



Scottish Campaign for National Parks

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Scottish Charity no. SC 31008

Mr Gordon Watson
National Park Headquarters
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
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19 May 2010

Dear Mr Watson

Re: Current planning application for development of the combined site for the Gartness Road field and Stirling Road public car park site, Drymen by Mactaggart & Mickel for 36 houses (12 Open Market houses + 14 Shared Equity houses + 10 Rentable houses for the Rural Stirling Housing Association).

This application should only be approved if it conforms with the existing approved Local Plan (the 1999 Stirling Council Local Plan) and it plainly does not conform. In that Plan, the Stirling Road car park is not allocated for housing development and the remainder of the proposed site (the 6+ acres wooded field on the north side of Gartness Road) is only referred to in the Local Plan as being the location of a site of a planning consent for 20 dwellings (14 for local needs). This outline consent, granted in 1997, has now expired, as has the relative detailed permission granted subsequently.

The only policy statement of the 1999 Stirling Council Local Plan which relates to housing in Drymen is in the 'Housing' chapter on page 34 where policy **POL.H3** states:- ***'Occupancy conditions will be secured for affordable local and special needs houses in perpetuity (in Drymen and Croftamie) – i.e. the villages in the Loch Lomond Subject Plan area – such conditions will be applied to all new housing in conjunction with a Section 75 Planning Agreement.'***

This quoted policy statement had been introduced as a result of the Secretary of State's decision to impose it following a public inquiry into the objections made against the Stirling Council's original proposals for the 1999 Local Plan. These had contained a proposal that the previous 1986 Loch Lomond Local Subject Plan's policy of only allowing 'affordable local needs housing in perpetuity' to be built in those parts of the Loch Lomondside villages which were within National Scenic Areas, should be changed. Stirling Council proposed that it should be replaced by a policy which allowed 'open market' houses to be built in them i.e. Drymen and Croftamie.

Drymen community and conservation bodies objected to this proposed change and gave evidence to that effect at the consequent government inquiry. The inquiry Reporters eventual decision was to support the objection and recommended retention of the 'all inclusive, local needs housing in perpetuity policy' for all houses for sale in Drymen and Croftamie. This was endorsed by the Secretary of State and the Plan was amended to the form quoted above and then published. The current Local Plan policy which the Park Authority is forced by law to currently administer in Drymen and Croftamie is the same policy POL.H3 referred to in the second paragraph above, i.e. all new housing in Drymen has to carry the identical local

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occupancy conditions in perpetuity.

The fact that the 1999 Stirling Local Plan indicated the Gartness Road field was already at that time having planning permission for 20 local needs houses is definitely not a basis for now considering granting planning permission for 36 houses of types that are stated to be forbidden in Drymen in the current Local Plan. You will see in the second paragraph that it states that the occupancy conditions 'will be applied to all new housing'. The word all is underlined, not just recently but in the original 1999 Local Plan and the issue can be checked on examining any copy.

A further feature of the 1999 Local Plan which affects this site is policy POL.DRYM E1 (Para 2.31 page 115) of the 1999 Stirling Local Plan. This policy states that the planning authority will operate the particular planning consultation procedures which are required for a site bearing a National Scenic Area designation, and apply them to a specified area of land extending some 800 metres eastwards from the centre of the village. An area which includes the planning application site. [A plan illustrating the extent of this designated area is illustrated by horizontal hatching marked POL.DRYM.E1 on the map of Drymen facing page 116 of the 1999 Local Plan.]

The reason for this issue being in the 1999 Local Plan is that Stirling Council had previously asked that the National Scenic Area protective designation be extended to include this particular area. The Government replied to the effect that official alterations would have to wait for the next official review but meantime the Local Plan should indicate the need to consult Scottish Natural Heritage informally as though it was an intended part of an NSA.. It is understood that no consultation has taken place between the Park Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage with respect to the current planning application.

The Application

It should be remembered that apart from the 10 proposed rentable houses for the Rural Stirling Housing Association all the other 26 proposed houses are virtually indistinguishable in terms of occupation from open-market or 'speculative' houses, the very sort of houses that have been so strongly resisted in Drymen for 45 years by the community, by the planning authority and by Central Government on appeal and nowhere more strongly than on this particular site where 4 separate appeals have been dismissed by the government on the grounds that the development would be too damaging to, quoting one appeal decision, '*Unquestionably one of the most attractive villages in Scotland ...*' None of those refused appeals had the additional huge disadvantage that this application would have with regard to its devastating effect on car parking in the village and the east Loch Lomond shore, not only now, but for the future.

We have authorized Mr Frank Bracewell, SCNP Executive Committee member to speak and answer any questions on our behalf at your meeting on 24 May 2010.

Yours sincerely

Ross Anderson
Vice Chairman