

## **ACE Assessment for Land North East of Conisby, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay**

### **A Purpose of Assessment**

This has been developed by the LRB in response to a request for a review to a refusal of permission for a bonded warehouse.

The land in question extends to approximately 1.3 hectares with the proposed warehouse located west of the A847 public highway and adjacent to an existing agricultural building to the north east of Conisby.

The application site occupies an elevated location above the 30m AOD and located approximately 300m west of a grouping of 6 dwellings which sit adjacent to the A847, and 200m north east of the existing residential properties Tigh Na Torraig and Tigh an Tobair would sit at the eastern edge of the Conisby settlement area.

The Council's adopted guidance requires that the findings should be made available to applicants and/or agents and to Members in advance of the determination of any related planning application(s) in order that, if necessary, there is an opportunity to prepare a response to the findings for consideration by Committee at the time of the application(s) is/are determined and the ACE is given consideration as part of the determination process.

The area to be assessed should be identified as a wider 'area of common landscape character' within the prospective development site(s) is/are located. ACE's will be considered by Members at the same time as the related development proposal(s) is/are being determined, and once endorsed will become a material consideration in respect of any future applications within that ACE compartment.

### **B Area of Common Landscape Character**

The application site is an open exposed and undeveloped parcel of land adjacent to an existing farm steading and lies partly within a section of rural opportunity area and partly within an area of sensitive countryside with an existing disused farm access track leading across open land from the site of the proposed building to the public road some 450m to the east.

The ACE compartment to be reviewed is the Conisby area of Islay. The common features of the landscape in this area of Argyll and Bute are in general terms –

- Diverse landscape character;
- Lowland moor with bog and few settlements;
- Upland plateau of inaccessible open moorland;
- Sand dunes, mudflats and machair bays;
- Marginal farmland pastures along valleys;
- Exposed rocky moorland with steep cliffs to the sea.

Islay is the most southerly of the Hebridean Islands. A complex geology results in diverse landscape character, from the large scale undulating moorland plateau, to extensive areas of low-lying bog with large sandy beaches, tidal mudflats and sand dunes. The landscape of Colonsay as well as the transition between lowland and upland moors on Islay are mosaics of marginal farmland. The islands have a rocky coastline with steep cliffs and narrow inlets; the

## Appendix

north west coast benefits from wind-blown shell sand, giving a fertile agricultural soil, and peat, which is found on the moorland plateau, is used for distilling whisky.

As specified in the SNH Landscape Assessment of Argyll and the Forth of Clyde 1996.

Within the small ACE compartment there are small clusters of mixed use buildings; namely residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial buildings; served by the public road and private tracks of varying landscape quality and impact.

The application site lies adjacent to existing development and will have a limited visual impact despite the scale of the development.

### **C Key Environmental Features**

Most of the ACE compartment is rugged rural land. Some given over to farming and other parts being more akin to moorland with a rugged and wild appearance lacking in significant cultivation or man-made alterations to that rural landscape.

There are however, pockets of development clustered around specific landscape features with an arc of broken development running from Bruichladdich Distillery along the coast past Spring Bank House as outlined on aerial photograph 1 then weaving in an undulating manner on past the site for development to Conisby and then returning again in an undulating manner to the Distillery.

Within that compartment there are two areas of unspoilt land punctuated by the arc of broken development. The key environmental features comprise open moorland, improved fields and fenced rough grazing fields throughout the majority of the ACE compartment, with the broken areas of development land.

### **D Capacity to Absorb Development Successfully**

The character of this rural area is one of moorland with rough grazing and managed fields in use for agriculture.

Interspersed within this are small pockets of development associated with the development of the island for agriculture, distilling and residential and commercial property to support the island lifestyle.

The site is close to an existing farm setting and would have the appearance of a very large farm building and would be larger than all the existing buildings taken together in that location.

The site is well screened from the road by virtue of the rising landform and the positioning of the building set back from the foregoing ridge. There would be distant views from Bridgend and beyond but it is perceived that nevertheless the development could be accommodated within the wider landscape.

The location of the proposed development adjacent to the existing development will mirror the existing character of landscape development which has pockets of development in an arc following the roadway and as such can be accepted as being consistent with the settlement strategy in this area of assessment as delineated on the plan.

## Appendix

The site is contained by existing development and the roadway on three sides and is contained by the existing arc of development from Bruichladdich into the undeveloped area of land between Conisby and the site back towards the coastline.