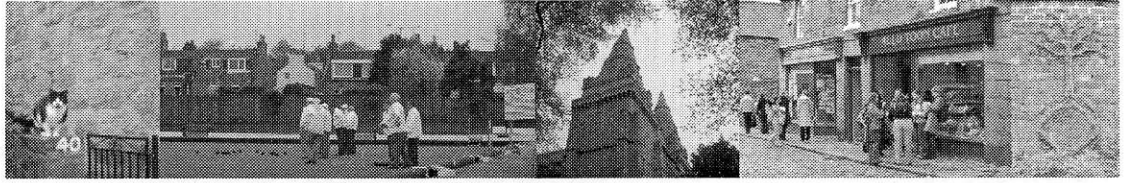


The Auld Toon News

The Old Aberdeen Community Council's newsletter is published in May, September and January
www.oldaaberdeen.org.uk



We are delighted to introduce both our new-look newsletter and our very own website to the community of Old Aberdeen. We welcome this combined opportunity to provide you with a forum for communication, which we hope will contribute positively to a feeling of "connectedness" and inclusion for us all.

This first issue introduces your new Community Council and gives you an insight into what we have been involved in since our re-constitution in February this year. But, importantly, this is your newsletter and it gives you the chance to air your feelings, tell others what you are doing, and link various groups and activities. So please be in touch with your thoughts so that we can fashion the newsletter accordingly.

You can contact any of us directly; and the website at www.oldaaberdeen.org.uk lets you log your ideas online. And, of course, you are always welcome to attend our meetings, held on the third Tuesday of every month at St Peter's R.C. School. You don't have to become a councillor to attend or be involved, though we do always welcome volunteers.

To celebrate this new beginning, we are planning a Community "Get-Together" evening at the Dunbar Hall in Dunbar Street on Friday 28 May from 7.30 to 10.30 and warmly invite you to attend. We look forward to creating a dynamic forum that has the community at heart.

Warmest wishes, Morag Paterson

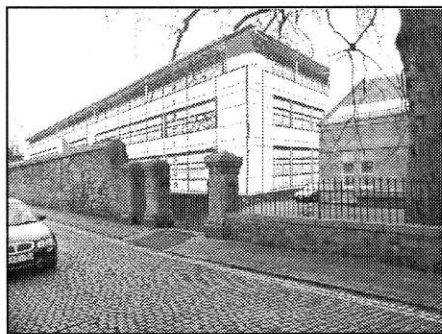
University Plans Rejected

[NL] Within weeks of Old Aberdeen Community Council (OACC) being re-instated a planning application was lodged by the University of Aberdeen to build new facilities at the corner of St Machar Drive and The Chanonry. The application proved controversial from the outset due to both proposed construction and timing of the application which coincided with the start of Christmas.

It was at the first meeting of the new year that the University first presented its plans for the new facility to OACC. Strong opposition was raised by residents present at the meeting and lively discussion ensued. Your Community Council raised formal objections to the application, organised a public meeting on the issue and notified local residents. A public meeting was held at St Peter's School on 5th February, leaving just enough time for interested parties to lodge representations with Aberdeen City Council Planning.

The public meeting was well attended by local residents and began with a presentation by architects contracted by the University. It was proposed that the AURIS building, greenhouses and other buildings would first be demolished.

Thereafter it was proposed that a three story building plus plant room (seen by most as a four story building) of glass and polished granite facade would be built. The building was to be of such height and scale as to dominate the surrounding community. Its design was not in keeping with the area which, in part, is at the heart of conservation area number one.



Artist's impression of the planned development

After the initial presentation a wide variety of objections were raised by the many residents present. Objections included mention of height, scale, design (both facade and roof), damage to the listed mediaeval wall surrounding the site, removal of trees, encroachment on the Cruickshank Gardens and lots more. While it was clear that no one wished to impede the University's pursuit of academic excellence or its world class

research, not one local resident appeared to support the proposal!

Despite overwhelming objections raised by local residents, Aberdeen City Council Planning Department supported the planning application. Clearly, the 28 objections lodged, including that of the OACC, failed to sway them. However, the support of local councillors initiated a site visit for the Planning Committee and resulted in the application being refused. At the time of writing it is not known if the University will appeal this decision.

OACC are endeavouring to engage the University in dialogue during the early stages of any future planning so that the needs of both residents and the University can be met while protecting the unique historic environment we have the privilege to live in. As a number of University buildings are close to the end of their useful life requiring either significant refurbishment or replacement, dialogue between University and local residents is now more important than ever.

OACC would like to thank the University for presenting at the public meeting, local residents who participated and our local councillors for their support on this issue. In particular, our thanks go to Councillor Macdonald for her significant contribution.

