

18 November 2019

Dear Sirs

The Croft, Baliscate, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, PA75 6QA

We have reviewed the recent comments from both the planning authority and the local objectors and the common objection from the various parties refers to housing in the countryside zone and the potential flood risk.

A number of the objections are not material planning considerations and we will not waste time by trying to comment on them all. With this in mind we would like to respond as follows:

The application was seeking planning permission in principle. Therefore no detailed layout, design or infrastructure details were required to be submitted. The purpose of this application was to establish the principle of development with the matters of layout, access, servicing and design to be addressed by way of future application for approval of matters specified in conditions. We have an experienced architect in place to deal with our application moving forward.

Flood Risk Assessment

This would be carried out as part of the detailed planning application for each plot in tandem with the site investigation works prior to submitting the detailed planning application. We believe it is not uncommon for such a report / assessment to be conditioned.

Description of Site

We note in the report of handling that the planning authority describe the adjacent housing as “a small linear row of long established private dwelling houses”. In our opinion these are not long established and are part of a recent development of a rural street.

Housing in the Countryside

The report of handling states that Plot 5 is within an undeveloped area of countryside. We believe this statement is subjective and can be interpreted differently as there is existing developments of various scales and types within the immediate vicinity. The fact is that the approval and development of the existing houses has extended the settlement in and around Baliscate therefore extending an existing settlement. When assessed alongside the existing building fabric the proposal does in fact read as rounding off an existing development area.

The report also states that the proposals are contrary to the established pattern of the linear row of the existing houses. In our opinion they reflect the linear design and streetscape and provide a building group of a scale suitable for the rural context.

In addition, we would ask that our original attached Site Plan 002 and Survey Plan 003 are consulted again, which shows the context and proximity of our plot within the development and demonstrates well the scale of the site compared to the plot opposite on which the houses are crowded closely together.

Alasdair MacLean

There appears to be a query in the report and some confusion as to who 'Alasdair' is. Alasdair is one half of the applicant, as per the original enquiries, planning application and as signed in all subsequent correspondence. The name on the confirmation on the online submission called for one main contact and therefore was shown as Iona MacLean. Alasdairs' business is as a share fisherman, employed in a primary industry and as a life-long local resident of the island, now nearing retirement age. As such, Alasdair (applicant) will be looking to provide housing to crew to operate his boat, as indicated in the design statement which accompanied the original application, providing local employment opportunities. At present, it is widely acknowledged how difficult it is to source employees due to lack of suitable and affordable housing for rent or to buy. The average monthly rental in Tobermory is £500 plus utility bills, and according to Zoopla the average house price to buy is now £222,000, which is unrealistic for most seeking employment on the island.

Affordable Housing

To quote from the report compiled by A Barrie 'Tobermory has the highest concentration of affordable homes on Mull' is a true fact, as it is by far the largest settlement on the island. However, these homes are still not regarded as affordable in a wider context. The following is an extract from the 2015 Argyll & Bute Council Housing Need & Demand Assessment (figures from 2013) when even then - 'Mull and Iona would be particularly unaffordable'.

considered affordable at mean prices for those on mean incomes, while Coll & Tiree and Mull & Iona appear to be particularly unaffordable. At the lower quartile prices and incomes, none of the HMAs would be affordable and Mull & Iona would be particularly unaffordable.

TABLE 4.6: Affordability by HMA (Mean Prices to incomes) 2013

Housing Market Area	Mean		
	Income	Price	Affordability Ratio
Bute	£26,694	£98,591	3.7
Coll and Tree	£30,300	£177,708	5.9
Cowal	£29,004	£122,957	4.2
Helensburgh and Lomond	£38,435	£174,669	4.5
Islay, Jura and Colonsay	£27,977	£133,477	4.8
Kintyre	£27,315	£125,764	4.6
Lorn and inner Isles	£31,692	£153,195	4.8
Mid Argyll	£32,670	£139,142	4.3
Mull and Iona	£31,417	£183,634	5.8

Source: CACI Paycheck & Register of Sasines 2013

Septic tank

It is mentioned in the report that there has recently been planning permission granted for a septic tank to serve two other houses to be put on this piece of land (your ref: 19/00057/PP). As has been discussed at length with Andrew Barrie, this application was not made by us as the owners of the land and the septic tank was sited in the wrong place on the drawing. This has now been rectified, and the email exchange confirming this from Beaton & McMurchy and acknowledgement of this from Andrew back in July are attached below.

From: "Barrie, Andrew" <Andrew.Barrie@argyll-bute.gov.uk>
Date: 30 July 2019 at 15:56:41 BST
To: "Craig MacDonald" <craig@bmatchitects.co.uk>
Cc: MacLean Allan <allan.maclean@yahoo.co.uk>, Iona MacLean <iona.maclean@outlook.com>, Marion MacLean <marion.maclean2561@yahoo.co.uk>
Subject: RE: 19/01061/PPP Plot 5 Baliscate

Thank you for the update Craig. I see that an application has now been submitted.

Kind regards,

Andrew Barrie

Planning Officer (Oban, Lorn and the Isles)

Development Management

Development and Economic Growth

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e: andrew.barrie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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From: Craig MacDonald [mailto:craig@bmatchitects.co.uk]
Sent: 18 July 2019 11:10
To: Barrie, Andrew <Andrew.Barrie@argyll-bute.gov.uk>
Cc: MacLean Allan <allan.maclean@yahoo.co.uk>, Iona MacLean <iona.maclean@outlook.com>, Marion MacLean <marion.maclean2561@yahoo.co.uk>
Subject: 19/01061/PPP Plot 5 Baliscate

Hi Andy,

I believe you have been having discussions with the applicant for planning application 19/01061/PPP, regarding the drainage of another application within their site edged red ?

Our Client, Mr Allan MacLean, the applicant of 19/00057/PP, has now amended their drainage proposals and we will shortly be applying for an amendment to the planning application to move the drainage out of the red lines of 19/01061/PPP. Please find attached the amended site plan showing the revised arrangement.

I trust this will be acceptable. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter.

Regards,

Craig

Conclusion

To conclude our response to the recent comments, our opinion is that the terms "infill" and "rounding off" are very much subjective and can be interpreted in various ways. The proposal enhances what is already an extended settlement by reflecting the scale and layout of the ribbon development on the opposite side of the road and creates a suitable small scale rural development.

Yours faithfully

Iona & Alasdair MacLean