

Notes for Presentation to PPSLC, Monday 18th June

I would like to address some of the practical/technical issues raised by this application as shown on the Drawings, Design Statement, & Drainage Report and also comment on the Application Report dated 23rd May.

Drawings and Design statement

Doc. # 20604927: Design statement.

Para. 1 states that the proposed dwelling is understated and rooted in the historical vernacular of rural Argyll. If there is such a thing, should it not be a simple, white, lime washed, stone built croft or cottage, with a thatched roof. It also states that careful consideration has been given to the landscape setting and surrounding environment. Having viewed the site earlier, we would expect your acknowledgement that neither of these latter statements are accurate.

Further in the statement it claims that the proposed building achieves a nesting within the sloping site and that because the ground FFL is below road level it reduces the impact to the public edge.

Careful examination of the drawings/sections available, suggest that the building will be “perched” rather than nested within the sloping site, as a result of the finished ground level being elevated from the existing, by depths of imported fill varying between 0.6m – 1.1m. This in turn results in approx. depths of underbuilding being visible at the NW corner elevation of 2.7m and 3.0m at the southwest corner elevation. This would seem excessive, and not in conformity to the statement in section 7.1, of Appendix A of the adopted Local Plan, which states that large areas of underbuilding look inappropriate in most settings. The lack of any substantial vegetation or topographical features to the southerly and westerly aspects of the proposed dwelling, coupled with its raised elevation, means that there is virtually no shelter from prevailing winds, again as mentioned in 7.1. Although the entrance is “sheltered” the whole building is not.

The parking provision seems extremely tight for two cars, with only 5.1m from the utility room projection to the edge of the hardstanding, or 5.8m to the boundary. In accordance with LP TRAN 6 and Appendix C, the standard car parking bay is 2.5m wide **minimum**, therefore to fit 2 cars into the space, requires 5.0m, meaning there is only 0.1m, 4 inches of free space. If one of the spaces was to accommodate disabled access, which would be a **minimum** of 3.6m wide, this means that 6.1m would be needed in total. Ergo there is insufficient space to satisfy these minimum requirements despite the statement that it is capable of doing so.

Not only does the parking area seem undersized, but the turning head provision seems severely constricted, with the nearest point of the gable wall only 9.65m from the road verge. This, together with the slightly acute angle of the drive/carriageway conjunction, seems at odds with the natural slope and expected ease of traffic movement. These points, taken together, indicate that the residents, their visitors and delivery drivers

will, either by necessity or choice, decide to park on the road. This will be a potential danger and inconvenience to all other road users, and the risks will be greatly magnified during the winter.

We have already commented on the proximity of the building to the road verge, but the height of the gable needs to be taken into account as well, to fully determine what impact it will have on the public edge. From drawing 11.010.08 the top of the gable is 6.4 - 6.6m above the plotted road level, or 7.6 - 7.8m above the existing ground level. We did request that a simple photomontage/CGI be produced of this aspect of the building to demonstrate this. However, instead of the photo being produced, a “panorama” was submitted as view 3, which is of dubious value, as it poorly reproduces views, similar to those already submitted as views 1&2. A similar request was made for the opposite, (westerly), gable, to indicate the extent of the underbuilding, but this again has not been forthcoming. We feel that both of these photos would have assisted greatly in determining the impact of this proposal, which is perhaps why they have not been produced!

The various sectional elevations shown on the drawings indicate quite clearly that the building will rise above existing ground levels by 11.0m (10.8 + 0.2m) on drawing 11.010.09 – SW elevation; and 10.8m (10.6 + 0.2m) for the NW elevation

Similarly, on drawing 11.010.10A these dimensions are 10.2m (10.0 + 0.2m) for the NE elevation, Also on this drawing, the ground designated on the plan as “sloped and maintained gardens and drying area” seems to have a slope approaching 20 degrees.

Drainage Comments

Two aspects will be covered here, namely the URS Scott Wilson Report and drawings, and the local surface water drainage.

First The URS report.

I note the changes to figures in the revised submission, with the SAAR value up by approx.23% to 2080mm, subsequent increases in design flows, the hydrobrake flow control diameter, and the M5-60mm value. However, the half drain times for the 30year and 200 year events have been reduced by approx. 28%. Is this on the basis of financial and/or spatial requirements?

The drainage drawing attached to the report shows that the pipe run from the tanked car park area, which could potentially suffer contamination from fuel oil etc., discharges untreated, directly into the attenuation tank, and then direct into the burn. Similarly I note that there are no “falls” indicated on the pipe runs. Given the level changes involved on the site, between the floor levels etc., and the point of discharge, can they be accommodated successfully.

The Officers state in their report that because of the presence of the STP, the discharge would not pollute the burn. However, it states in the technical literature for the Klargestor Biodisc that under TEST conditions, it only removed 95% pollutants successfully. Have SEPA been asked to carry out an inspection of the burn both above and below the proposed point of discharge to gauge its suitability to accept this extra flow?

The depth of even the shallow invert biodisc unit is 2.16m. To this should be added the foundation depth, which would be determined by site conditions and calculation. The geology of the area indicates that the bedrock in the location of the development is mainly schists of the Dalradian supergroup. These are normally extremely hard, highly impervious, rocks with a relatively thin weathered skin, overlain by a shallow overburden of mainly peaty, silty, usually saturated soils. This suggests that to install both the STP and to a lesser extent the surface water attenuation tank, either a large amount of difficult excavation would need to be attempted, or large quantities of concrete and imported fill would need to be used to cover and stabilise the installations.

Secondly, the local drainage.

Two aspects deserve mention. Firstly the fact that the drainage provision on the main A814 between the railway overbridge and the Portincaple road junction is of such poor quality that it is virtually non-existent in even moderate rain. The flow cannot be contained in the channel and therefore floods across the carriageway to eventually run into Feuins Road. Because of the natural slopes and the simple road camber, it spreads across the whole of the upper part of the road, which obviously causes problems especially in the winter.

Secondly the drainage provision on the east side of Feuins Road. For most of its length it is a shallow ditch protected by an earth mound. The carriageway width is only 4.5m at the point of the proposed development, and is the sole means of access and egress for the whole of Portincaple. Not only will this be at risk during construction from vehicles with large turning circles entering or exiting the site, but also from vehicles parked on the road. For example a typical HGV is 2.5m wide (or 2.8m overall including mirrors), and a coach or box van generally 2.0 – 2.5m wide. This suggests that the ditches will come under severe pressure as traffic tries to pass. These dimensions do not allow for either, - any working/circulation clearances around parked vehicles, or manoeuvring/turning space for vehicles exiting the site.

The construction phase is when the most damage and disruption will occur. Because the plot has a narrow frontage and with the slopes involved, most of the bulk materials will be offloaded at roadside. Even then, the clearances from the plot boundaries to the building footprint, will dictate that a substantial amount of the materials required will end up being stored at the roadside. Space must be maintained for the building itself, scaffolding to build it, circulation/material distribution space outside the scaffold, and avoidance of excavations for drainage runs etc. Close inspection of the plan drawings show how limited any free space would be, and as a retired construction person I know that the builders will take the easy option of leaving it on the roadside.

Finally a comment on the Application Report.

In section F, some 28 representations are listed and commented against. Whilst we realise that some are by necessity combined, there were in fact 76 different topics raised in correspondence by the residents. Again, while many of these were duplicated, it resulted in a total of 394 items mentioned. This is a massive expression of legitimate concern from our small local community regarding this proposed development. We

would request that the magnitude of this is fully recognised by the members on the Committee today, together with the design and location issues as previously highlighted.