

Killearn Community Council

Interim Comments from Residents on Proposed Housing at Blaressan

1. General comments

- 1.1 This document has been prepared for discussion with Mactaggart and Mickel, summarising comments received so far from Killearn residents following the public consultation event held on 29 March, and during discussion at the meeting of KCC held on 20 April. The document is being sent now to allow time for discussion before any planning application for the development is submitted. Other issues may arise in future discussions and so this cannot be taken as a definitive list.
- 1.2 Mactaggart and Mickel have informed us that 120 people attended the consultation event on 29 March, a small proportion of the 2000 residents and 800 households in Killearn. Leaflets were distributed to only 200 households. Future consultations should be publicised further in advance and more widely, including in Stirling Observer newspaper as well as Milngavie and Bearsden Herald. The fact that it was held the day after the Easter weekend probably lessened attendance.
- 1.3 Blaressan is a prime site in the centre of Killearn with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside and distant mountains, including several Munros. It can be seen from miles away and houses built here will be highly visible. The site slopes downhill below the impressive Blaressan House, and a large part of the site boundary adjoins Killearn Conservation Area. The layout of the new development and the styles of house must not detract from the Conservation Area. In particular, the site should not be densely packed with houses.
- 1.4 The site plan shows 33 units instead of the allocated 30, which we believe to be the maximum permitted for this site by the Reporter to the Scottish Government.
- 1.5 Fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband should be provided to the new houses. Indeed, this should be a requirement in all new developments.

2. Road access, roundabout and pedestrian access

- 2.1 Virtually all the comments we have received have been strongly critical of the access arrangements and of the impact of the development on road safety and on traffic in the village. In the light of these we believe that the design of the access and the crossing arrangements should be given a high priority, with full consultation with the community as soon as possible.
- 2.2 The proposed new housing development will generate a considerable amount of additional traffic on Station Road if this is the only access to the site. It has been requested that serious consideration be given instead to widening

Drumtarn Road to give access to the site either as the sole access or in addition to Station Road. A one-way traffic system should be considered.

- 2.3 The vast majority of people consider the idea of a roundabout giving access to the site from Station Road an unacceptable intrusion which is being imposed on the village. It is understood that it would be larger than a mini roundabout but not a full size roundabout. A T junction with Station Road would be preferred and is considered safer. If there has to be a roundabout it should be located farther up Station Road. As proposed it is too near the bend.
- 2.4 A safe crossing point on Station Road will be essential for pedestrians. From Blaressan across Station Road to Endrick Road will be the route to the Primary School for children, and to the play grounds and field for families and dog walkers. Traffic lights would be unwelcome in this rural village, but the bend at Blaressan is blind in both directions. Safe pedestrian access to the development will need to be provided on Station Road, respecting as far as possible the grass verges and stone walls which contribute so much to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 2.5 Loss of parking places on Station Road on the approaches to the roundabout and the crossing place will create serious problems in the village, particularly when there are events in the Village Hall and the Kirk. Replacement parking places will require to be provided elsewhere.
- 2.6 It has been previously stated by Stirling Council that there should be no need to close Station Road during work to enable access and we trust that this will be the case.

3 Size and type of house

- 3.1 The majority of comments suggest that too many large houses with 4 and 5 bedrooms are proposed in this development, and that Killearn is already well provided with detached 4 bedroomed houses. Where large houses are built, gardens should be larger than shown on the plan, in keeping with the size of existing plots in Killearn.
- 3.2 Houses with 2 upper floors are too high for this site. More information is required on the height of the proposed houses and how they relate to the site (see also 4.2).
- 3.3 Killearn needs smaller housing units for people to buy as well as rent - bungalows on one level, flats or four in a block. Provision should be made for people with varying needs and elderly people wishing to downsize to smaller properties but remain within the village. We also need affordable houses for young families to buy, so that young people who grow up in Killearn can afford to live here. Shared equity arrangements might assist young families to buy. Similar comments were made to Killearn Community Futures Company in the context of updating the Village Action Plan for Killearn.

- 3.4 Affordable is defined in this development as social housing to rent, managed by Rural Stirling Housing Association. Affordable housing may be indicated on the plan by semi-detached houses but the size and type are still to be determined by RSHA in conjunction with KCC's Community Panel. We await advice from Stirling Council and RSHA on local housing need.
- 3.5 Some people thought the house styles uninteresting and 'too white'.
- 3.6 Slate roofs should be stipulated, in keeping with the adjacent Conservation Area. One respondent suggested roofs consisting entirely of solar panels but this could impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. Layout and spacing

- 4.1 Many people thought the plan too dense, others thought it was OK. Houses should be spaced out more, using the whole area on the plan. The courtyard layout was thought too formal in a country setting, taking into consideration the proximity to the Conservation Area and the style of the houses adjacent to the site. The Reporter to the Scottish Government said that the development should fit with the established character of residential areas on either side.
- 4.2 This is a sloping site yet the plans appear to imply a level site. How will the areas of housing relate to the terrain? (see also 3.2).
- 4.3 Most people disliked the 'Designing streets' aspect of shared vehicle and pedestrian space within the site although we understand that it has been successful elsewhere. Safe areas for children to play are essential. 'Designing streets' policy avoids long straight stretches of road so that vehicles do not build up speed, but the proposed layout is too rectangular with too many sharp corners. Rounded corners would be more in keeping with the surrounding countryside and make it easier for vehicles to turn.
- 4.4 Parking provision for residents, deliveries and visitors is seriously inadequate, bearing in mind that many households have two or more cars. Additional parking at each house is required, and laybys within the site are advisable.
- 4.5 Adequate space for refuse and recyclable bins needs to be provided.
- 4.6 Are the front gardens intended to be open plan? Fences erected in front gardens would make the development look even more congested.
- 4.7 Pedestrian footpaths around the site and leading to Drumtian Road are welcome and should be extended.
- 4.8 How close to the boundary with existing houses will the new houses be located? New houses must not overlook or take light from existing houses.
- 4.9 There is concern about drainage of the site and the SUDS pond. The large areas of hard standing may give rise to flooding on this site or on adjacent

land. Would the SUDS pond require to be fenced off from the rest of the site, in order to ensure child safety?

- 4.10 Play areas for children with play equipment, as well as more green spaces should be included in the site.
- 4.11 A hammerhead is shown on the plan. This should not be intended to enable further development of the site in future.

5. Landscaping and boundaries

- 5.1 A landscaping plan will be crucial for this site. The Community Council wishes to be consulted about this.
- 5.2 The conifers along the boundary of the site with Station Road should be felled and the entrance to the development enhanced by rebuilding the stone walls and landscaping with mature trees.
- 5.3 As regards boundaries with existing houses, mature trees and shrubs would be preferred to low planting.
- 5.4 What style of fencing is planned? There are low field fences at present.
- 5.5 The boundary of this site will become the new village boundary. How will the new village boundary be defined and what landscaping is planned on the periphery of the site?
- 5.6 Will landscaped areas be maintained by Stirling Council or privately maintained at cost to residents?

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