

Firstly, I wish to point out to members that I am certainly not anti-development. I have always been known as pro-development. Official Council records over the past 13 years will certainly confirm my pro-development stance. From memory, this is the first planning application within my ward that I can recall having submitted an objection to.

I will try and be brief and will highlight some of the issues relating to this planning application that are of real concern to me and many of those living in the local community.

Depending on the weather this morning, you will have viewed the development site and noted the wonderful panoramic views at this location.

As officers have highlighted within their report, although the majority of the site lies within the settlement boundary as defined by the adopted Local Plan, part of the site lies outwith the settlement boundary and within an area defined as 'countryside around settlement' where there is a clear presumption against development. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policy STRAT DC 2 of the Argyll & Bute Structure Plan and Policy LP HOU1 of the Argyll & Bute Local Plan.

As you will have noted, the Planning Officers report confirms that the proposal fails to comply with policy and as such, I will argue strongly that it should be refused.

- a. The proposed development falls within the centre of an Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) and a Regional Scenic Area (RSA) and if allowed to go ahead, would have a serious detrimental impact on both the APQ and RSA. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would be totally inappropriate at this location.
- b. Although the proposed development is on a slightly sloping site, it will be well above road level when viewed from Feuins Road thus contributing to the destruction of the wonderful views within the Area of Panoramic Quality and Regional Scenic Area.

- c. Although it is claimed that the proposal will not interrupt the skyline from any public vantage point, as you will have noted, the most important views at this location are downwards towards Loch Long and Loch Goil and it would be those views that are destroyed.
- d. The proposed development would be totally unsympathetic to the general setting at this location and would destroy the outstanding panoramic views across Loch Long to Loch Goil from this area which is **one of the most dramatic and wonderful views within Argyll & Bute and which the Council has a responsibility to protect.**
- e. When considering the landscape setting, it is considered that the proposal is totally out of keeping with the immediate and surrounding environment at this location.
- f. Other properties within the Portincaple area, particularly those outwith the centre of the settlement such as Dalriada and Finnart Farmhouse, are set in locations which ensure they are virtually hidden from view. This proposal would see a dwellinghouse in a very prominent position that would fail to achieve a nesting of the building within the sloping site and would therefore be out of character with the remainder of the settlement area.
- g. Most dwellinghouses within Portincaple have the front of the building facing the road which is to the front of the site. This proposal would see the gable end of the building, which is a large bleak and virtually blank wall, facing the road and as such, it is considered that this orientation would be totally inappropriate at this location.
- h. Even if it was considered that the scale, location and design were all acceptable, then it is clear to me that the proposed development still fails to comply with Appendix A of the Local Plan and as such, should be rejected.
- i. Paragraph 3.1 of the Argyll & Bute Local Plan states that ***“Argyll & Bute’s greatest asset is its natural and built environment which needs to be protected and enhanced so that future generations have at least the same level of opportunity that we have today”***. ***“The Local Plan policies can help achieve this by safeguarding key environmental assets and guiding new development to locations that minimise environmental impacts”***. It also

goes on to state that it helps to “*conserve and enhance Argyll & Bute’s landscape*”. This proposal would clearly fail to achieve these aims.

j. As has been highlighted, the proposed development is within an Area of Panoramic Quality and is therefore covered by Policy LP ENV 10 – Development Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality. **This policy states that any development in, or adjacent to, an APQ will be resisted where its scale, location or design will have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape unless it can demonstrate that:**

a. Any significant adverse effects on the quality for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social and economic benefits of National or regional importance.

b. Where acceptable, development must also conform to Appendix A of the Local Plan.

and

c. In all cases, the highest standards, in terms of location, siting, landscaping, boundary treatment and materials, and detailing will be required within APQ’s.

JUSTIFICATION - The aim of Policy LP ENV 10 is to provide panoramically important landscapes in Argyll and Bute, with adequate protection against damaging development. The Local Plan confirms that APQ areas are important, not only for their physical landforms and for the flora and fauna which they support, but also for the environmental assets that they represent. These qualities could easily be destroyed or damaged by even a relatively small, insensitive development. They therefore must be protected.

k. It is considered that this development would have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape at this location, which is not outweighed by any social or economic benefits of National or regional importance and as such, the proposal fails to comply with LP ENV 10 and should therefore be rejected.

I would therefore urge you to take your responsibility seriously by rejecting this planning application that would destroy one of the most dramatic and wonderful views within Argyll & Bute and which you have a clear responsibility to protect.

I am aware of the difficulties of producing a motion to oppose a Planning Officers recommendation. I have therefore provided you with copies of a proposed motion that will allow you reject this application. I believe that it is competent and I am sure that Planning Officers will be able to confirm that.

I would also ask that if you are minded to support the views of the community, that you also consider making a recommendation to Development Plan officers to review settlement boundaries at this location in the next Local Plan so that this important Area of Panoramic Quality can be safeguarded for future generations.

Councillor George Freeman