

Perth and Kinross Council
Development Control Committee – 30 July 2008
Recommendation by Development Quality Manager

Erection of 143 dwellinghouses, 43 affordable houses and associated parking and garaging at Plots 1-186, Lynedoch Road, Methven

Ref. No: 06/00774/FUL
Ward No: 9 Almond and Earn

Summary

This report recommends approval of a major planning application for the development of a large greenfield site on the eastern edge of Methven which in part is contrary to the Local Plan.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

- 1 The village of Methven lies 5km west of Perth nestling within the rolling countryside between Glen Almond and Strathearn. It straddles the A85 (T) but sits mainly to the north of the road on gently rising ground. There is an historic core to the village surrounded by post-war development which fans out to give the village a roughly semi-circular form.
- 2 The application refers to a large irregularly shaped area of agricultural land, subdivided into a number of field units, adjoining the eastern edge of the built up area, which, at this point, comprises mainly low-rise modern housing of varying density. Extending to some 10.5ha, the site, which is partly owned by Perth & Kinross Council, has frontages to Lynedoch Road, the A85 (Crieff Road) and the unclassified road to Glenalmond which lies to the east of the village. Generally, the site has a south facing slope rising from 72m to 98m above ordnance datum level taking it beyond the highest point of the existing built up area. For the most part, it is contained by the existing village development and the boundaries are clearly defined which, on the east takes the form of existing mature tree belts. The exception to this is the part of the site lying between the existing built up area and the Glenalmond Road which has no definition on its northern boundary.
- 3 Detailed consent is sought for the erection of 186 houses, the main features of which are as follows:
 - Three points of vehicular access to the site are proposed i.e. from the Glenalmond Road, which will be re-aligned to join the A85 some 110m further west; from Lynedoch Road which forms the north-west boundary of the site; and, from Rorrie Terrace which abuts the western boundary. These accesses will link up to create a meandering network of distributor roads with spurs leading off to serve the more outlying parts of the site.
 - At a number of locations throughout the layout the roads will traverse a shared surface court or terminate at one.

- In addition to the road layout will be a network of segregated footpaths related to projected desire lines, the main route being set within a linear park which also acts as a landscape break between the higher density housing in the southern part of the site and the rest of the development.
- There will be a broad range of house types from large detached houses within a generous landscape framework to three storey blocks of flats, the former being located above the 90m contour and the latter in the lower lying southern part of the site. Of particular note is the proposal for a two/three storey building at the entrance to the site from the Crieff road which will also function as a new gateway to Methven from the east.
- Forty three affordable units will be provided which equates with 23% of the total with these being grouped around home zones in the south-eastern part of the site adjacent to the existing built development. There would be semi-detached, terraced and flatted units within the affordable mix.
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage System is to be provided on the east side of the re-aligned Glenalmond Road, the lowest lying part of the site, and foul drainage connected to the public sewer.
- Architecturally the buildings have a traditional style, in terms of scale form detailing and finish, with some of the smaller houses having a cottage appearance to the front elevation.

National Policy and Guidance

SPP3 “Planning for Housing

- 4 The key aim is to provide well located, high quality new housing, create quality residential environments, to guide new housing to the right places and to deliver housing land

Planning Advice Note 44 –

Provides through a series of case studies, design principles for large housing developments on the edges of built up areas and how to relate these sensitively to the existing landscape.

Planning Advice Note 74 – “Affordable Housing”

States that for sites in urban areas, local authorities should seek to achieve on-site provision of affordable houses on housing developments of 20 or more units, but in rural areas, where the general scale of development is smaller, a lower threshold for on-site provision may be appropriate in order to make affordable housing available in a range of locations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Perth and Kinross Structure Plan 2003

- 5 The principal relevant policies are in summary:
- 6 Sustainable Communities Policy 5 states that within the Perth Core Area small scale opportunity sites will be identified in villages to increase range and choice within the market.
- 7 Environment and Resources Policy 4 requires that the Tayside Landscape Character Assessment be a material consideration in the consideration of development proposals.

Perth Area Local Plan 1995 Incorporating Alteration No 1 Housing Land 2000.

- 8 The principal relevant sections are in summary:
- 9 Opportunity 8 zones site H65, known as Drumgrain Avenue, for residential use with the number of units to be determined by a design brief. Most of the application site, some 7.3ha, lies within the zoned area and, thereby, the defined village boundary. However, part of the site lies beyond the village boundary. A draft design brief for the zoned part of the site was prepared in 2002 but never formally approved.
- 10 Policy 71 seeks to safeguard residential amenity and village character within the village boundary.
- 11 Policies 1 and 2 are relevant to the balance of the site lying outwith the village boundary. Policy 1 requires all development sites to have a robust landscape framework and Policy 2 presumes against consent for built development outwith and adjoining settlement boundaries.

Draft Area Local Plan 2004

- 12 The principal relevant policies are in summary:
- 13 Essentially the policies with regard to Methven are the same as those in the statutory adopted local plan although a notional figure of 100 houses is suggested as being the capacity of the site with 25 affordable and 25 low cost (although on a smaller site than the application covers).

Other Key Policies

Allocation of Public Drainage Capacity

- 14 The report to Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee June 2006 noted that, of the 121 houses capacity available in the system at Methven, 103 should be allocated to zoned sites.

Affordable Housing Policy

- 15 The Council's Affordable Housing Policy is applicable to all residential development of five units and above. Outwith Perth city centre there is a requirement for 25% of the development to be affordable. Where the development is for greater than ten units, this should be provided on site.

SITE HISTORY

- 16 There is no planning history pertaining to the application site.

CONSULTATIONS

- 17 Transport Scotland has no objections to the proposal subject to the detailed design of the new junction on the A85 being submitted for approval.
- 18 Methven Community Council objects since the proposal is considered to be contrary to the Local Plan in that the site extends beyond the village boundary; the village infrastructure does not have the capacity to accommodate the development; the design is out of character with the village; and the affordable housing provision is inadequate.
- 19 Scottish Water states that no development should commence until the developer has reached an agreement with them regarding drainage provision.
- 20 Head of Public Space Management considers there are aspects of the open space provision to be resolved, particularly with regard to sports pitch provision and the level of public open space within the site.
- 21 Scottish Environment Protection Agency objects due to lack of information relating surface water drainage.
- 22 Scottish Natural Heritage has no objection.
- 23 The Perth and Kinross Archaeologist has no objections.
- 24 Historic Scotland considers that the development could adversely affect the setting of Methven Castle designed landscape as the eastern part of the development extends beyond the historical boundary of Methven which is defined by tree belts.
- 25 Education and Children's Services originally advised that not all the children arising from the development could be accommodated in the local school at present. This situation has now been overtaken by more recent events.
- 26 The Environmental Health Manager has no objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

27 Twenty nine representations from separate households have been received from local residents, the main points of concern being as follows:

- The overall scale of the development would have an unacceptable impact on the community.
- The proposal exceeds the village boundary and is contrary to the local plan.
- There is insufficient capacity in the local infrastructure to accommodate the development.
- The three storey building scale would be out of character with Methven and be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent property.
- Additional traffic movements would be generated at local road junctions which are already dangerous.

These issues are addressed in the Appraisal section of this report.

APPRAISAL

28 This is a major application which raises a number of important issues and these can be summarised as follows:

Policy

29 Most of the site, approximately 70%, lies within the defined village envelope and is zoned for residential use in the Perth Area Local Plan, as well as in the Draft Plan. However a significant part lies outwith the village envelope and is in conflict with the relevant Local Plan policies, in particular, Policy 2, since the proposal involves development outwith and adjoining a settlement boundary.

Affordable Housing

30 The proposed affordable housing provision would be 43 units out of 186 representing 23% of the total which falls short of the policy requirement by 2% or 3.5 units. The provision is therefore contrary to the Council's policy but this could be addressed by an appropriate condition.

Education

31 The primary school in Methven is now very close to capacity following a review of capacity in February 2007 which means that not all children from the development could be accommodated at present. Notwithstanding that, part of the site is zoned and therefore represents a partial commitment on the Education Authority. The balance of the site (86 houses) could therefore not be developed until the primary school has been expanded and this, in accordance with the interim protocol, which

has been applied since early 2007, would normally require the developer to make a substantial financial contribution. The applicant was not prepared to make any such contribution and this was a major cause in the delay in determining this application. However, the Council has recently decided to increase the capacity of the school through the installation of additional classroom units at its own expense therefore the education constraints will now be effectively removed.

Traffic

- 32 The construction of a roundabout at the proposed access onto the A85 would minimise the impact on the existing village streets of traffic generated by the larger development and enable it to become readily absorbed. This would also serve as an entrance feature to the village as well as assisting traffic calming. The proposed internal road layout is considered to be acceptable in planning terms since it has been aligned to deter extraneous through traffic. No detail has been provided on the design of the new A85 junction or the closure of the superseded section of Glenalmond Road, but this can be covered by planning conditions.

Drainage and Flooding

- 33 There is insufficient spare capacity in the wastewater treatment infrastructure to accommodate the whole development of 186 houses and of the 121 house equivalent spaces available only 103 are allocated to zoned sites in the approved drainage allocation policy. This would require the development to be phased with the first phase tailored to the drainage availability and a suspensive condition imposed requiring further investment by Scottish Water prior to development beyond that.

Residential Amenity

- 34 I do not consider that the development will impinge to an unacceptable degree on the residential amenities of adjacent properties. However, at the interface between the proposed housing and the existing village edge, some additional landscaping would be desirable to provide a buffer between the two.

Open Space

- 35 As the development will inevitably put pressure on the existing open space infrastructure, it would not be unreasonable for the developer to make a significant contribution towards the upgrading of recreational facilities in the village. Community Greenspace have suggested that junior sized football pitch should be provided on the opposite side of the main road adjacent to the existing park. The applicant has offered a sum of £60,000 towards the upgrading of the existing park although this has not been agreed, as yet, as being appropriate or sufficient. In addition, useable public open space provision within the site is minimal for a development of 186 houses at 0.25ha (0.6acres). Ideally this should be doubled in size, albeit at the expense of some units, in order to create a central greenspace of significance to act as a focal point for the development, create a sense of place and meet the recreational needs

of the new community. The applicant is now prepared to amend the layout, but a condition requiring additional open space would render the proposal acceptable.

Design and Layout

- 36 While the layout meets the technical standards in terms of road geometry, parking provision and house to plot ratio, it fails to reflect a village character with regard to the grouping of buildings and modelling of spaces. This could be resolved to some extent by providing a village green type feature overlooked and enclosed by houses. This would also address the shortfall in open space provision. Traditionally the planned estate villages of Perthshire were laid out in this manner, Methven itself has a square within its historic core, and there is an attempt to achieve a vernacular style in the detailed design of the houses. The application initially proposed a 3-storey block of flats to the eastern side of the site but this has been reduced to 2 storeys. A 2-storey block, incorporating a central two-and-a-half storey section is proposed at the main entrance to the development as a design feature.
- 37 In the Perth Landscape Capacity Study prepared by consultants for SNH, the 90 metre contour was considered to be the appropriate upper limit of development at Methven. This does represent a landscape threshold in that any built development at a higher level would impact on the setting of the village. However, the area above the 90 metre contour is included within the zoned site in the adopted Local Plan for housing and the development does incorporate a lower density and screen planting in this area.

Natural Heritage

- 38 The eastern boundary of the development runs close to the western boundary of the Methven Castle Designed Landscape (which runs along the Harrietfield Road). The proposal does not encroach within the designated area, and in most part the eastern boundary of the development runs within an existing treebelt. I do not consider, therefore, that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the Designed Landscape.

REPRESENTATIONS

- 39 All of the issues raised in the representations are covered elsewhere in this section.

CONCLUSION

- 40 Under S25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. This proposal is in part contrary to the Perth Area Local Plan since the eastern end of the proposed site extends beyond the village boundary. However, in the context of the overall development I consider this extension to be acceptable since it is on the lower part of the site and offers the opportunity for planning gain through the opportunity to provide a third access to the

development from the Crieff road. This would spread the traffic load, and improve an existing junction to the trunk road. In my view this justifies a departure from the Development Plan. There are other infrastructural constraints on the development as well as issues relating to affordable housing, open space provision and lack of quality in the layout design, but these can be addressed by regulating the development in an appropriate manner.

RECOMMENDATION

A Approve the application subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall be commenced within a period of five years from the date of this consent.
2. The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans herewith unless otherwise provided for by conditions imposed on the planning consent.
3. Prior to the commencement of works a 1:500 scale plan of the proposed A85(T) (Main Street)/Harrietfield Road roundabout shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland.
4. Prior to the occupation of any part of the development, the A85(T)/Harrietfield Road roundabout shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland.
5. Prior to the occupation of any part of the development the existing A 85(T)/Harrietfield Road priority junction shall be permanently closed off and the road properly reinstated.
6. All matters regarding access, car parking, road layout, design and specification, including the disposal of surface water, shall be in accordance with the standards required by the Roads Authority, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
7. Pick up and drop off areas together with appropriate shelters for bus passengers shall be provided on both sides of the A85 trunk road adjacent to the access to the development. The areas shall be a minimum of 6m long by 1.8m wide kerbed and surfaced to the requirements of the Roads Authority, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
8. The site layout shall be amended to include provision for a recycling facility, details to be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement work.
9. All foul effluent from the development shall be connected to the public drainage infrastructure and no more than 100 units shall be erected until such time as drainage capacity is available, details of the phasing programme to be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of work.
10. Disposal of surface water shall be in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

11. No more than 100 houses shall be occupied prior to the provision of additional classroom capacity at Methven Primary School and details of the manner in which the development will be phased shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of work.
12. A minimum of 25% of the units shall be affordable as defined in the Council's policy on Affordable Housing.
13. Details of finished floor levels for the houses related to a suitable OS datum shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of work.
14. The main open space area in the middle of the development shall be a minimum of 0.5 hectares in area with the housing layout re-arranged accordingly. Details to be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of any work.
15. A detailed landscaping and biodiversity plan for the development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of work. This shall make provision for retention and protection of existing tree belts along the eastern boundaries of the site, extensive mixed woodland planting above the 90m contour, and landscaping of open spaces. The landscaping works shall be implemented concurrently with the progress of development to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reasons

1. In accordance with the terms of Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
2. To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the plans approved.
- 3-7. In the interests of pedestrian and traffic safety.
- 8-11. In the interests of proper planning.
12. In accordance with Council policy.
- 13-15. In the interests of visual amenity; to ensure a satisfactory standard of local environmental quality.

B PROCEDURAL NOTES

Justification for departure from Development Plan

This proposal is only in part contrary to the Perth Area Local Plan since the eastern end of the proposed site extends beyond the village boundary. In the context of the overall development this extension is acceptable since it is on the lower part of the site and offers the opportunity for planning gain through the opportunity to provide a third access to the development from the Crieff road. This will spread the traffic load, and improve an existing junction to the trunk road.

C Consent shall not to be issued until a Section 75 Agreement and other legal agreement if required, has been completed and signed in respect of the following;

- **Affordable housing provision**
- **Open/play space financial contribution**
- **Maintenance of open space.**

D As the Council has a financial interest in part of the site, any decision by the Council to approve the application will require to be referred to the Scottish Government.

E Informatives

1. The applicant should be advised that in terms of section 21 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 he must obtain consent from the Roads Authority for the construction of a new road prior to the commencement of roadworks.
3. The applicant is advised that no development shall commence until agreement has been reached with Scottish Water regarding a connection to the public drainage system.

Background Papers: 28 Letters of objection were received
Contact Officer: Brian Dunkin – Ext 75354
Date: 17 July 2008

**Nick Brian
Development Quality Manager**

06/00774/FUL

Erection of 186 houses, Lynedoch Road, Methven



Scale : 1:5000

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Comments	
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