

P67. Erection of Visitor Centre to Include Information / Exhibition Space, Arts and Craft Workshop, Restrooms, Café and Retail Area and 82 Bungalows at Airth Mains Farm, Cemetery Road, Airth – for George Russell Construction Limited - P/21/0110/PPP – Continuation

The committee considered an update report by the Director of Place Services on an application for the erection of visitor centre to include information / exhibition space, arts and craft workshop, restrooms, café and retail area and 82 bungalows at Airth Mains Farm, Cemetery Road, Airth – for George Russell Construction Limited - P/21/0110/PPP.

With reference to Standing Order 33.5, the Convener referred to a deputation request received from, David Jones, agent, to be heard in relation to this item.

The committee agreed to hear the deputation.

Councillor Murtagh, seconded by Councillor Bouse, moved that the Planning Committee refuses the application for the following reason(s):-

- (1) The application is contrary to Policies PE14 'Countryside', HC05 'Housing in the Countryside' and JE05 'Business Development in the Countryside' of Falkirk Local Development 2 as the proposed development does not satisfy any of the circumstances to justify new housing or business development in the countryside. The application therefore represents unjustified development in the countryside, outwith the urban and village limits.
- (2) The application is contrary to Policies PE14 'Countryside', HC05 'Housing in the Countryside' and JE05 'Business Development in the Countryside' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the scale, layout and design of the proposed development are not considered to be suitable for the intended countryside location. In particular, the proposed development extends onto open agricultural land and is largely unable to take advantage of existing features such as topography and woodland to integrate and nestle it within the landscape.
- (3) The application is contrary to Policy PE01 'Placemaking' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the proposed development is not considered on balance to promote the qualities of successful place-making.
- (4) The application is contrary to Policies PE07 'Listed Buildings' and PE10 'Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the proposed development would significantly adversely affect the character, integrity and setting of the East Lodge Category B listed building and the inventory Garden and Designed Landscape of Dunmore Estate associated with The Pineapple and the understanding and experience of this designed landscape.

- (5) The application is contrary to Policy PE18 'Landscape' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the proposed development would extend onto open agricultural land to the detriment of the landscape setting of the village and it is not considered that a satisfactory landscape fit would be able to be achieved.
- (6) The application is contrary to Policy HC01 'Housing Land' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the site is not identified as a contributing site to meet the Council's housing supply target for the period 2017 to 2030. While additional sites for housing will be considered as there is currently a shortfall on the 5-year supply of effective housing land, this is only where the proposal constitutes sustainable development. The proposed development is not considered to constitute sustainable development.
- (7) The application is contrary to Policy JE01 'Business and Tourism' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the site is not identified as a Strategic Business Location or a tourism node and the proposed development is unlikely to support the tourism nodes and tourism networks/ themes identified in the development plan. The Pineapple is not identified as a tourism node in the plan.
- (8) The application is contrary to Policy IR04 'Community Facilities' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as it is not considered that the criteria to support new community facilities have been satisfied. In particular, it is not considered that good access to the proposed visitor centre by walking and cycling would be provided, and the scale and character of the visitor centre and associated road and parking infrastructure would not be compatible with its location within the inventory designed landscape.
- (9) The application is contrary to Policy IR05 'Travel Hierarchy and Transport Assessment' of Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 as the extent to which the travel demands of the proposed development can be maximised by firstly walking, then cycling, then public transport is constrained by the edge of village location, and the substandard width of the existing footway along the A905 between the village and the proposed visitor centre. It is considered that no suitable mitigation measures have been identified to provide a suitable, safe and convenient footway connection between the village and the proposed visitor centre.
- (10) It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the proposed scale of enabling housing development (82 units) is the minimum necessary to deliver the proposed visitor centre while allowing an appropriate level of developer profit.

Informative(s):-

- (1) For the avoidance of doubt, the plans to which this decision refers bear our online reference numbers 01, 02A, 03A, 04 and 05.

As an amendment, in substitution for the motion, Councillor Flynn, seconded by Provost Bissett, moved that the Planning Committee considers that the following material considerations are considered to be of such weight as to indicate that the development plan should not be afforded priority:-

- (1) That the proposal would enhance tourism and leisure provision in the area;
- (2) That the proposal would bring economic and employment benefits to the area;
- (3) That the proposal would enhance recreational and leisure space in the area;
- (4) That road traffic and transportation improvements would result from the development including a roundabout access;
- (5) That the location and scale of both the proposed visitor centre and the proposed housing, which would cross fund the development works for the visitor centre and associated infrastructure, are acceptable and it is not considered that either would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding area;
- (6) Noting that there is a shortfall in the Council's housing land supply and that it is considered that the development would contribute to sustainable development with benefits being considered to outweigh any adverse impacts, the development would contribute to meeting the shortfall in the housing land supply.

The Committee accordingly agrees that it is minded to grant planning permission in principle subject to the completion of a section 75 planning obligation under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 in terms satisfactory to the Director of Place Services in respect of:-

- (1) An open space contribution at the rate of £1,400 per unit;
- (2) The provision of 25% of the units at the site as affordable housing;
- (3) Public transport provision (a bus service contribution to fund a Sunday service at the rate of £1,332 per unit);
- (4) A contribution towards education provision to mitigate and address impacts on capacity within catchment schools to accommodate children from the proposed housing development;
- (5) Phasing of development to ensure completion of the visitor centre;
- (6) Appropriate investment of the proceeds of disposal of houses in the visitor centre and associated infrastructure;
- (7) The floor area safeguarded for the tourist information display area within the visitor centre;

(8) Retention of land for passive open space/landscaping;

And thereafter on conclusion of the foregoing matters, remit to the Director of Place Services to grant planning permission in principle subject to appropriate conditions as determined by him.

In terms of Standing order 22.1, the vote was taken by roll call, there being 11 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (6) – Councillors Bouse, Collie, Forrest, Kelly, Murtagh and Sinclair.

For the amendment (5) - Provost Bisset, and Councillors Buchanan, Flynn, Kerr and Stainbank.

Decision

The Planning Committee agreed the motion.