

with an interest to attend the exhibition or to visit the consultation project bus as it tours the city to ensure you have your say in the development of this important site, which will drive the regeneration of our city centre."

Muse and the Council are seeking to deliver an exemplar development with sustainable offices, high quality public realm - including a new civic square space between the scheme and Marischal College - a circa 150-bedroom hotel and new retail/restaurant space to create a new mixed-use quarter for the city.

"The economics of the current economic climate dictate that Marischal Square simply has to be a mix of commercial and civic space, but how that will look and 'feel' is something the public can have a major influence on by attending the exhibition or talking to our team on the consultation bus," added Steve .

"As we are still very much at the consultation stage in this project, we will not be turning up at the exhibition with drawings or visuals of how we feel the Marischal Square development will look, we want the people of Aberdeen to have a major influence on our thinking before we come back with a development which works for all concerned."

The public exhibition events are scheduled to take place at Aberdeen Art Gallery on Schoolhill between 10am and 5pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and between 10.30am and 3pm on Saturday. The consultation bus will be located at key sites in Garthdee Road (Aberdeen Snowsports Centre), Springfield Road (Airyhall Library), Oscar Road (Torry Youth & Leisure Centre), Springhill Road (Sheddocksley Sports Centre) and Scotstown Road (Alex Collie Sport centre) on Friday and Saturday.

Two further stages of consultation will be held later this year and early in 2014 before Muse submits a full planning proposal to the Council next year.