

Review of Planning application 18/00355/PP (Graeme and Wendy Bruce) by PPSL

WENDY BRUCE COMMENTS IN RED, WENDY BRUCE ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE OUTLINED IN RED

Ellenabeich is a conservation area. Its conservation status must not preclude development to the area. Ellenabeich along with many other small rural and coastal communities require business opportunities and a young vibrant community if they are to survive and succeed. Along with many similar communities in Argyll Ellenabeich relies on tourism (No it doesn't. - Ellenabeich is a diverse residential Community providing homes for a wide range of residents, indeed Argyll and Bute Planning Department, Enforcement, have recently enforced the closure of 1 small local specialist engineering businesses within the village, which is a loss to the other marine businesses in this area. Seafari is the only business which completely relies on tourism. Its seasonal workforce are mainly engaged on a self-employed basis and are mainly from outwith the area, renting their accommodation from Seafari). The influx of visitors, irrespective of their reason to visit, is essential to the (wider) local economy.

The Slate Industry which was the cornerstone of this area is well past but its legacy remains and is reason Ellenabeich obtained its conservation status. Part of the village is listed by Historic and Environmental Scotland. These listings can be a positive gain to the area but can also have a negative influence in and on the area. Common sense should be applied.

In the most part, the outward appearance to Ellenabeich as viewed from public areas is considerably more important than any development to the rear of a property. It is with this in mind that the PPSL should gather information appropriate to reaching its decision. The information supplied in this appeal relating to areas outwith Ellenabeich is irrelevant. (It is relevant because it is used to illustrate some very important and well understood conservation and design principles.)

Ellenabeich is a former slate village and this has to be the criteria from which a decision is reached. The photographs supplied in the appeal document of Ellenabeich whilst accurate, have been carefully selected (See further photographs below) and is perhaps not a true representation of the area (Members may wish to visit the village to satisfy themselves on this point). The B844 is the only road to Ellenabeich. The Old Coach House is at the far end of the village still on the B844 (No - it is on the UC108, an unclassified road which has not been formally adopted by Argyll and Bute Council, but which has been included in the "List of Roads") and at the entrance to the public car park. Many of the supporting photographs of the village are taken in areas away from this main public thoroughfare (they included this thoroughfare) .

Appendix A is a series of photographs from the start of the conservation area to the public car park. It is for the PPSL to conclude whether there is a predominance of white rendered walls or stone walls. It should be noted there is a high correlation between supporters of the white rendered walls for this application and those insisting on a drystone wall for the adjacent Seafari fuel store. (Yes, they are concerned that appropriate boundary treatments are applied; a stone wall where it is a site with and adjoining to an existing stone wall and a white rendered wall where it sits against a white rendered building and extension, just like Mr Hill's son's recent and prominent development - to which he did not object)

Specific mention is made of Seafari and its fuel storage facility. The photograph presented was carefully taken so as not to include the adjacent drystone wall and the stone garage also on the site. (The appeal statement soecifically referenced the dry stone wall to the back of the safari site. The stone garage to which Mr Hill refers has been white rendered in the past and the stone wall wall closest to the Old Coach House has been white for more than 20 years to blend in with the white house which it sits against. For the purpose

of this argument, I have taken a photograph from a similar position to Mr Hill's - but with a wide angle lens, as not to be "selective")

Appendix B shows the full view for those entering the car park area either by foot or vehicle and includes these features. This may be considered a more accurate representation. (Please see the real view into the car park and note the white painted wall which Mr Hill has selectively precluded)

Mrs Bruce has also carefully selected and quoted early correspondence with A&BC's then Conservation Officer Ms Lynda Robertson (This is the only publicly available correspondence from Ms Robertson, I would welcome sight of the subsequent correspondence to which Mr Hill refers). Reference is also made to the internal wall of the site. The quotation does not reflect the final outcome of discussions between Seafari, Planning, Building Control and Ms Robertson (Please can the Planning department supply me with this document). The statement with respect to the view of the internal wall by the public entering the car park similarly requires clarification.

It is accurate that Ms Robertson requested a drystone wall without mortar to be placed around the fuel site. The wall height stipulated by Planning was 1.8m high. Planners and Building Control also stipulated that the boundary wall to this site had to be a fully engineered wall (Thank you for confirming that the engineering requirements for this wall were the reason for it to be a stone clad/composite wall and not the proper dry stone wall for which planning permission was granted and subsequently compromised on). Ms Robertson was advised this was not be possible as drystone without mortar. She did not appreciate the engineering constraints. A compromise was necessary and agreed. Appendix C shows the finished wall. Unfortunately Ms Robertson is no longer employed by A&BC so is unable to comment on whether, in her opinion, the compromise was successful. Planners and the current Conservation Team may offer opinion.

Addressing the issue of the internal wall of the site Seafari were not required to either render or finish the internal wall in drystone. Both were possible. Access gates must remain locked unless the site is in use. Considerable flexibility is required in the use of the site. Seafari does attempt a general routine. It is accepted we cannot always follow this routine. Seafari will draw fuel from the site less than 300 times a year. Staff are allocated 40 minutes for this procedure. Site gates are open for perhaps less than 30 minutes per load. During the low season fuel is generally drawn at 0930. Occasionally a second load may be taken. During high season it is generally 3 loads during a working day, 4 loads when busy. The high season timings being circa 0815, 0930, 1330 and 1545. Many visitors do not arrive in the area and park in the public car park before 1030. Similarly few arrive after 1500. The appeal document intimates the gates are open throughout the day for all visitors to see inside. This is not the case. (The appeal document intimates simply that the inside of the wall is concrete and can be seen when the gates are open, directly ahead, on entry to the car park)

The decision made by the PPSL in respect of this appeal will set a precedent in the area for all future developments. (This is why it is important that composite fake walls do not suddenly and regrettably proliferate, purely as a result of a specific engineering solution applied to a one-off petrol storage site) The lack of a conservation officer at A&BC must not be a reason for stopping or delaying any development (I would thank Mr Hill for confirming that there is not a qualified Conservation Officer in the Council at this time and that the Council's response to my appeal on conservation grounds is therefore not professionally advised). Interpretation by post holders must remain consistent (Argyll and Bute's own policy states that and not be one of subjective opinion. Rules regulations and policies do change or require updating. Should this appeal be successful A&B Planners must be seen to adopt a level playing field approach to all future development applications in this area.

Appendix A - the B844 start of the conservation area

Mr Hill's photograph of the start of the conservation area shows clearly a stone house with white rendered gables fronted by a stone wall with white painted top, drawing together the design elements of this property in the Conservation village



Here is the same house from a different angle the dry stone wall which is closer is to a field and therefore old agricultural.



The approach showing the high wall at An Cala Gardens, date of construction unknown (An Cala is neither stone nor stone faced, it looks like a type of brick. See below for close up)



Inshaig house

(again confirming that a stone boundary is appropriate when against a stone house)
boundary treatments should blend with the property to which it relates.



Beyond Inshaig House

(This Stone wall is an old agricultural traditional dry stone wall bounding a field, not a white rendered property)



It is unclear what Mr Hill is trying to prove with this picture? that a hedge would be more appropriate over the top of a knee high stone wall?



Approach to the village - development circa 25 years old to left
(See centre left of photo, high, curved, white rendered wall bounding the white rendered property and white rendered garage - just like the one we are appealing for)



B844 entering the older section of Ellenabeich

(Note that the stone bound gardens on the right are separated from the white rendered houses by a road, as the white wall surrounding our home would be from the adjacent stone wall on the other side of the road - note also these are real stone walls not stone clad)



Prior to village square

(again, gardens are separated from white rendered houses by a road, as ours would also be)



Village square 1

(Stone wall sits against a stone foreshore and old stone pier which was built with the materials most available at the time of its construction to serve the slate industry - these walls do not relate to domestic properties)



Village square 2 (no stone walls here - the photograph has been carefully selected to edit out the white rendered wall in the background - see below x 2 pictures; everything is white render, apart from some street furniture and we do however intend to have some slate built garden furniture within the development)





All domestic properties off the square have white boundary walls



Village square 3

(yet again, dry stone wall bound stone bound gardens sit separate from the white rendered houses - white on inside and stone on the other)



Village square 4 Road to and including Old Coach House

(all walls bounding the houses are, again, white although this photograph clearly aims to fade them out to hide the fact that the stone wall is on the opposite side of the road to the houses, like in the front street.) However, see mr Hill's photo below to see that these house boundaries are white rendered - without exception.



Approach to old coach house

(Further proving that all walls sitting against white rendered houses on the approach road to the Old Coach House are finished in white - without exception. The stone wall sits opposite, separated from the houses by a road - as ours would be if the appeal were successful)



General view from approach road

(Proving that the stone wall separated from the white houses by a road. Note also the little entrance finishings have actually been painted white to assert that this entrance belongs to the house opposite - Monaveen Lodge -)



Appendix B - The car park entrance

(a wall which is, by necessity of the petrol storage site, engineered and then clad with stone as a compromise attempt to blend in with the existing, natural stone wall again which the site has been built you will see that the garage, as mentioned in Mr Hill's report as a stone garage, has indeed been rendered; albeit somewhat degraded, - it is a different colour and has a tin roof, It is a white rendered garage that we need too)



See below, the white wall which Mr Hill has selectively precluded from his photograph



Appendix C - The boundary wall Seafari fuel store

(a stone clad wall which looks different to every other wall in the village. see also the removed parking bay which, members may recall, Mr Hill's non material amendment confirmed would not be lost - I believe that my neighbour was told she would have to leave the NMA hearing for trying to speak out about this /affirming that this space would be lost)



View from inside the car park back towards car park entrance

(note that the final wall - also visible in Appendix B - which sits against a white rendered property has been painted white many years ago, to unify due to its close proximity to the white gable, the garage on the left can be more closely seen in the pictures below as having had white render applied in past years - see also below for close-up of where the white render meets the original stone wall behind)





Finally, another view of Seafari petrol storage site which is industrial not residential. You can see that the back wall is an original dry stone wall whereas the other walls are stone/slate faced concrete. This might be deemed appropriate by some for an industrial site which has been placed within a conservation area but not for our white rendered house.

