

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

**Report of Handing - Planning
Application Delegated Report**

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

Planning Reference: 15/00159/FULL

**DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT SERVICES
CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL**

REPORT OF HANDLING PLANNING APPLICATION DELEGATED REPORT

Application Ref. No. **15/00159/FULL** Date of Site Visit: 7th August 2015

Description of Proposal **Demolition Of Existing Stables Building And
Erection Of 1 No. House With Driveway and Garden**

Location: **Balquharn Stables, Back Road, Alva,
Clackmannanshire
FK12 5NZ**

1. The Proposed Development

The application involves demolition of an existing stone stable building and erection of a new house with associated access, parking, hard and soft landscaping and drainage on agricultural land just west of Alva.

The site lies on the north side of the minor private Back Road, between Alva and Menstrie, which also forms part of a national cycle route. Its road frontage is formed by a stone retaining wall, with the site extending to 0.62Ha of steeply sloping land at the foot of the Ochils, and containing a stone built, flat roofed stable. Just to the east lies a house known as The Arns, owned by the applicant. To the west lies woodland separating the site from Balquharn Farm, to the north is open hillside, whilst on the opposite side of the road to the south lie agricultural land and a large steel shed which is used a recycling facility.

The site is identifies as being in the Countryside and Green Belt in the newly adopted Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan (LDP), and also lies in a Special Landscape Area (SLA). The farmland to the south is identified in the LDP as a Housing Proposal site.

The application would involve removal of the stable, re-grading of land and construction of a new single storey house and integral garage with a footprint of approximately 430m². The house would be designed to provide level access throughout, and would be finished with mainly smooth render walls, including stone and timber clad features, large areas of glazing and a natural slate clad roof. External works would include access, driveway, paths, patios and soft landscaping. The plans also include surface water drainage systems and a private sewage treatment plant.

2. Summary of Consultation Responses

Roads: Recommend refusal of the proposed house as it lies outwith the urban area and will generate pedestrian and vehicle activity that would be more safely accommodated in the urban area. Concern regarding precedent for similarly poorly accessed development. *Comment: The site and adjacent house to the east both take access onto this private section of Back Road, owned by the applicant. The road enters the urban area and adopted road network at the western edge of Alva, approximately 100m from the site. No other development currently takes access off this section of road which is gated just to the west of the proposed new site access. Therefore the development would result in only two houses served off a private section of road, but which is linked to the adopted road network in Alva. As such these concerns alone are unlikely to warrant refusal of the application.*

Scottish Water: No response received

3. Neighbour Notification and Publicity

Number Of Neighbours Notified

1

Number of Objections

0

Number of Other Representations

0

A Neighbour Notification advert was placed in the Alloa Advertiser on 29-07-15

4. Summary of Representation(s)

None

5. Summary of Supplementary Statements

The application is accompanied by a Design Statement and a Planning Statement which provide a background to the proposals, an assessment of the site and design characteristics of the development, and comments in the context of the Local Development Plan. The Statements concludes that:

- The proposal is in keeping with the pattern of development and character of the area.
- The settlement is due to extend on land immediately to the south of the site, and the proposed house would merge in terms of skyline and perception of the built environment.

6. Summary of Section 75 Planning Obligations.

None

7. Site History/Background

04/00252/OUT - Change Of Use Of Existing Stable Building To Form House -
Withdrawn

The current application was subject to pre-application advice.

8. Planning Assessment

(a) Development Plan Position

The Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan adopted August 2015 (LDP) forms the development plan for the area.

As noted above, the site lies in an area of Countryside and Green Belt as identified in the LDP. This area is also part of a Special Landscape Area (SLA).

(i) Policies

The LDP has policies on development in the countryside and specifically residential development in the countryside (Policies SC23 & SC24, respectively).

Policy EA4 sets out criteria for assessing developments in SLAs, and Policy EA8 deals with proposals for development in the Green Belt.

The LDP indicates a positive approach where development is shown to require a rural location, particularly where that will contribute to sustainable economic growth, however proposals that cannot demonstrate a requirement for a rural location will not normally be supported. Such proposals will be directed to existing communities to make efficient use of existing infrastructure, and protect the countryside from sporadic suburban development.

Policy SC24 sets out detailed criteria that proposals for houses in the countryside should meet. One such criteria is where the Council is satisfied that the house is integral and necessary for the full-time management of a countryside business which has not previously incorporated residential accommodation.

As noted, the applicant lives in a house in close proximity to the site, and has business interests in nearby Balquharn Farm. The Planning Statement accompanying the application indicates that the house is required in order to provide the client with level access, which is not available in his current house, just to the east. In addition, the location remains close to the client's enterprises at Balquharn Farm. These factors alone would not make the proposals policy compliant, and no evidence has been presented to demonstrate that a house in this countryside location is necessary for the running of the applicant's nearby enterprises.

Policy EA8 indicates that new development will not normally be permitted in the Green Belt, other than in exceptional circumstances, none of which would apply to the proposals. Even if it were deemed that the proposal involved the clearance or re-development of vacant land and buildings, the application still does not comply with Policy SC23, in respect of the need for a countryside location.

Policies SC23, EA4 and EA8 all include criteria regarding the scale, nature and design, of developments and their impact on landscape character of the countryside, SLA and Green Belt. The house would sit in a slightly elevated position above the adjacent road, and whilst of single storey design would have an overall floor to ridge height of over 6.5m, and a footprint of approximately 430m². This is not therefore a modest scale of house, and would be clearly visible, both from the Back Road, and also the A91 road to the south. The house would appear as a form of linear development west of the existing settlement boundary of Alva, and which would alter the rural character of the area.

The proposed house has been carefully designed to respond to its setting. Over time, the land immediately in front of it, now allocated in the LDP for housing may be developed. The large shed to the south west of the site, and its associated bund and screen planting, also provide a degree of visual screening to the site when viewed from the main road.

In summary, the proposals would impact on the landscape character of the site and wider hillside it sits within, and appear as an additional element of linear development to the west of Alva, which would change the rural character of the area. The application would therefore have a negative impact on the landscape character of this area of Green Belt and SLA.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the future development of the land to the south may significantly alter the character of this wider area, that development has not taken place, and is not subject to any formal proposals, which would allow its wider landscape impact to be assessed. To that end any conclusion that the current proposal would visually merge with such other planned development would at best be premature.

Having failed to comply with these key policies, the proposal is deemed not to accord with the Development Plan. In these circumstances, there is no requirement to examine other policy areas on infrastructure, services, environment etc.

(ii) Proposals

None

(iii) Supplementary Guidance

None

(ii) Other Material Considerations

Clackmannanshire's LDP policies are in line with Government policy as set out in the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), which requires a restrictive approach to housing in accessible rural locations in Central Scotland, in order to control sporadic development, suburbanisation of the countryside and increased car-based commuting, although these provisions on their own are perhaps not grounds for refusal in this case.

As noted above, the comments of Roads would not in themselves warrant refusal of the application.

Scottish Water have not responded to the application. The proposals involve a private sewage treatment system which would, in any event, be subject to separate consenting procedures should planning permission be granted.

There are no representations to the application.

9. Recommendation

Approve	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approve with Conditions (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refusal (see below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral to Historic Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposal is contrary to Policies SC23 (Development in the Countryside - General Principles) and SC24 (Residential Development in the Countryside) of the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan, as it involves development in the countryside where it has not been demonstrated that there is a requirement for a countryside location.
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy EA8 (Green Belt) of the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan, as it involves development in the Green Belt that would not justify a Green Belt location based on any of the criteria set out in this policy.
3. The proposal is contrary to Policy SC23, Policy EA4 and Policy EA8 of the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan as the proposed house, by virtue of its size and location would have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the site and wider hillside it sits within, and appear as an additional element of linear development to the west of Alva, which would change the character of this part of the Green Belt and Special Landscape Area.

Plan Numbers Relating to the Decision

<u>Plan No</u>	<u>Title</u>
1.	Location Plan, Site Plan, Elevations & Floor Plans
2.	Existing Site Survey
3.	Proposed Site Plan & Section

10. Checklist

The application does not involve development of land in which the Council has an interest

The list of owners/occupiers of neighbouring land has been verified during the site visit and appears to be correct

The charge for advertising this application has been paid or is not required

Any publicity period has expired

The recommendation requires authorisation by the following Appointed Officers:

Development Quality Team Leader

Development Services Manager

The recommendation/decision has secured added value which is recorded in Uniform

Two complete sets of plans to be approved are attached, or identified from the electronic file

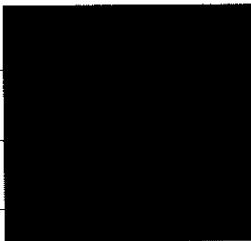
The electronic file requires annotated plans which are attached

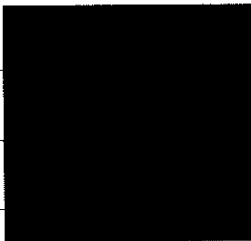
There are instructions to Business Support attached to this report/file

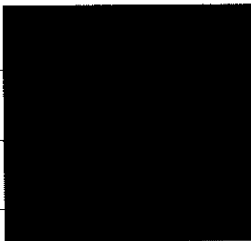
Site Notice - Note to Applicant required for National, Major or Bad Neighbour development

Coal Authority Householder Referral Area Note to go with Decision

Coal Authority Standing Advice Note to go out with Decision

Signed  (Case Officer) Date 16-9-15

Signed  (Team Leader) Date 16/9/15

Signed  (Service Manager) Date 21/9/15