

MINUTES of MEETING of HELENSBURGH & LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE held in the PILLAR HALL, VICTORIA HALLS, SINCLAIR STREET, HELENSBURGH on THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2008

Present: Councillor James Robb (Chair)

Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor George Freeman
Councillor Garry Mulvaney	Councillor Daniel Kelly
Councillor David Kinniburgh	Councillor Ellen Morton
Councillor Andrew Nisbet	

Attending: Charles Reppke, Head of Democratic Services & Governance
Deirdre Forsyth, Area Corporate Services Manager
Neil McKay, Planning Manager

Mr Alan Kerr, Area Roads & Amenity Services Manager
Mr Campbell Divertie, Roads & Amenity Services
Mr Nigel Millar, Helensburgh Community Council
Mrs Kathleen Siddle, Helensburgh Community Council

Graham Rennie, John Dickie Homes
Jim Pettigrew, GD Lodge Architects
Joanne Brindley, Brindley Associates
Alex Mitchell, James Barr

Mr Ian Fraser, North Colgrain Residents Association
Mr Brian Grant, North Colgrain Residents Association
Mr Alex Dolan, Objector
Mr Wilson Hamilton, Helensburgh Athletic Club

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Provost William Petrie and Councillor Al Reay.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

None

3. JOHN DICKIE HOMES (HELENSBURGH) LTD: APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SCHOOL AND CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 166 DWELLINGS, INCLUDING 43 AFFORDABLE HOMES, WITH ROUNDABOUT ACCESS FROM A814: HERMITAGE ACADEMY, HELENSBURGH (REF: 07/01955/DET)

The Chairman introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced the Members of the Committee and set out the procedure that would be followed.

Planning Department

Mr Neil McKay spoke to the report by the Head of Planning and advised on the procedural issues where the Council had a vested interest. He advised that if the application was granted then the Planning Authority would write to all objectors asking for comments giving a minimum of 14 days to reply. It would then be reported back to Committee and thereafter to the Scottish Ministers who have 28 days to respond. If the Committee refuse the application then that would end the process.

Mr McKay advised that the application site was located within the old Hermitage Academy and that Policy STRAT DC1 of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan 2002 has a presumption in favour of large scale developments. This is a residential development consisting of 166 units including 43 affordable homes, access via a roundabout and internal integration of the roads layout. Mr McKay spoke on the recent Planning Advice Note 84 (PAN 84) which was introduced by Scottish Government in March this year to reduce carbon emissions by 15% which is referred to in Supplementary Report No. 2. Mr McKay advised that a condition had been attached as a recommendation, although he advised that the applicants considered that it would not be possible to meet its requirements and advised that Members would need to give careful consideration to the need for the condition. Mr McKay said that this area was allocated to housing in the Modified Draft Local Plan. Mr McKay advised that the main concern from the Objectors was the opening up of Guy Mannering Road and Mr McKay explained that this was a critical part of the integration of the development with the surrounding community. Mr McKay said that the objection to the ownership the verge of Drumfork Road was not a material planning consideration and was a matter between the owners and the developers. Mr McKay said that there had been concern over the height of the flatted buildings but the existing school was 4 storeys in height. Mr McKay spoke on the layout of the development explaining there was flats at the gateway and the affordable houses were located in three areas. He said that there was a variety of house types with footpaths and landscaping. Mr McKay said that although the affordable housing was grouped they were integrated with the rest of the development. Mr McKay explained that there would be 43 units provided by a Registered Social Landlord and these could be rented or shared equity. Mr McKay explained that a condition is in place that one affordable house must be build for each 4 commercial units. Mr McKay explained that noise during construction was dealt with under the Environmental Protection Act. Mr McKay said that there had been 31 representations and these were detailed in the report. The key concerns raised by objectors were Guy Mannering Road, the entrance flats and the situation of the affordable houses. Mr McKay said his department were recommending approval of the proposal, subject to conditions detailed in the reports and having due regard to the change in condition 9, which he had read out.

Applicants

Mr Graham Rennie, Applicant, gave a background to John Dickie Homes stating that they are renowned for their high quality. He said they had been working closely with Argyll & Bute Council for 2 years to produce this development. Mr Rennie said that they had shown representatives of the Community Council round other Dickie Homes developments. He said they use traditional materials

that keeps it sharpness and a factor would be appointed with a fund set aside to refresh the landscape every 15 years. He said there had been a public meeting, organised by the Community Council, where 200 people attended and 75% of them were happy with the development.

Mr Jim Pettigrew, GD Lodge Architects said that this was a brown field site for development, he said that each development is a unique opportunity. Mr Pettigrew said that they have been in discussions with Argyll & Bute Council to link the site and surrounding areas with the Roads Department preferring a roundabout to traffic lights and the opening up of Guy Mannering Road. Mr Pettigrew said that this was an important site and they have ensured quality and an innovative development. Mr Pettigrew said that they did not want the landscape dominated by hard landscaping and cars so they came up with a new approach and worked with the landscape architect. Mr Pettigrew said that the mixed environment provides a wide range of houses and flats the architectural style was of a quality which sat comfortably in its surroundings and integrated with the vernacular of the surrounding area. Mr Pettigrew said that they did not know how they could deliver on PAN 84 as given the limited notice and impracticality of the requirements it would take the industry some time to response to this new guidance.

Joanne Brindley, Brindley Associates, spoke on the landscaping and how they had arrived at this design. Ms Brindley said they had to consider all the constraints, the steep embankments, planning requirements, pedestrian links to existing areas. She said the landscape proposals had to be of creative robust design, easily managed to enhance and compliment the new house design. She said there were trees planted for traffic calming measures, defensive planting to protect boundaries, footpaths and cycle routes which had low shrubs, two open spaces in the heart of the development designed as community spaces and multi functional. She said this was a well designed scheme for a high quality development.

Consultees

Mr Alan Kerr, Network & Environment Manager said this was a very positive development with access to the site from the A814 in the form of a roundabout. This is a safer junction than traffic lights and has traffic calming links to the East and West. Mr Kerr said that opening Guy Mannering Road would not result in any significant increase in traffic flow. Mr Kerr advised that there were traffic calming measures proposed in and out of the site giving the opportunity to have a mandatory 20mph extended from the existing one. Mr Kerr said that the existing site drainage consisted of a 85 litre per second outfall into a large pipe and the new site would have to work within that limit. He said there was no risk of tidal flooding but a slight risk from flooding from the burn but the developer has dealt with that by building the houses slightly higher than existing ground levels.

Mr Nigel Miller, Chair Helensburgh Community Council, said that they were objecting on design and sustainable energy. He said that there was a lot of the development he liked but felt it needed an extra push to make it an exciting development. Mr Miller said that this was the largest single housing application for 35 years and it was a unique opportunity to put a footprint in time instead of an opportunity missed. Mr Miller said that they had given John Dickie Homes

some comments which they have taken on board. Mr Miller said that Helensburgh had two conservation areas and the site had to reflect the best features of Helensburgh as a whole. Mr Miller spoke on the design of the development saying that although it was unique to John Dickie Homes it was a “could be anywhere” development. He felt that this was a gateway development and should have a stronger statement, he said that the Scottish Executive had produced a new code in April asking to have Scottish character built into houses. Mr Miller explained that the residents of Guy Mannering Road have set up a housing association saying they want it to be kept as a cul de sac and the integration could be through pedestrian access. Mr Miller said it was important to meet current requirement in energy conservation and the company should be looking ahead for 3 to 5 years. Mr Miller finished by saying the development could be improved with greater emphasis on good design and take into account Helensburgh’s design and architecture.

Mrs Kathleen Siddle, Secretary, Helensburgh Community Council said that most of her points had been covered. Mrs Siddle reiterated that this was a look good anywhere development and she felt there was no local identity there was nothing about the development that said this was from Scotland. She asked the developer to contact Lighthouse and McIntosh School of Architecture in Glasgow as they were keen to give advice on Scottish architecture.

Objectors

Mr Ian Fraser, North Colgrain Residents Association, Objector, said there was 146 residents who make up the association. Mr Fraser said that the residents only found out about the development in November saying that this is the biggest development in 40 years and that the development should not just keep to the minimum legal limits with regard to neighbour notification. Mr Fraser said that the plans given were misleading and that they did not realise that Guy Mannering Road was being opened up. Mr Fraser spoke on the layout of the affordable housing saying that they were all located at the end of Guy Mannering Road, he felt that as they were of the same quality and standard they should be mixed together throughout the site.

Mr Brian Grant agreed with Mr Miller that the integration from Guy Mannering Road does not have to be by cars. He said that it had been a cul de sac for over 40 years and it was a child safe road. Mr Grant felt that if Guy Mannering Road was opened up it would become a through road for traffic accessing the site. Mr Grant said that there were already 3 vehicular accesses into the site and he didn’t think they needed a 4th. He said that out of 150 residents 140 objected to the opening up of this road and urged the Members to keep the status quo.

Mr Hamilton, Helensburgh Athletic Club, was concerned about the proposed access to the Athletic Club saying it was unacceptable because of where it is situated and there was no parking provision. Mr Hamilton advised Members that the Club had to pay £7000 for a disabled ramp and asked that there be two disabled bays allocated to the Club. Mr Hamilton also asked for continuous safe access and egress to the Club during construction.

The Chairman then invited questions from members of the committee.

Questions from Members

Members asked questions on the uniqueness of the buildings, Layout of the development, location of the affordable homes, when the affordable homes would be built and funding of these homes, the new roundabout with regard to Policy LPEN20 regarding public art, the size of the roundabout, the access and opening up of Guy Mannering Road, the access and parking at the Athletics Club, architectural quality of the proposed homes, the mixture of house types within the development, traffic issues and the proposed planting and factoring of the development.

Councillor Danny Kelly left the meeting prior to the summing up.

The Chairman then invited the speakers to sum up.

Summing Up

Mr Neil McKay advised that he was satisfied that the development meets policy and design guidelines and that it was essential for Guy Mannering Road to be opened and integrated into the development. Mr McKay recommended approval subject to conditions.

Mr Graham Rennie said that they had covered all requirements the development was a new design and they address the affordable homes issue, he said he was very enthusiastic about the site and asked for the development to be approved.

Mr Alan Kerr said that his department had taken on board the traffic issues that the layout of the development was safe for visitors and owners.

Mr Nigel Miller spoke on the design of the development, Guy Mannering Road and the need to look ahead with regarding to CO² emissions. Mr Miller asked that the development should be delayed for the developer to assess the design.

Mr Fraser said he disagreed with Mr McKay and the traffic will increase in Guy Mannering Road he would be happier with a cycle way instead of opening it up, he said he was not against the development just the integration, this could be better as they have not taken existing residents into account.

Mr Dolan said that at the moment they have no cars passing in Guy Mannering Road and it would not make a difference if they changed it to 20mph. Mr Dolan said that the affordable houses should be dispersed throughout the site.

Mr Hamilton said that he was satisfied there was resolution on two issues he was happy that they would move the access into the Athletics Club but he still had a problem with parking and disabled spaces.

The Committee then debated the merits of the application and the Chair ruled on Points of Order raised during this debate.

Motion

After due consideration of all the merits of the proposal and taking into account

all the arguments and issues raised at the hearing, its is recommended that the application be continued for a period of 2 months. The reason for continuing is because it is considered the proposal lacks details in respect to the detail of the road safety and traffic management proposals, particularly in relation to the turning provision for emergency vehicles and to the traffic calming measures for Guy Mannering Road, Jeannie Deans Drive and Drumfork Road and the detail and treatment of the proposed roundabout, particularly in relation to it being the main entry point into the town, the cumulative visual effect of 2 new roundabouts in such close proximity to each other, the Council's public art policy and the need to provide a suitable entry point to the town on its main approach road.

Proposed: Councillor Ellen Morton
Seconded: Councillor Andrew Nisbet

Amendment

The application be approved subject to the conditions and reasons recommended in the Supplementary Report.

- a. Having due regard to the provisions of PAN84 and the recommended condition by the Planning Officer, it is however considered unreasonable to impose the condition because it is considered that it would not be possible to reasonably provide the onsite zero to low carbon equipment over and above the Building Standards for the reasons given by the applicant and referred to in supplementary report 2.
- b. Condition 9 should read:- Development shall not begin until samples of materials to be used (on external surfaces of the buildings) including harling windows and for the construction of hard standings, walls and fences have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, Such detail shall include all external elevations and root plans. Development shall thereafter be carried out using the approved materials and elevations or such alternatives as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
- c. The addition of the word 20th immediately before the word "house" in Condition 17(iii)
- d. The detail and treatment of the roundabout being remitted to the Head of Planning.
- e. Alterations to the access for the Athletics Club and access during construction being determined to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning.

Proposed: Councillor Vivien Dance
Seconded: Councillor Gary Mulvaney

With the matter being put to the vote 3 voted for the Motion and 4 for the Amendment.

Decision

The application be approved subject to the notification procedure required and that conditions be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee.