

**THIS PAPER RELATES TO
ITEM 3 (c) (i)
ON THE AGENDA**

**Planning Statement from
Original Planning Application**

**Balquharn Stables, Back Road,
Alva, FK12 5LH**

Planning Reference: 15/00159/FULL

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed New Build Dwelling House In Place Of Balquharn Stables, Back Road Alva.

Proposal and Context.

Our proposal is for the demolition of an existing run down underused stables building and associated ground and replacement new build single storey dwelling house.

The existing stables block sits to the west side of our client's current garden ground of 'The Arns', Back Road, Alva. The site is sloping and sits above the existing road. The road in front of the site continues along to the nearby farm, but it terms of vehicle access terminates a few meters to the east of the site where it becomes a footpath for pedestrian traffic only.

There is a high stone wall along the entire frontage of the garden ground and site. There is an area of trees and natural hillside foliage to the west of the site. To the east, the ground is garden ground and has been utilised as a paddock for the horses. The stables are proposed to be removed and the horses will be relocated to larger premises elsewhere.

Our Client currently lives in the property to the east of the site; 'The Arns'; as previously mentioned. This property also sits at the foot of the hillside, but in an elevated position. The existing house is accessed via a steeply sloping driveway and numerous steps. Once inside the property, there are various changing levels and more steps to contend with. Our Clients have lived in this area of Alva all of their lives, running various local enterprises. Due to developing circumstances they require to relocate into a more level access property and to down size. 'The Arns' is no longer fit for their living requirements.

Location

The site is situated to the west of Alva, on the outskirts, adjacent to the existing working Balquharn Farm and Farm Holiday cottages. It nestles at the foot of the stunning Ochil Hills and is accessed from the 'Back Road', just off of the A91 between Menstrie and Alva. There is currently a small stone flat roofed stables building on the site with associated existing access from the Back Road.

Existing Characteristics and History of Towns Growth.

Alva is termed as a 'West Ochils Area', in terms of the proposed Local Development Plan. Over the years in terms of other Hillfoots Towns, most of the recent development has been seen in Menstrie expanding to the west and south. This is less so the case in Alva and Tilllicoultry.

However, Alva as a town has been growing over the years. In the last 40 years or so, the town has been allowed to expand towards the east and the west; both north and south of the main high street; A91. The diagram of the town as it currently stands can be analysed as having a south and north of the main street area. Alongside this there is a 'back road' that runs parallel with the main street; along the foot of the Ochil hills. To the north of the back road there are houses running alongside this along the foot of the slope of the hills. Some of these houses are historic and have been in existence since the early planning of the town. Others are more modern extensions of the back road as the town has expanded. There are areas there are gaps due to difficult topography- sloping gradients or existing rocks and trees. This is consistent along the entire length of the town.

Planned changes to the area and responding to the Proposed Local Development Plans.

Given the status of the Proposed Local Development Plan; the Council have notified intention to adopt this year; it is a main and material consideration.

Our proposals do not compromise any of the goals the new LDP sets out to achieve.

Clackmannanshire Council notified the public of their intention to adopt the new Development Plan back in May this year. The Council Plans to adopt the new plan by midsummer this year. The new Development Plan identifies an area to the west side of Alva for further expansion. This area fills the existing fields between the extent of the towns existing boundary and the next farm road to the west.

As it stands, in front of our site, there is a large industrial building which has been screened with a heavily planted verge of trees. The development plan also identifies other sites within the town which are Brownfield sites. The plan states that the western area allocated for development should only be moved onto once more progress has been made on the inner town sites.

Currently areas of green belt separate the Hillfoots towns and villages to prevent them from merging with one another. It is important this break is made. Making reference to 4.6.10 of the proposed local development plan 'Care is needed to protect landscape character and setting of settlements. Areas of Green Belt separate Alva, Menstrie and Tillicouly..' Our proposed new house will not alter this condition as it will be located adjacent to the proposed new boundary of the western edge of the town.

There will be no flood risk issues with the site proposed due to it sitting at higher level.

The Development

Although the planned development site to the west represents a longer term development, the premise to move the town boundary has been approved. Therefore if this new house were to be approved it would not be detrimental to the delineation of the towns boundary. The back road condition already exists. The new house will be read both as a rural house located on the back road similar to others as existing and as part of the town. There will be open landscape around the house to match existing conditions. But when the town boundary does eventually move, then house will also sit comfortably within this new condition. In line with proposed landscaping and planting requested by the LDP to help define the edge of the planned development, we would also propose to plant new trees behind the new property to give the house a sense of place; adding to the existing environment.

There is already a stables building on the proposed site, the new house will sit in place of this building but will be of a larger scale. It will not appear out of scale in comparison to neighbouring properties- equally spaced apart. The character of the area will remain unchanged.

The LDP states that the new development is required to provide a quality edge to the settlement, creating a sense of place. The proposed new house will too provide a quality, edge to the back road area of the settlement, whilst tying in with the existing back road condition.

The A91 is the main road running through the area. From the A91 and approach to the town, the house will eventually barely be seen, once the proposed expansion of the town is underway. However, in the meantime the house will be an in-keeping addition to the more sparingly developed back road area.

2. Vision and Objectives

2.19.1 States appropriate sites have been allocated for development; meaning this area to the west of Alva is appropriate below the back road area. We feel a single dwelling to the north of the back road would tie in with this concept.

2.21.1 Natural Environment.

'Safeguarding Greenbelt' We are not proposing that this is altered. The Greenbelt area as it stands wraps around the rear of the stables, as these are existing. We proposed to slightly alter this boundary line to accommodate for the slightly larger footprint of the house. We do not wish to change to greenbelt planned, but to slightly tweak it to allow for this house/ have the house on its' edge.

2.22.1 Built Environment.

Designing spaces- strong sense of local identity. The Architecture of the proposed house addresses this.

Priority to re-use vacant/ derelict land. Again, there is a stables block currently on the site- it is therefore not a Greenfield site.

3.12.15 Settlements:-

'Close proximity to each other- surrounded by attractive, diverse, landscape; settlements and communities retain a sense of local identity and distinctiveness'- introducing a new house in this location will not alter this in any way.

3.13 Detailed assessments were carried out to determine where land for houses would best be located. This area has been identified, albeit in line with the main town; it sets a precedent for the existing diagram of the town being repeated. This location for the new build will not affect the landscape setting or the identity of the town. It will not affect the open space around or within the town.

3.21 'Development will mainly be located on sites within or adjacent to existing urban areas'- This house will simply repeat the existing pattern of the town. There are currently houses along the back road throughout length of town. Towards this end of the town we feel it is important the house also responds with other existing house styles as the back road leaves Alva. The design allows for this and is similar to the cottages and houses out-with Alva.

The Natural Environment.

4.6.31 of the Proposed LDP describes how the Ochil Hills form the most prominent feature in the landscape. The proposed new build house respects this prominence and sits low in elevation and section; creating a single storey cottage in place of the existing stables. The existing stables are located in a slightly elevated location at the foot of the hill and are bound by existing stone walls between the plot and the back road area. The stables act as a full stop to the back road area and the new house will also. The stables are located to the east of the garden to the last house on the back road. We will retain the existing setting and an open space will be retained between the existing house and proposed house. The new house will therefore not change this 'Special Landscape Area' that it sits adjacent to.

4.6.33 describes how the Green Belt separates the settlements. Again the new house will not change the character of the Green Belt due to the proposed extension of the town boundary.

4.6.34 advises that a review has identified/ raised a point that with the development of new houses to both the north and south of the A91, that in conjunction with this proposal, an enhanced green belt to the west of the town is required; a more defined edge to the town should be created, with higher quality landscape setting. This will clearly allow the green belt to define the town. It furthermore reinforces the idea that the back road should be allowed to move along with the town boundary and terminate in line with it.

Spatial Context.

5. Creating Sustainable communities.

5.4.2 Although on the outskirts of Alva, the site is not in a rural location. It could be considered as sitting within or very near to the edge of the proposed town envelope. The existing town is planned to eventually expand in front of the site. The site will therefore eventually be encompassed by the town and read as part of it from approach by car on the A91 or on foot along the back road. It will be a straight forward addition to an existing community with existing infrastructure.

5.4.7 As the site is on the outskirts of the town, we feel it is also important that it be read as a countryside design. It requires to be in keeping with existing characteristics of other houses out with the town envelope, but also interact with the existing town. The building will require to be constructed to high standards, both visually and in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability.

7. Environmental Assets

7.3

'The Clackmannanshire Green Belt will continue to play an important role in managing growth and ensuring that it is directed to the most appropriate locations, while the quality and distinctive character of our landscapes will continue to be protected and enhanced, particularly in areas of exceptional landscape quality, which have been designated as Special Landscape Areas.'

The character and functionality of the greenbelt in this location will not be affected by proposals.

Central Scotland Green Network

7.5

The Green Network links together all the open spaces in Clackmannanshire into an interconnected network delivering a multitude of economic, environmental and social benefits to the communities and ecosystems on which our area depends for its quality of life

7.6

The key elements of new development that can contribute to the Clackmannanshire Green Network include:

- *Mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts (Policies EA2, EA6, EA9, EA10, EA13, EA14, EA16, EA18).*
- *Improving access to the core paths network wherever opportunities arise, encouraging active travel (SC11).*
- *Strengthening biodiversity through provision of new or enhanced wildlife habitat, linking up and strengthening habitat networks and delivering biodiversity benefits through building design and appropriate landscaping (SC5, EA2, EA4).*

The new design will contribute to the existing green network with new tree planting and biodiversity opportunities. It will not in any way have a detrimental effect on the biodiversity of the surrounding environment. There is an existing core path link to the south of the proposed house owned by the applicant which the public have been given right of way over. The proposals will not alter this.

7.11

Although the CSGN is a relatively new concept, many of the green corridors, open spaces, paths and recreation areas which make up the network already exist. Many of these have previously been identified for their landscape and/or environmental value and continue to be protected through the LDP policies: such as Special Landscape Areas, Green Belts, watercourses, local nature conservation sites and core paths. These areas range from areas of local importance to nationally designated sites.

Again there is a core path to the south of the proposals. The proposal will not affect this.

Landscape and Tree Preservation Orders

7.23

Clackmannanshire is recognised for its dramatic and contrasting landscape, where the carseland of the Forth Valley meets the southern escarpment of the Ochil Hills. The Landscape Character Assessment for Clackmannanshire identifies the area as one of the most visually sensitive areas of Scotland with the escarpment forming one of the most significant landscape features in Central Scotland, visible from a great distance.

7.26

The Clackmannanshire Local Plan (2004) identified two Areas of Great Landscape Value covering the Ochil Hills and 'Forest',

Our proposal recognises these and seeks to sit low to respect this situation. The design reflects existing buildings in the local area.

Green Belt

7.31

In accordance with the principles set out in Scottish Planning Policy, the purpose of the Clackmannanshire Green Belt is to:

- *direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration;*
- *protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of settlements; and*
- *protect and give access to open space within and around settlements.*

7.32

The existing Clackmannanshire Green Belt has been largely successful in meeting its objectives. It has reinforced the delivery of appropriate planned growth of Clackmannanshire's main settlements; prevented coalescence between settlements, protecting their setting; and assisted in safeguarding assets of acknowledged importance such as prime quality agricultural land.

7.34

The Green Belt is intended to form part of the framework to manage growth in Clackmannanshire and direct development to appropriate areas consistent with the spatial strategy. The Countryside Policy (Policy SC23) also applies within the designated Green Belt.

The proposed house would not have detrimental effect on the existing greenbelt. It will replace an existing structure on the edge of the existing town, sharing a garden boundary with the existing last house on the Back Road; The Arns. When the proposed extension to the town envelope is realised, the new house will be consumed by this area of built environment and merge into this. As existing, the large industrial shed forms a full stop to the town, which it will continue to do so, upon expansion of the existing town boundary and this proposed development.

7.67

Developers must consider not only the waste generated during construction and the use of recycled and re-used building materials, but also what infrastructure and capacity exists that will ensure their development's compliance with the proximity principle, polluter pays principle and the waste hierarchy (see Diagram EA1). Evidence of compliance proposals should be an integral part of any development proposal.

In line with Policy 7 Environmental assets, the house would be subject to any policies set out for the main town. Being within/ adjacent to the proposed expansion area.

Policy SC23, Development in the Countryside- general principals- scale, nature and quality of design.

We have covered all of these aspects within our Design Statement enclosed.

Our proposed house design respects the character and location of the site. The design will provide significant contribution to the enhancement of the areas visual amenity, incorporating new planting and generally grooming the area.

Access and existing services are also close to hand.

The Policy advises that proposals will be supported when:
On suitable sites next to existing groups of buildings and sympathetically integrated. It can therefore also be seen that the new build could also fall under this category. It would also be found acceptable to build adjacent to a cluster of buildings- there is a cluster of buildings around Balquharn farm.
The policy also states that proposals isolated from an existing development would not normally be supported. This site does not do this.

Policy SC24

Residential Development in the Countryside
Although our proposals are on the edge of the town and will soon be encompassed visually by the townscape due to planned developments; our proposals also sit adjacent to the countryside. We feel it is important this is also considered. The new house will replace an existing building. Its design will be in keeping with nearby precedents and will seek to be environmentally friendly at all stages.

The Design and technical Considerations

Design Aspirations and the Surrounding Environment.
This is covered in our enclosed Design Statement document.

Services.

It is the intention of our client to connect into a private waste water facility at the moment, however as they own the land south of the application site, they fully intend to connect into the new drainage system as and when it becomes available during the development of this area. This will be allowed for and integrated during the development of this area.

Planting and Landscaping.

As part of proposals new planting will soften and compliment the new building. There is already an area of trees to the west of the property. These will be complimented by further planting to the north on the hillside; helping to tie the house back to the landscape and softening the building line. There is an existing stock fence to the rear of the existing house at the Arns- the line of this fence can be maintained along to the proposed new house- defining the rear of the site.

The existing stone wall to the front of the site will be retained. New natural planting can be incorporated behind this wall and around the new building.

A new long sweeping driveway following the lie of the land will access the house from the east side and via Alva. The pedestrian zone between the site and existing farm along the back road will remain pedestrian.

Responding to the current Local Plan and Local Structure Plan 2002

The aim of the existing local plan is 'to work towards sustainable development in Clackmannanshire through a local land use framework that facilitates positive social and economic development whilst maintaining and enhancing environmental quality

Objective 3 - Managing the Countryside and the Urban Fringe

1.47

Although small in size, Clackmannanshire is under considerable development pressure. The degree of pressure varies but is at its most intense in the more rural areas which coincide with Clackmannanshire's most attractive and sensitive landscapes, and at the edges of settlements and the countryside between these settlements. There is therefore a need to provide a policy framework within this Local Plan which ensures that Clackmannanshire's high quality and diverse countryside is retained and enhanced, and that the identity of the settlements and their landscape setting is maintained by establishing a clear definition of their boundaries. This will assist in preventing coalescence.

The identity of the town and surrounding landscape will not be detrimentally affected by proposals. The new house will sit in line with the proposed new edge of the town boundary, to the north of the Back road and in line with the existing Back Road houses. A clear distinction between the town and countryside will be maintained.

Green Belt & Urban Fringe Management

1.53

The Structure Plan (Policy ENV 4 – Green Belts) requires the Local Plan to define precise boundaries for the areas of Green Belt broadly shown in the Structure Plan key diagram. Within the designated Green Belt areas, the Structure Plan has a strong presumption against new development and requires any new development which is permitted to demonstrate appropriate environmental enhancement.

Policy ENV4 - Green Belts

Local Plans will define precise boundaries for the areas of Green Beltthere will be a strong presumption against development, and only in exceptional circumstances will development be permitted. Any developments which are permitted will be expected to demonstrate appropriate environmental enhancement within the Green Belt.

Our proposals should not be considered within the green belt. It is proposed to sit in place of an existing building and will be connected to the west of Alva; which in turn is due to expand and encompass the area in front of our site.

3.14 Renewable Energy

Policy ENV14 - Renewable energy and energy-efficient development

1. *In the interests of sustainable development the Councils and the National Park Authority will, subject to conformity with other relevant Structure and Local Plan policies, support:
 - i. *developments required for the generation of energy from renewable sources and fuels; and*
 - ii. *integration of renewable energy generation and utilisation into new developments.**
2. *Development proposals must demonstrate that energy conservation and efficiency are integral to the design, and to the layout of new buildings.*

The detailed design of the new house will seek to incorporate Green and Renewable Energy initiatives where appropriate/ possible.

The objectives of existing policy are outlined as follows:

- Objective 1: **Protecting & Enhancing the Natural Environment**
- Objective 2: **Protecting & Enhancing the Built Environment**
- Objective 3: **Managing the Countryside and the Urban Fringe**
- Objective 4: **Managing Minerals and Waste**

Our proposals are in line with all of the above policies.

Chapter 5, existing Local Plan Chapter 5

New development will be located to take account of the need to access local facilities and public transport. Greater choice in the way you choose to travel as well as reducing the need to travel. Making our towns and villages safer with less pollution and congestion.

Our proposals comply with the above

**Responding to supplementary advice notes. SANS
Infill Residential Development. SAN 2**

Although the proposed house sits on the edge of the town, we feel it is important to respond to/ take cognisance of this advice note due to the future plans for the area. The advice note states areas of infill and gap sites may become available due to the removal of incompatible non housing uses or through the clearance of existing buildings. The existing stable block is no longer required and will be removed to make way for this new house.

In line with the advice note, the new house will improve the overall appearance of the area. It will appear in scale to existing buildings and the space achieved around them.

Subdivision of garden ground: The existing stables block is owned by the applicant who lives adjacent to the stables. The existing garden ground meets the existing stables area. In creating the new dwelling house a reasonable garden ground can be achieved for both existing and new properties 'compatible in size and layout with those in the surrounding area' The advice note states 'where existing houses have been built in regular pattern, it is important that plots are sufficiently large to allow the infill house to be of a similar mass and on a similar building line to its neighbours. Normally, the best arrangement is achieved with new and old houses side by side, both having a street frontage', we achieve these criteria with the proposals.

The design: 'The character of the surrounding area should be assessed. We have assessed the local character in terms of materiality, design, mass and layout and respond to all of these criteria- see design statement for more detail.

We have identified that we are proposing to site the new house on the edge of the town and at the foot of the Craigleith Hill and have sought to design a low eaves and ridge line to the property to respect this.

The design of the new house ensures privacy both indoors and outdoors for the new and existing houses- in line with this advice note.

Additional Material Considerations

1. The new house will create a sense of place.
2. The existing town boundary of Alva as proposed will be extended beyond the limits of our proposed site. Our proposals will therefore not affect the character of the area.

Conclusion.

The existing stables building sits on the outer edge of the town's boundary line. Our proposals seek to build over the footprint of this building and interact with the existing 'Back Road' condition. In doing so we are simply repeating a condition/ the diagram that is in existence throughout the length of the existing town (unless topography has otherwise prevented this) The proposals therefore do not alter the character of the area or environment and will contribute positively to the area.

The design takes cognisance of the characteristics of the site and aesthetics of existing buildings nearby- this is outlined in the enclosed Design Statement.

The proposal should not be considered as controversial due to the fact the existing boundary of the town is due to expand to fill the fields to the south of the proposed application site which will in turn consume this area and merge with the proposed in terms of skyline and perception of the built environment.

The new house will both sit comfortably as part of the existing environment and in the long term will be lost amongst the newly built up environment and townscape planned for development over the next 5 years. The proposals will simply allow the backroad to follow the pattern already existing and do so to meet the new eastern limit of the town. A simple repetition of the existing town diagram.

We hope you can look upon proposals favourably in line with this Planning Statement and accompanying Design Statement, along with the many material considerations outlined therein.

