

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF LARBERT HOUSE TO FORM 20 FLATTED DWELLINGS AND CONVERSION OF THE STABLE BLOCK TO FORM 8 MEWS DWELLINGHOUSES AT LARBERT HOUSE, STIRLING ROAD, LARBERT FK5 4SB FOR STRATHYRE PROPERTIES LIMITED – P/11/0485/FUL

Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: 4 April 2012

Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Local Members: Ward - Bonnybridge and Larbert
Councillor Billy Buchanan
Councillor Tom Coleman
Councillor Linda Gow

Community Council: Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood

Case Officer: Allan Finlayson (Senior Planning Officer), Ext. 4706

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL / SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 This application seeks detailed planning permission for the restoration and extension of Larbert House, Larbert, Falkirk to provide 20 flatted dwellinghouses. In addition planning permission is sought for the restoration and conversion of Larbert House stables to form 8 ‘mews’ style dwellinghouses.
- 1.2 Larbert House, the stables and an associated walled garden are all ‘B’ Listed. The house and stables are derelict and the walled garden is in need of significant repair.
- 1.3 A replacement vehicular access to the site is proposed to the east of an existing site access from the B905 Denny Road to the south of Larbert House.
- 1.4 The proposal to restore Larbert House, stables and walled garden is also the subject of a Listed Building Consent application (ref: P/11/0481/LBC).
- 1.5 Further planning applications to develop land within the policies of Larbert House for residential development remain under consideration by Falkirk Council Development Services. These applications are:
 - P/11/0486/FUL – erection of 3 detached dwellinghouses to the east of Larbert House stables.
 - P/11/0556/FUL – erection of 10 terraced ‘mews’ style dwellinghouses in a new stable block to the south of Larbert House stables.

- P/11/0557/FUL – erection of 16 detached dwellinghouses to the west of Larbert House walled garden.
- P/11/0565/LBC – Listed Building Consent for development affecting the setting of Larbert House stables and walled garden in relation to the above development proposals.

1.6 The application site forms land immediately surrounding Larbert House and stables. Larbert House lies on a plateau of land to the south of the newly constructed Forth Valley Royal Hospital (FVRH). Larbert House stables lie to the south of Larbert House on land gently sloping from north to south. The walled garden lies immediately to the west of Larbert House stables.

1.7 Larbert House stables and walled garden have lain derelict for a period in excess of 10 years. The building condition has deteriorated significantly over this time.

1.8 There are a number of footpaths through the site and linking with the wider area. Footpath/cycle links to the Hospital to the north and Larbert to the east are proposed in the application.

1.9 In addition to architectural drawings and roads details, information submitted in support of the application includes the following:

- Financial Development Appraisal
- Architectural Design Statement
- Tree Survey
- Transport Assessment

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

2.1 The application relates to a significant development proposal affecting an important Listed Building in the Falkirk Council area. In addition, the proposed development does not fully accord with policies of the Development Plan.

2.2 It is anticipated that, should Planning Committee approve the application which is the subject of this report, the associated applications referred to above, which are fully compliant with the Development Plan, would be recommended for determination on the usual weekly list under delegated powers.

3. SITE HISTORY

3.1 There have been no previous planning applications submitted for the site. Pre-application submissions have however, been made by the applicant going back for a period of two years prior to the submission of the planning applications currently under assessment.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Falkirk Council Roads Development Unit has no objections to the proposed development. Amendments have been requested to access arrangements in relation to junction geometry and visibility. Footpath/cycle connection has also been requested. The applicant has addressed these requirements in the submission of amended plans.
- 4.2 The Roads Development Unit has requested the submission of a Drainage Strategy Assessment and a Flood Risk Assessment. The application site is not prone to flooding. These documents are, however, required to assess development impacts on existing drainage arrangements and the potential for flooding to result. The applicant is preparing this documentation for submission to Falkirk Council for assessment and approval. The approval of these documents will be required before planning permission is granted.
- 4.3 Falkirk Council Transport Planning Unit has identified necessary footpath/cycle provision and appropriate linkages with FVR Hospital to the north and Larbert to the east. The applicant has provided these footpaths/cycle links in submitted plans.
- 4.4 Falkirk Council Environmental Protection Unit has no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a planning condition requiring the submission of a Contaminated Land Assessment to determine if ground contamination exists and, if so, how to mitigate for its presence. In addition, an informative advising of restrictions on noise emanating from construction is requested.
- 4.5 Falkirk Council Education Services has no objections to the proposed development subject to the provision of financial contributions required to fund necessary education capacity improvements at Larbert Village Primary School, Larbert High School and St. Mungo's RC High School. The applicant has agreed to the provision of £5,950 per proposed dwellinghouse and £3,100 per proposed flatted dwellinghouse to contribute on a pro-rata basis to the funding of capacity improvements necessary as a direct result of the proposed development. The required financial contribution would be secured by means of a Section 75 legal obligation to be signed prior to the grant of planning permission. A contribution of £109,600 will be required in relation to this planning application. A total contribution for all development proposals of £264,300 is sought by Education Services. The applicant has agreed to making this contribution subject to agreed phasing of contributions.
- 4.6 Scottish Water has no objections to the proposed development. The applicant has been advised of capacity availability and potential required infrastructure improvements to allow connection to this capacity.
- 4.7 The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has no objections to the proposal. Guidance has been provided to the applicant in relation to foul drainage, surface water drainage, pollution prevention and waste management.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- 5.1 The Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council has not objected to the proposed development. The Community Council has, however, observed that the proposed number of housing units exceeds the number identified in the original Masterplan for the site. In addition, assurances are sought that the proposed development will not impact on flora and fauna in the environment of the Larbert House policies and the community infrastructure can accommodate the level of development proposed.

6. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 One letter of objection has been received as a result of neighbour notification and press advertisement. The representation opposes the conversion of Larbert House into flats and the development of further housing in the surrounding policies. Housing development is considered by the objector to adversely affect the recreational use of the area. Further concerns relate to the setting of a precedent for further housing development in the countryside and that the land had previously been gifted for the construction of a new hospital.

7. DETAILED APPRAISAL

Under section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the determination of planning applications for local and major developments shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Accordingly,

7a The Development Plan

Falkirk Council Structure Plan

- 7a.1 Policy COM.5 'Developer Contributions' states:

"The Council will ensure that proper provision is made to meet the physical and social infrastructure needs of new development and to mitigate the impact of such development on the locality. Where it is required to make a proposal acceptable in land use planning terms, serve a planning purpose and is directly related to the proposed development, developer funding for on- or off-site works will be sought in respect of:

- (1) environmental enhancement required to mitigate, or compensate for landscape, townscape or ecological impacts;*
- (2) physical infrastructure required to make the development acceptable, particularly transport provision required to ensure that the development meets sustainability criteria;*
- (3) community and recreational facilities required to meet demand generated by the development.*

The required provision will be reasonable and related to the scale and nature of the proposed development, taking into account the relevant Council standards and will be specified within Local Plans and development briefs as appropriate. Examples of the range of matters which developers may be asked to address are provided in Schedule COM.5.”

7a.2 The proposed development would facilitate the restoration of the derelict Larbert House and stables and associated walled garden, all Listed structures. In addition, financial contribution to fund education capacity improvements required as a direct result of the development are proposed.

7a.3 Policy COM.7 ‘School Provision’ states:

“New housing development will not be permitted unless adequate school capacity is available or will be made available.”

7a.4 Education Services has confirmed that the needs of the proposed development for education provision can be met provided that the applicant makes a financial contribution towards the development’s impacts on that capacity. The applicant has agreed to making this contribution to phasing of payments.

7a.5 Policy ENV.1 ‘Countryside and Protected Areas’ states:

“(1) There is a general presumption against development in areas defined as countryside, unless it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is essential or is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification. Where it is established that a countryside location is essential, development proposals will also be assessed in relation to Local Plan policies appropriate to specific protected areas as defined generally by Schedules ENV.1 and ENV.3.

(2) The policies applicable to countryside and protected areas within it, together with the detailed boundaries of each area, will be set out in Local Plans.”

7a.6 The proposed redevelopment of Larbert House and stables itself requires a rural location by virtue of the site location. The site is identified in the Falkirk Council Local Plan as an opportunity (H.L&S03, HP.L&S07 and RC.L&S02) for re-use for a number of potential uses including residential.

7a.7 Policy ENV.5 ‘Built Environment and Heritage’ states:

“Important Archaeological Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, sites included in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes and trees will be protected and enhanced. Local Plans will identify these assets and incorporate policies appropriate to the significance of the area or individual feature, including the following range of measures:

(1) Measures to ensure that assets are maintained in a good state of repair.

(2) Promotion of appropriate new uses for buildings.

(3) Promoting sensitive interpretation of heritage assets.

- (4) *Protection of the assets and their setting from inappropriate development.*
- (5) *Where development would damage, or result in the loss of the asset, that provision is made for adequate recording of the current status of the asset.”*
- (6) *Reviewing the boundaries of areas to ensure their continuing relevance.”*

7a.8 Larbert House is identified in the Falkirk Council Local Plan as an asset with the potential for re-development.

7a.9 The principle of the restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden itself is supported by Policy ENV.5.

7a.10 Policy ENV.7 ‘Quality of Development’ states:

- “(1) Priority is attached to the achievement of high standards of design in all new development. Proposals for development which would have significant visual and physical impact on a site and its surroundings must be accompanied by a "design concept statement" incorporating the relevant factors outlined in Schedule ENV.7 which sets out how design principles have been addressed and how quality objectives will be achieved.*
- (2) Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance will provide detailed guidance on how significant impact will be assessed and the details to be included in such design concept statements.”*

7a.11 The proposal is accompanied by a design statement and landscape appraisal. The proposed development integrates well with the existing landscape and involves minimal loss of trees with acceptable supplementary planning. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV.7.

Falkirk Council Local Plan

7a.12 Policy SC13 ‘Open Space and Play Provision in New Development’ states:

“New development will be required to contribute to open space and play provision. Provision should be informed by the Council’s open space audit and strategy and the SPG Note on ‘Open Space and New Development’, once available, or a site-specific local audit of provision in the interim, and should accord with the following principles:

- (1) Open space and facilities for play and outdoor sport should be provided in broad accordance with the guidance in Table 4.2. These requirements may be increased where the extent and quality of facilities in the area are proven by the open space audit to be below a suitable standard. Above ground SUDS features, small incidental amenity areas, structure planting and road verges will not count towards requirements.*
- (2) Financial contributions to off-site provision, upgrading, and maintenance, as a full or partial alternative to direct on-site provision, will be sought where*
 - existing open space or play facilities are located nearby and are able to serve the development through suitable upgrading;*

- *in residential developments, the size of the development falls below the threshold of 10 houses indicated in Table 4.2, or where it is otherwise not practical, reasonable or desirable to provide facilities on site; or*
 - *as part of a co-ordinated approach, a centralised facility is the optimum solution to serving a number of different developments in an area;*
 - *The required financial contribution per house will be set out in the SPG Note on ‘Open Space and New Development’.*
- (3) *The location and design of open space should be such that it:*
- *forms an integral part of the development layout, contributing to its character and identity;*
 - *is accessible and otherwise fit for its designated purpose;*
 - *links into the wider network of open space and pedestrian/ cycle routes in the area;*
 - *sensitively incorporates existing biodiversity and natural features within the site;”*
 - *promotes biodiversity through appropriate landscape design and maintenance regimes; and*
 - *enjoys good natural surveillance;*
- (4) *Developers must demonstrate to the Council that arrangements are in place for the management and maintenance of open space, including any trees, paths, walls, structures,*

7a.13 The proposed development is low density development in the setting of historic lowland and open space. The standards relative to access to quality open space are easily met. Formal play provision is not proposed and, given the historic character of the site, not considered appropriate.

7a.14 Policy SC14 ‘Education and New Housing Development’ states:

“Where there is insufficient capacity within the catchment school to accommodate children from new housing development, developer contributions will be sought in cases where improvements to the school are capable of being carried out and do not prejudice the Council’s education policies. The contribution will be a proportionate one, the basis of which will be set out in the SPG Note on ‘Developer Contributions; Education and New Housing Development’. In cases where the school cannot be improved in a manner consistent with the Council’s education policies, the development will not be permitted.”

7a.15 The proposed development would require consultations towards capacity improvements at Larbert Village Primary School, Larbert High School and St. Mungo’s RC High School. The applicant has agreed to the provision of contributions to fund these improvements on a pro-rata basis resulting from development impacts on capacity.

7a.16 Policy EQ4 - ‘Landscape Design’ states:

“Development proposals should include a landscape framework which enhances the development and assists integration with its surroundings. The landscape scheme should:

- (1) *Be informed by the surrounding landscape;*
- (2) *Retain and incorporate existing vegetation, natural and cultural features where they contribute to the amenity and biodiversity of the site, with provision for replacement planting where removal is authorised;*
- (3) *Integrate with strategies for the provision of open space, pedestrian access, and sustainable urban drainage systems on the site;*

- (4) *Promote biodiversity, including the use of native tree and plant species (see Policy EQ25);*
- (5) *Incorporate robust structure planting to provide structure in larger developments, and screen the edge of developments where necessary;*
- (6) *Incorporate street trees and informal open space planting to assist in structuring and unifying streets and spaces;*
- (7) *Incorporate high quality hard landscaping, including surface materials, boundary enclosures and street furniture which are robust and complement the development; and*
- (8) *Demonstrate that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the future maintenance and management of all landscaped areas.”*

7a.17 The application incorporates a landscape analysis detailing minimal landscape works. The proposed landscaping works are appropriate and comply with Policy EQ4.

7a.18 Policy EQ1 ‘Sustainable Design Principles’ states:

“New development will be required to achieve a high standard of design quality and compliance with principles of sustainable development. Proposals should accord with the following principles:

- (1) *Natural and Built Heritage. Existing natural, built or cultural heritage features should be identified, conserved, enhanced and integrated sensitively into development;*
- (2) *Urban and Landscape Design. The scale, siting and design of new development should respond positively and sympathetically to the site’s surroundings, and create buildings and spaces that are attractive, safe and easy to use;*
- (3) *Accessibility. Development should be designed to encourage the use of sustainable, integrated transport and to provide safe access for all users;*
- (4) *Resource Use. Development should promote the efficient use of natural resources, and take account of life cycle costs, in terms of energy efficient design, choice and sourcing of materials, reduction of waste, recycling of materials and exploitation of renewable energy;*
- (5) *Infrastructure. Infrastructure needs and their impacts should be identified and addressed by sustainable mitigation techniques, with particular regard to drainage, surface water management, flooding, traffic, road safety and noise; and*
- (6) *Maintenance. Proposals should demonstrate that provision will be made for the satisfactory future management and maintenance of all public areas, landscaping and infrastructure.”*

7a.19 The proposed restoration and enhancement of Larbert House complies with the aims of Policy EQ1. Additional ancillary development is considered to be of a high design standard and is necessary to ensure the retention and restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden.

7a.20 Policy EQ14 ‘Listed Buildings’ states:

“The Council will seek to preserve the character and appearance of listed buildings. Accordingly:

- (1) *Development affecting a listed building, or its setting, shall preserve the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.*

- (2) *Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported where it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted by all concerned to find practical ways of keeping it. This will be demonstrated by inclusion of evidence to the Council that the building:*
- *has been actively marketed at a reasonable price and for a period reflecting its location, condition and possible viable uses without finding a purchaser; and*
 - *is incapable of physical repair and re-use through the submission and verification of a thorough structural condition report; and*
- (3) *RCAHMS shall be formally notified of all proposals to demolish listed buildings to enable features to be recorded."*

7a.21 The proposed restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden is welcomed and Historic Scotland has not objected to the proposed development. Historic Scotland has provided comments on the design of particular elements of the proposed development in relation to the associated Listed Building Consent application (ref: P/11/0481/LBC). The applicant has incorporated their comments and the resultant proposal is considered to comply with Policy EQ14.

7a.22 Policy EQ15 - 'Re-Use Of Buildings' states:

"The Council will generally support the re-use or conversion of existing vacant buildings of architectural and townscape merit, provided that the building is structurally sound and capable of beneficial conversion, and an acceptable internal layout and level of amenity can be provided."

7a.23 The re-use of Larbert House is supported and this element of the proposed development complies with Policy EQ15.

7a.24 In addition to the consideration of Policy EQ15, Larbert House is identified by Opportunity RC.L&S02 of the Falkirk Council Local Plan. Opportunity RC.L&S02 states:

"RSNH Development Framework and Masterplan provides further guidance. Category B listed building. Opportunities will be sought for the sensitive reuse and refurbishment of Larbert House. A Feasibility study will be required to assess options for conversion to different uses, and the implications for conservation and integrity of the building. Potential future uses are likely to include ancillary hospital facilities, business or residential use or a use which safeguards the building in its current form. Future of Larbert House must be secured in conjunction with the development of the new Acute Hospital."

7a.25 Opportunity RC.L&S02 identifies Larbert House as an opportunity for conversion to a number of uses, including residential. The development under consideration proposes the extension of Larbert House which is not identified by Opportunity RC.L&S02.

7a.26 The Falkirk Council Local Plan identifies Larbert House stables and the surrounding land as a development opportunity. Opportunity H.L&S07 states:

"RSNH Development Framework provides further guidance. Stable block covered by the Larbert House listing. Feasibility Study for Larbert House should address issues relating to the conversion of the Stables. Restoration must be secured in association with adjacent development sites. Development should be sympathetic to the stable block and the core parkland in terms of form layout and materials. Maintaining integrity of Stable Block will be paramount. Other appropriate uses would include healthcare and business uses. RSNH Development Framework and RSNH Master Plan and Management Framework provide further guidance."

7a.27 The proposed development of Larbert House stables is considered to comply with the intentions of the Falkirk Council Local Plan. The proposed extension to Larbert House is not envisaged by opportunity RC.L&S02 of the Falkirk Council Local Plan. In this respect the proposed development is not fully in accordance with the Development Plan.

7a.28 This aspect of the development is considered in detail in the Material Considerations Section of this report. (Section 7b).

7a.29 Policy EQ22 'Landscape and Visual Assessment' states:

"Development proposals which are likely to have a significant landscape impact must be accompanied by a comprehensive landscape and visual assessment as part of the Design Statement, which demonstrates that the setting is capable of absorbing the development, in conjunction with suitable landscape mitigation measures, and that best environmental fit has been achieved, in terms of the landscape character of the area."

7a.30 The applicant has submitted a landscape plan which has been subject to appraisal by Falkirk Council. This assessment of the landscape setting and the proposed development's impacts upon it have acceptably demonstrated that the site is capable of absorbing the development. The proposal therefore complies with Policy EQ22.

7a.31 Policy EQ19 - 'Countryside' states:

(1) The Urban and Village Limits represent the desirable limit to the expansion of settlements for the period of the Local Plan. Land outwith these boundaries is designated as countryside and will be subject to the detailed policies for specific uses indicated in Table 3.3. Development proposals in the countryside for uses not covered by these policies will only be permitted where:

- it can be demonstrated that they require a countryside location;*
- they constitute appropriate infill development; or*
- they utilise suitable existing buildings.*

(2) In circumstances where development meets the relevant countryside policy criteria, the scale, siting and design of development will be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside. In particular:

- the siting should be unobtrusive, making use of natural features to integrate development into the landform and avoiding skylines;*

- *building design should be sympathetic to vernacular building styles and comply with the design principles contained within the Council's 'Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Areas'; and*
- *boundary and curtilage treatments should be sympathetic to the rural area, with a preference for stone walling and hedging using native species."*

7a.32 The proposed development requires a countryside location by virtue of the location of Larbert House. The proposed development is not infill development but would, in part, utilise existing buildings. The new residential development is unobtrusively sited and respects the landscape setting of the area. Boundary and curtilage treatments are sympathetic to a rural area. Building design is considered to be of good quality. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal does comply with Policy EQ19.

7a.33 Policy SC3 - 'Housing Development In The Countryside' states:

"Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- (1) *Housing essential to the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential. In these instances, the applicant must demonstrate:*
 - *The operational need for the additional house in association with the business*
 - *That no existing dwelling which might have served that need has been sold or otherwise alienated from the holding*
 - *That there are no reasonable opportunities for reusing or converting redundant buildings rather than building a new dwellinghouse*
 - *That the business as a whole is capable of providing the main source of income for the occupant;*
- (2) *Proposals involving the rehabilitation of former residential properties, or the conversion of farm and other buildings to residential use, where*
 - *The building, by virtue of its existing character, makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape*
 - *The building is in a reasonable state of repair, still stands substantially intact and is capable of beneficial restoration, as verified by a report and certificate from a qualified structural engineer*
 - *The restored or converted building is of comparable scale and character to the original building*
 - *In the case of former non-residential buildings, the building is no longer required for the purpose for which it was built; or*
- (3) *Appropriate infill opportunities within the envelope of an existing group of buildings, where the development would not result in ribbon, backland or sporadic development, and the proposal satisfies Policy SC8."*

7a.34 The proposed housing development is not essential to the pursuance of accepted countryside uses. The proposal includes the restoration of Larbert House and stables. New housing development seeks to relate to the siting of Larbert House and exploit the Listed walled garden and landscape setting opportunities in order to limit visual impact. In this respect, the proposed development is considered to accord with the aims of Policy SC3.

7a.35 Policy EQ26 - 'Trees, Woodland And Hedgerows' states:

"The Council recognises the ecological, landscape, economic and recreational importance of trees, woodland and hedgerows. Accordingly:

- (1) Felling detrimental to landscape, amenity, nature conservation or recreational interests will be discouraged. In particular ancient, long-established and semi-natural woodlands will be protected as a habitat resource of irreplaceable value;*
- (2) In an area covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or a Conservation Area, development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, stability or appearance of the trees. Where necessary, endangered trees and woodlands will be protected through the designation of further TPOs;*
- (3) Where development is permitted which will involve the loss of trees or hedgerows of amenity value, the Council will normally require replacement planting appropriate in terms of number, size, species and position;*
- (4) The enhancement and management of existing woodland and hedgerows will be encouraged. Where the retention of a woodland area is integral to a development proposal, developers will normally be required to prepare a plan and make provision for its future management; and*
- (5) There will be a preference for the use of appropriate local native species in new and replacement planting schemes, or non-native species which are integral to the historic landscape character."*

7a.36 The proposed development has demonstrated, through landscape assessment and tree conservation measures, that the ecological, landscape and recreational importance of trees, woodland and hedgerows has been recognised and will be respected. The proposed development complies with Policy EQ26.

7a.37 Policy EQ29 'Outdoor Access' states:

- "(1) The Council will seek to safeguard, improve and extend the network of outdoor access routes, with particular emphasis on the core path network once it is defined.*
- (2) In promoting new routes particular emphasis will be placed on*
 - opportunities specified on the Proposals Map*
 - other opportunities which support and provide linkages in respect of the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative, the recreational use of the major river corridors, including the Forth Estuary, and sustainable travel within and between settlements;*
 - other areas of proven demand as identified through community consultation; and*
 - the need to safeguard protected habitats and species in accordance with Policies EQ24 and EQ25.*
- (3) When considering planning applications, the Council will*
 - Safeguard the line of any existing or proposed access route affected by the development, and require its incorporation into the development unless a satisfactory alternative route can be agreed.*
 - Seek to secure any additional outdoor access opportunities which may be achievable as a result of the development, particularly where they relate to the priority areas identified in sub-section (2) above.*

- *Where an access route is to be temporarily disrupted, require the provision of an alternative route for the duration of construction work and the satisfactory reinstatement of the route on completion of the development.”*

7a.38 The proposed development provides informal countryside access within the site and to Forth Valley Royal Hospital to the north and Larbert to the east. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy EQ29.

7a.39 Accordingly, the proposed development does not fully accord with the Development Plan.

7b Material Considerations

7b.1 The material considerations to be assessed are the site history, the principle of enabling development required to fund the restoration of Larbert House, National Planning Guidance, Falkirk Council’s Economic Downturn Action Plan and the views expressed by consultees and in objections.

Site History

7b.2 The principle of the renovation of Larbert House, stables and walled garden and ancillary development including enabling development has been under discussion for a period in excess of two years. The principle of sensitive renovation of Larbert House, stables and walled garden with carefully considered and financially justified enabling development has been formally accepted in the preparation of a masterplan for the site.

7b.3 The stringent requirements of the redevelopment of Larbert House and ancillary structures, as important ‘B’ Listed Buildings has also been stressed.

Enabling Development

7b.4 The applicant has submitted a detailed financial appraisal of the land purchase costs, development costs and profit levels anticipated. This appraisal has been the subject of review by relevant national guidance and development experience.

7b.5 The applicant has submitted a financial summary of costs that provide quantified expenditure on land acquisition, emergency works, construction costs, infrastructure costs, preliminaries and contingencies. In addition, quantified costs on professional fees, finance, sales costs, company formation costs, profits and VAT have been provided.

7b.6 The conclusion of the submitted financial summary is that the enabling development proposed is the minimum required to secure the renovation of Larbert House.

7b.7 Review of the applicant’s financial appraisal has indicated that the proposed enabling development to restore Larbert House, stables and walled garden would not be excessive.

National Planning Guidance

7b.8 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) establishes national planning policy in relation to housing land use. In the context of the proposed development, Scottish Planning Policy seeks to create quality residential environments, guide new housing to the right places and deliver housing land in the context of historic buildings, landscapes and natural heritage.

- 7b.9 It is considered that the renovation of Larbert House, stables and walled garden and provision of high quality housing of mixed type, to include terraced and detached units, is consistent with the aims and objectives of Scottish Planning Policy.
- 7b.10 Scottish Planning Policy advises of the need for a sensitive response to increasing demand for development in the countryside. The aims behind Scottish Planning Policy are that Scotland has a prosperous rural economy with a stable or increasing population and that the housing needs of that population need to be accommodated.
- 7b.11 Scottish Planning Policy establishes Scottish Government policy in relation to development affecting Listed Buildings and their settings with a view to protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 7b.12 The policy expressions in Scottish Planning Policy that are relevant to the proposed development relate to the renovation of Larbert House, stables and walled garden as 'B' Listed Buildings and the potential impact on the setting of these buildings of new enabling development.
- 7b.13 The proposals to renovate Larbert House, stables and walled garden are welcomed both in policy terms and by Historic Scotland as statutory consultee. The agreed renovation works would ensure the restoration of these buildings and the re-introduction of residential use would ensure their long term care and protection. This position is consistent with the aims and policy expressions of Scottish Planning Policy.
- 7b.14 Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) provides guidance on the statutory responsibility for the protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and their setting.
- 7b.15 The proposed renovation of Larbert House, stables and walled garden is consistent with the requirements of SHEP. The renovation and long term survival of these buildings is considered to accord with the aims of SHEP and no objections to these proposed developments are held by Historic Scotland. It should be noted that there is an associated Listed Building Consent application (P/11/0481/LBC).

Falkirk Council's Economic Downturn Action Plan

- 7b.16 This action plan emphasises the need for flexibility in the current economic climate. The development proposes 58 new dwellinghouses on the site. The number of housing units has been demonstrated to be necessary in the applicant's financial appraisal. The number of units sought has necessitated a proposed extension to Larbert House not originally anticipated. The extension has been carefully designed so as not to adversely affect the design of Larbert House or its setting.

Consultation Responses

- 7b.17 The requirements of consultation responses from within Falkirk Council in relation to Education, Environmental Protection, Transport Planning and Roads Development can be achieved either by developer contribution or appropriately worded planning conditions, except for a few remaining roads/drainage issues which would have to be resolved following any minded to grant decision by the Committee prior to the conclusion of a required Section 75 legal obligation to secure education (contribution). Education Services consider that developer contributions would be necessary for Larbert Village Primary School, Larbert High School and St. Mungo's RC High School.
- 7b.18 SEPA and Scottish Water have expressed no objections to the proposed development.
- 7b.19 Historic Scotland welcomes the restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden. Amendments to building design have been undertaken following the detailed comments of Historic Scotland.

Representations

- 7b.20 The development of the grounds of Larbert House to secure the renovation and long term use of the House, stables and walled garden have been agreed following community consultation dating back almost 10 years. The principle is now established in the Falkirk Council Local Plan. Central to the acceptance of development is that it must protect and improve recreational use of the policies of Larbert House for community use. The proposal is considered to achieve this aim.
- 7b.21 Approval of the proposed development would not establish precedent for further development in the countryside. The construction of FVR Hospital is now complete. The application site is not subject to a 'gifting' arrangement and has always been intended for development proposals subject to the approval of planning permission.

7c Conclusion

- 7c.1 The proposed development represents a significant opportunity to secure the sensitive restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden. The proposal has been assessed against the terms of the Development Plan and National Planning Policy. The conclusion of this assessment is that the proposal is, in part, contrary to the Development Plan but not significantly so in that the extension of Larbert House to provide additional residential units is not anticipated by the Falkirk Council Local Plan. Review of the applicant's financial appraisal in the context of Falkirk Council's Economic Downturn Action Plan has confirmed that the proposed number of dwellings is necessary to satisfactorily restore Larbert House, stables and walled garden. The proposed extension to Larbert House is considered to be acceptable in terms of architectural design and landscape setting.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is therefore recommended that Committee indicates that it is minded to grant planning permission subject to resolution of outstanding roads and drainage issues to the satisfaction of the Director of Development Services.**

8.2 On conclusion of considerations referred to in section 8.1 above, Members remit to the Director of Development Services to grant planning permission subject to:

(a) The satisfactory completion of an obligation under the terms of Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 relating to:

- (1) Financial contributions of £109,600 towards educational contributions;
- (2) The provision of off site road works identified in the approved Transport Statement;
- (3) The provision of a footpath/cycle links to the north and east of the site;
- (4) A restriction of new build dwellinghouses to a maximum of 58;
- (5) The phasing of the development to ensure the satisfactory restoration of Larbert House, stables and walled garden prior to the completion of an agreed number of build dwellinghouses. The phasing of new build dwellinghouses thereafter shall be agreed;

(b) and thereafter, on conclusion of the Section 75 obligation, to grant planning permission subject to appropriate planning conditions including those relating to roads, drainage, archaeological investigations, ground contamination, external materials and samples as required, construction methodology, phasing of development, landscaping and boundary treatments.

Pp

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Director of Development Services

Date: 27 March 2012

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Council Structure Plan.
2. Falkirk Council Local Plan.
3. Falkirk Council Supplementary Planning Guidance.
4. Falkirk Council Economic Downturn Action Plan.
5. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).
6. Historic Scotland's Historic Environment Policy (SHEP).
7. Letter of objection dated 19 October 2011 from Mr & Mrs Collins, 8 Guthrie Crescent, Larbert.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504706 and ask for Allan Finlayson, Senior Planning Officer.

Planning Committee

Planning Application Location Plan **P/11/0485/FUL**

This plan is for location purposes only. It should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the application site.



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