

**Delegated or Committee Planning Application Report and Report of Handling as required by Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 relative to applications for Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle**

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**Reference No:** 14/01083/PP  
**Planning Hierarchy:** Local  
**Applicant:** NHS Highland  
**Proposal:** Demolition of buildings, tree removal and ground engineering, erection of clinical building, estates building, service yard and landscaping works to create patient gardens and amenity space with related Masterplan submission reference 14/01256/MPLAN. Mast 1/8 Lochgilphead/Argyll and Bute Hospital Mixed Use/Business/Tourism/Community Facilities  
**Site Address:** Argyll and Bute Hospital, Blarbuie Road, Lochgilphead

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## **DECISION ROUTE**

Local Government Scotland Act 1973

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### **(A) THE APPLICATION**

**(i) Development Requiring Express Planning Permission**

- Erection of new Mental Health Unit;
- Ground Engineering Works

**(ii) Other specified operations**

- Demolition of Hospital Buildings (Succoth and Tigh-na-Linne);
  - Tree Felling;
  - Landscaping and Compensatory Tree Planting;
  - Connection to Public Water Supply;
  - Connection to Public Sewer.
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### **(B) RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend that Planning Permission be granted subject to the conditions and reasons attached.

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### **(C) CONSULTATIONS:**

ABC Biodiversity Officer: (10.07.14) – No objections subject to conditions.

ABC Core Paths: No objections (response submitted to associated masterplan).

ABC Environmental Health: (08.07.14) – No objections subject to conditions.

ABC Roads: (21.07.14) – No objections subject to conditions.

Forestry Commission: (28.08.14) – No objection subject to conditions.

Lochgilphead Community Council: (18.08.14) – LCC have raised concern that the associated masterplan does not set out any detailed proposal for the future of residual buildings within the Hospital Estate. It is suggested that any approval of the current planning application should be incumbent upon specific proposals being made for the existing buildings of the old hospital.

*Comment: It is noted that the current masterplan submission seeks to provide only sufficient detail to allow the re-development of the hospital to proceed; a further 'Stage 2' masterplan submission would be required prior to any grant of planning approval in respect of new uses/redevelopment of either the East or West Houses.*

Scottish Natural Heritage: (02.09.14) – No objections.

Scottish Water: No response to date.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service: Have recommended (see 14/01256/MPLAN) that development within the masterplan area be subject to suspensive planning conditions requiring archaeological investigation of development sites.

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**(D) HISTORY:**

14/01256/MPLAN – A 'Stage 1' masterplan for the re-development of the A&B Hospital Estate is considered elsewhere on the agenda.

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**(E) PUBLICITY:**

The application has been advertised having regard to the provisions of Reg. 20 – expired 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

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**(F) REPRESENTATIONS:**

**(i) Representations received from:**

None to date.

**(ii) Summary of issues raised:**

- n/a

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**(G) SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Has the application been the subject of:**

- (i) Environmental Statement:** No
- (ii) An appropriate assessment under the** Yes – Protected Species

**Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994:** Survey

- (iii) **A design or design/access statement:** Yes – site selection criteria for the new MHU is set out within section 3.12 of the accompanying masterplan.
- (iv) **A report on the impact of the proposed development eg. Retail impact, transport impact, noise impact, flood risk, drainage impact etc:** Yes – Tree Survey

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**(H) PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

**Is a Section 75 agreement required:** No

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- (I) Has a Direction been issued by Scottish Ministers in terms of Regulation 30, 31 or 32:** No

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**(J) Section 25 of the Act; Development Plan and any other material considerations over and above those listed above which have been taken into account in the assessment of the application**

- (i) List of all Development Plan Policy considerations taken into account in assessment of the application.**

'Argyll and Bute Structure Plan' 2002

STRAT DC 1 – Development within the Settlements

STRAT DC 7 – Nature Conservation and Development Control

STRAT DC 8 – Landscape and Development Control

STRAT DC 9 – Historic Environment and Development Control

'Argyll and Bute Local Plan' 2009

LP ENV 1 – Impact on the General Environment

LP ENV 2 – Impact on Biodiversity

LP ENV 6 – Impact on Habitats and Species

LP ENV 7 – Impact on Tree/Woodland

LP ENV 13a – Development Impact on Listed Buildings

LP ENV 17 – Impact on Sites of Archaeological Importance

LP ENV 18 – Protection and Enhancement of Buildings

LP ENV 19 – Development Setting, Layout and Design

LP SERV 1 – Private Sewage Treatment Plants and Wastewater Systems

LP SERV 2 – Incorporation of Natural Features/Sustainable Drainage Systems

LP SERV 4 – Water Supply

LP SERV 5 – Waste Related Development and Waste Management Sites  
LP SERV 7 – Contaminated Land

LP TRAN 1 – Public Access and Rights of Way  
LP TRAN 2 – Development and Public Transport Accessibility  
LP TRAN 3 – Special Needs Access Provision  
LP TRAN 4 – New and Existing Public Roads and Private Access Regimes  
LP TRAN 6 – Vehicle Parking Provision

LP COM 1 – Community Facility Development  
LP COM 2 – Change of Use of Key Rural Services

LP PG 1 – Planning Gain

Appendix A – Sustainable Siting and Design Principles  
Appendix C – Access and Parking Standards  
Appendix E – Allocations, Potential Development Area Schedules and Areas for Action Schedules

**(ii) List of all other material planning considerations taken into account in the assessment of the application, having due regard to Annex A of Circular 4/2009.**

- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)
- Argyll and Bute proposed Local Development Plan (Feb 2013) (pLDP)

*Note: The emergent pLDP is the most recent expression of Council policy, and following the conclusion of public consultation, those elements which are uncontested may be afforded significant material weight in the determination of planning applications at this time.*

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**(K) Is the proposal a Schedule 2 Development not requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment: No**

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**(L) Has the application been the subject of statutory pre-application consultation (PAC): No**

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**(M) Has a sustainability check list been submitted: No**

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**(N) Does the Council have an interest in the site: No**

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**(O) Requirement for a hearing (PAN41 or other): No**

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**(P) Assessment and summary of determining issues and material considerations**

The proposal relates to development within a larger site identified as Area for Action 12/3 within the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Plan. This designation is however superseded by the uncontested, emergent provisions of the Argyll and Bute proposed Local Development Plan which sets out the Council's intent to subsume the current

Area for Action within a larger Mixed Use Potential Development Area (PDA 3008) within which support is afforded for a mixed use re-development of the A&B Hospital Estate subject to a masterplan for designation MAST 1/8 having already been endorsed by the Council.

NHS Highland have put forward a 'Stage 1' masterplan for designation MAST 1/8 which seeks to provide sufficient detail to allow release of the current application site and other identified land parcels in advance of proposals being finalised for the wider designation. The 'Stage 1' masterplan appears elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting (ref. 14/01256/MPLAN); for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that the Masterplan submission will be endorsed by Members in its current form.

The proposal sets out a 'large scale' community facility development comprising a new mental health care unit within the grounds of the existing Argyll & Bute Hospital. The proposed new development is intended to replace the existing buildings with a modern facility designed to meet current mental health care requirements for the locality.

The reuse of the site for a mental health care facility is consistent with the 'Stage 1' masterplan and the proposed development is of appropriate design, scale and finish having regard to its location and the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance. The development will appear as a modern addition to the existing grouping of buildings within the A&B Hospital Estate, and the adjacent Mid Argyll Community Hospital and will not have any significant or adverse effect upon the character, appearance of setting of the local landscape setting / built environment.

Whilst the application will result in the felling of a significant number of healthy, mature trees which make an important contribution to the woodland setting of the A&B Hospital grounds it is considered that there is sufficient justification to merit such a loss in this instance provided that compensatory planting is secured elsewhere within the immediate locality.

Replacement of existing buildings allows the new development to form part of an integrated health care offering along with the adjacent Mid Argyll Community Hospital which is readily accessible on foot, by public transport and car, and can readily be connected to existing infrastructure.

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**(Q) Is the proposal consistent with the Development Plan: No**

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**(R) Reasons why Planning Permission Should be Granted:**

See sections P above and Q below.

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**(S) Reasoned justification for a departure to the provisions of the Development Plan**

The proposed development requires the felling of a significant area of healthy, mature woodland which provides a significant contribution to the amenity and setting of the locale. The loss of such an area of sustainable, healthy woodland is contrary to the provisions of policy LP ENV 17. However, in this particular instance the anticipated social and economic benefits associated with the hospital re-development, and the ability of the applicant to provide compensatory planting in the immediate locale are

considered to offer sufficient justification to approve planning permission as a minor departure to the provisions of LP ENV 17.

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**(T) Need for notification to Scottish Ministers or Historic Scotland: No**

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**Author of Report:** Peter Bain

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**Reviewing Officer:**

**Date:**

**Angus Gilmour**  
**Head of Planning & Regulatory Services**

## CONDITIONS AND REASONS RELATIVE TO APPLICATION REF. NO. 14/01083/PP

1. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the details specified on the application form dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014, supporting information and the approved drawing reference numbers 1/14 – 14/14 unless the prior written approval of the planning authority is obtained for other materials/finishes/for an amendment to the approved details under Section 64 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Reason: For the purpose of clarity, to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the approved details.

2. No development shall commence until details of the proposed finished ground floor level of the development relative to an identifiable fixed datum located outwith the application site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to secure an acceptable relationship between the development and its surroundings.

3. Notwithstanding the effect of Condition 1, no development shall commence until samples of materials to be used in the construction of external walls and roof coverings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be completed using the approved materials or such alternatives as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to integrate the development into its surroundings.

4. Notwithstanding the effect of Condition 1, no development shall commence until details of colour finish of the window and door units to be installed in the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details or such alternatives as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to integrate the development into its surroundings.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of Condition 1, the development shall incorporate a surface water drainage system which is consistent with the principles of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) compliant with the guidance set out in CIRIA's SuDS Manual C697. The requisite surface water drainage shall be operational prior to the development being brought into use and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the provision of an adequate surface water drainage system and to prevent flooding.

6. No tree felling, demolition works or development shall commence within the application site until a scheme for the retention and safeguarding of trees during construction has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall comprise:

- i) Details of all trees to be removed and the location and canopy spread of trees to be retained as part of the development;

- ii) A programme of measures for the protection of trees during construction works which shall include fencing at least one metre beyond the canopy spread of each tree in accordance with BS 5837:2005 "Trees in Relation to Construction".

Tree protection measures shall be implemented for the full duration of construction works in accordance with the duly approved scheme. No trees shall be lopped, topped or felled other than in accordance with the details of the approved scheme unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to retain trees as part of the development in the interests of amenity and nature conservation.

- 7. No tree felling, demolition works or development shall commence within the application site until a Detailed Landscape Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and approved by the Planning Authority in consultation with Forestry Commission Scotland.

The Detailed Landscape Plan shall be compliant with the requirements set out within Appendix 1 of the Forestry Commission Scotland's consultation response dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014, and shall inform the design of a Compensatory Planting Plan which shall be included within the submission.

The Compensatory Planting shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Any trees which within a period of ten years from the completion of the approved Compensatory Planting scheme fail to become established, die, become seriously diseased, or are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the following planting season with equivalent numbers, sizes and species as those originally required to be planted unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to an appropriate scheme of compensatory planting elsewhere within the locality to mitigate for the loss of sustainable, mature woodland within the development site.

- 8. No demolition works or development shall commence within the application site until a scheme of boundary treatment, surface treatment and landscaping within the application site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall comprise a planting plan and schedule which shall include details of:

- i) Existing and proposed ground levels in relation to an identified fixed datum;
- ii) Existing landscaping features and vegetation to be retained;
- iii) Location design and materials of proposed walls, fences and gates;
- iv) Proposed soft and hard landscaping works including the location, species and size of every tree/shrub to be planted;
- v) A programme for the timing, method of implementation, completion and subsequent on-going maintenance.

All of the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Any trees/shrubs which within a period of five years from the completion of the



approved landscaping scheme fail to become established, die, become seriously diseased, or are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the following planting season with equivalent numbers, sizes and species as those originally required to be planted unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To assist with the integration of the proposal with its surroundings in the interest of amenity.

9. No demolition works or development shall commence within the application site until a Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The details of the scheme shall include measures for protecting the amenity of nearby residential properties during demolition and construction activities. The CMS shall have regard to BS5228 – Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction Sites, and shall include:

- i) The proposed working hours of demolition and construction works.
- ii) Details of the plant and machinery to be used.
- iii) A Noise Management Plan outlining the complaint response procedure to be adopted.
- iv) Mitigating measures to prevent any dust nuisance.
- v) Mitigating measures to prevent excessive vibration to nearby residential properties.
- vi) Any other information the applicant may deem necessary to demonstrate that the closest sensitive receptors are unlikely to be affected by noise or disturbance.

Demolition and construction works shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved CMS, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of the area for noise and dust disturbance.

10. In the event that contamination that was not previously identified is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported immediately in writing to the Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is deemed necessary then a Remediation Scheme must be prepared which is subject to the approval in writing of the Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved Remediation Scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of public health, as the site may be contaminated as it includes an area of made-up ground of unknown infill material and in order to ensure that any contamination is removed appropriately.

11. The development and demolition works shall be implemented having full regard to the recommendations set out in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the Protected Species Survey (dated February 2014).

Reason: In order to ensure demolition works / construction activity is undertaken in a manner which does not compromise European Protected Species.

12. The road geometry, parking and turning area shall all be laid out and surfaced in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans prior to the development first being occupied and shall thereafter be maintained clear of obstruction for the parking

and manoeuvring of vehicles.

Reason: In the interest of road safety.

13. Notwithstanding the provisions of Condition 1, the proposed southern access to the shall be formed with visibility splays of 2.4 metres to point X by 42.0 metres to point Y from the centre line of the proposed access. Prior to work starting on site the visibility splays shall be cleared of all obstructions such that nothing shall disrupt visibility from a point 1.05 metres above the access at point X to a point 0.6 metres above the public road carriageway at point Y. The visibility splays shall be maintained clear of all obstructions thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

14. No demolition works or development shall commence within the application site until, a Traffic Management Plan has been submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with the Roads Authority. The Plan shall detail approved access routes, agreed operational practices (including avoidance of convoy movements, specifying conduct in use of passing places, identification of turning areas, reporting of verge damage) and shall provide for the provision of an appropriate Code of Practice to drivers of construction and delivery vehicles. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the duly approved Traffic Management Plan.

Reason: To address abnormal traffic associated with the development in the interests of road safety.

15. No demolition works shall commence until a schedule of items to be reclaimed from the site during or prior to demolition has been drawn up in consultation with, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These materials and items shall be satisfactorily set aside, stored and/or used in a manner which shall first be agreed with by the Planning Authority, prior to any demolition taking place.

Reason: In order to protect and save materials and items which can reasonably be retrieved and reused, in the interests of the historical and architectural qualities of the building to be demolished.

16. No development shall take place within the development site as outlined in red on the approved plan until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved by the Planning Authority. There after the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Reason: In order to protect archaeological resources.

## NOTE TO APPLICANT

- **The length of the permission:** This planning permission will last only for three years from the date of this decision notice, unless the development has been started within that period [See section 58(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).]
- In order to comply with Section 27A(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, prior to works commencing on site it is the responsibility of the developer to complete and submit the attached 'Notice of Initiation of Development' to the Planning Authority specifying the date on which the development will start.
- In order to comply with Section 27B(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 it is the responsibility of the developer to submit the attached 'Notice of Completion' to the Planning Authority specifying the date upon which the development was completed.
- Regard should be had to the consultation comments from Forestry Commission Scotland dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014 in respect of the requirements for a Detailed Landscape Design and Compensatory Planting Plan.
- The Council's Core Paths Team note the presence of Core Paths within the locality of the proposed development. It is advised that if at any time there is a requirement to close or amend the route of a Core Path written consent must be sought from the Access Authority prior to the closure or amendment. Closure of a Core Path may require to be the subject of public consultation and it is therefore recommended that if the development requires closure or amendment of a Core Path, that the developer contact the Access Authority at the earliest opportunity to discuss their proposals.
- Consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer should be undertaken in identifying items to be reclaimed from buildings to be demolished.
- A Road Opening Permit under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 must be obtained from the Council's Roads Engineers prior to the formation/alteration of a junction with the public road.
- The access shall be constructed and drained to ensure that no surface water is discharged onto the public road.

## **APPENDIX A – RELATIVE TO APPLICATION NUMBER: 14/01083/PP**

### **PLANNING LAND USE AND POLICY ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. Settlement Strategy**

The application site is located within the 'settlement area' for Lochgilphead wherein the relevant provisions of the current Development Plan would include policies STRAT DC 1 and LP COM 1 which set out a general presumption in favour of up to 'large' scale community facilities development. Furthermore, the site lies within the boundary of Area for Action (AFA 12/3) which sets out the Council's aspiration for a local redevelopment study for the wider Argyll & Bute Hospital Estate.

Having regard to the emergent draft Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP) (Feb 2013) the provisions of draft policies LDP DM 1 and LDP 8, and SG LDP REC/COM 1 would also be supportive in principle of 'large' scale development within the Lochgilphead 'settlement area'. Having regard to the emergent LDP, the application site lies within larger designations MAST 1/8 and PDA 3008 – both designations seek to promote a mixed use re-development of the A&B Hospital Estate subject to this being overseen with a masterplan approach. The current application is accompanied by a 'Stage 1' masterplan submission which seeks to justify the release of identified areas of land for development, including the current application site, in advance of detailed proposals for the existing hospital buildings being developed.

The development will replace existing hospital buildings which currently provide mental health care to the wider community and as such the current application is considered to be a re-development and continuation of the established lawful use of this site.

#### **B. Location, Nature and Design of Proposed Development**

The application relates to a site area of 1.98ha located within the north eastern corner of the existing A&B Hospital. The proposed new development requires the clearance of a site which presently includes the existing buildings Succoth and Tigh-na-Linne, in addition to the Chapel and Mortuary which are on the north-west wing of the West House, and a number of storage outbuildings.

The application site is contained by Blarbuie Road to the north, the access to the Mid Argyll Community Hospital (MACH) to the west, the lower Blarbuie Woodland to the south and east, and the West House buildings of the old A&B Hospital to the east.

The proposal comprises a new Mental Health Unit (MHU) comprising of a Clinical Core Building, a Facilities Maintenance (FM) Building with adjacent service yard. The proposal also includes for extensive parking and turning areas, patient gardens and landscaping.

The Clinical Core Building will occupy the south-western portion of the application site. The Clinical Core Building has a proposed external footprint of approximately 2600sqm; and a gross internal floor area of almost 3000sqm. The Clinical Core Building will accommodate an Acute Ward, an Intensive Psychiatric Ward, a Rehabilitation Ward, Medical Records/Offices and Staff Facilities. The Clinical Core

Building is comprised of two parallel wings which run SW-NE along the site, the northernmost wing is two storey of design, the southern wing is single storey. These principal elements are connected by three perpendicular single storey wings to create an internal courtyard arrangement. The two storey north-west facing elevation of the building is broken up by the protruding single storey Outpatient wing, and the continuation of the easternmost perpendicular wing beyond the principal building line. The external walls of the building will be finished in elements of render (no specification provided), separate elements of horizontal and vertical timber cladding (no specification provided), and metal cladding (no specification provided). Windows and doors will be aluminium framed (no specification provided), and the roof finish will be of metal profile sheeting (no specification provided).

The FM Building will sit some 17m directly to the northeast of the Clinical Core Building separated by a garden area for patients and screen planting. The FM Building has an external footprint of almost 1000sqm and is adjoined to the northeast by a 730sqm service yard which is enclosed by a 2.85m high vertical timber fence. The FM Building will accommodate ventilation plant, stores, laundry, workshop, office and staff welfare facilities. Standby generation plant, water storage plant, heat generation plant, and waste management facilities will be located within the adjacent service yard. The FM Building is a relatively simple, single storey, mono-pitched building which will be finished externally in render (no specification provided) with a metal profile roof (no specification provided) and aluminium framed windows and doors (no specification provided). Containerised plant within the service yard will be located within a 4m high metal profile sheeted, louvered enclosure and requires provision of a 9.5m high chimney.

The Clinical Core Building is of similar design emphasis and palette of finishes to that of the nearby Mid Argyll Community Hospital (MACH). The building incorporates elements of traditional design emphasis, including symmetrically pitched roofs and gable ends but has sought to break up the sizeable building mass by combining single and two storey elements, breaking down the accommodation into smaller wings, and the use of a variety of complimentary and high quality external finishes. The proposed development will be viewed within the wider context of the MACH, and the remaining elements of the A&B Hospital and will appear in keeping with the scale of these existing buildings and the mature woodland backdrop of Blarbuie Woodland.

The design and layout of the proposed development is considered to be consistent with the relevant provisions of LP ENV 19.

The Council's Environmental Health Officers have not raised objection to the current application but have highlighted that the extensive demolition and construction activity required for a project of this scale has potential to impact adversely upon the amenity of nearby residential properties. It is suggested that it would be appropriate to ensure that any permission granted is subject to a conditional requirement for submission and approval of a construction method statement setting out working hours, details of plant and machinery, and mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration.

## **C. Natural Environment**

The proposed development will require the felling of a substantial area of mature broadleaf woodland which is located between the existing Succoth and Tigh-na-Linne buildings.

The current application is accompanied by a tree survey which advises that a total of 223 individual trees were recorded within the application site boundary and its immediate surrounds. The woodland is largely contained within two principle blocks, one to the south west of the site and the other as a band bisecting the site from west to east (between Succoth and Tigh-na-Linne). Nine smaller tree groupings were also recorded scattered around the site.

The survey advises that much of the mature tree cover possibly pre-dates, or is contemporary with the establishment of the original hospital buildings (1860 onwards) and as such is in the region of 150 – 180 years in age. The original plantings comprise a fairly limited range of species typical of mid-nineteenth century planting on such sites and includes Lime, Scots Pine and Sycamore. Oak, Ash, Beech and Horse Chestnut. The mature tree cover is of large size and stature and collectively forms prominent woodland areas.

A younger generation of tree cover which has become established through natural regeneration and more recent landscape planting over the last 10 to 50 years is also evident. In this respect Sycamore is predominant, with other species including Beech, Rowan, Birch, Apple and Gean.

The tree survey concludes that tree condition is fairly mixed, with most individual specimens in good to fair condition given their age and growing environment. The tree survey only identified four trees that would require to be felled as a result of poor condition. The survey is simply a stocktake of existing tree cover within and adjoining the application site and does not specifically identify the individual trees which would require to be felled to accommodate the proposed development; however, overlaying the tree survey with the proposed site layout plan it would appear that even in a 'best case scenario' at least 70-80 mature trees would require to be removed, the majority of these being in the grouping between Succoth and Tigh-na-Linne,. It is however noted that the felling total is likely to be higher in order to accommodate ground re-profiling works and removal of any trees which might be located too close to the proposed new buildings.

The masterplan acknowledges the requirement for significant tree felling within the site selection for the MHU but suggests that compensatory planting could be provided between the upper and lower Blarbuie woodlands.

The Forestry Commission have not raised objection to the proposals subject to a condition being imposed that requires the submission and approval of a Detailed Landscape Plan addressing the proposed woodland removal and provisions which are to be made for Compensatory Planting.

The details which accompany the application confirm the presence of Red Squirrel and Bats, both of which are European protected species, within the locality of the application site. Neither SNH, nor the Council's Biodiversity Officer have raised objection to the current application subject to appropriate mitigation measures being implemented prior to, and during construction. The proposal is considered to be consistent with LP ENV 2 and LP ENV 6.

Policy LP ENV 17 sets out that the Council will resist development which is likely to have an adverse impact on trees, particularly where trees and groups of trees: provide a woodland setting / are of amenity value / are of recreational value to local people / have habitat value. In this particular instance it is considered that, having regard to the site selection criteria, employment retention and community health care benefit which would result from the new development that there is sufficient

justification to merit the removal of a significant area of healthy, mature woodland to accommodate the new MHU at the proposed location provided that an appropriate scheme of compensatory planting of equivalent landscape, amenity and recreational value is provided within the vicinity of the development. The proposal is accordingly viewed to be a justified minor departure to LP ENV 17.

#### **D. Historic Environment**

Firgrove Lodge, a category C listed dwelling is located some 70m to the north of the proposed FM Service Yard. It is noted that the proposed development does not encroach upon the setting of Firgrove any more so than the existing Succoth building which is to be demolished; furthermore the submitted plans indicate that additional screen planting is to be provided in the intervening area. In this respect it is considered that the proposed development will not have a negative impact upon the setting of Firgrove and as such may be considered to be consistent with LP ENV 13a.

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service have highlighted that the masterplan site is within an area of some archaeological potential based on the presence of other recorded sites and monuments of prehistoric and medieval date in the surrounding landscape. A suspensive planning condition requiring archaeological investigation of the site is proposed, this approach would be consistent with the relevant provisions of LP ENV 17 and the proposed SG LDP ENV 20.

#### **E. Road Network, Parking and Associated Transport Matters.**

Access will be via improved junctions with Blarbuie Road at north and south ends in order to provide a through route. The proposal includes for the provision of 69 onsite car parking spaces, a bus stop, cycle parking, separate parking for service vehicles, turning areas for ambulances/deliveries at the main entrance and loading areas adjacent to the FM Building.

The Council's Roads Officers have not raised any objection to the proposals subject to conditions specifying the standard of access and parking provision, and to ensure that adequate signage provision is made to warn drivers of construction traffic. The proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant elements of policies LP TRAN 1 – 4 and 6.

#### **F. Infrastructure**

Water supply will be by connection to the public water main; foul drainage shall be to the public sewer. Scottish Water have not responded to their consultation and as such are assumed to have 'no objections' to the proposal – this position is underpinned by Scottish Water's separate consultation response to the associated masterplan document which confirms that public water and sewerage systems have capacity locally. The proposal is consistent with LP SERV 1 and LP SERV 4.

The submission does not include details of surface water drainage, this can however be secured by planning condition to ensure compliance with LP SERV 2.