



Lasswade District Civic Society

Director of Strategic Services
Midlothian Council
Fairfield House
Lothian Road
Dalkeith EH22 3ZN

c/o 21 Polton Bank
Lasswade
Midlothian
EH18 1JR

For the attention of Mr. Kingsley Drinkwater

8 July 2014

Dear Sirs,

**Planning Application Number 14/00435/MSC
Erection of 29 dwellings and 6 flatted dwellings; formation of access roads
and car parking; and associated works (approval of Matters Specified in Conditions
4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 14 of Planning Permission 11/00177/PPP | Land At Kevock Vale Park
Lasswade.**

Lasswade District Civic Society has been established for over 40 years, and its adult membership now stands at around 400. Our constitution objectives include '... care for the beauty and character of the local area and the preservation of the general public amenity'. For these reasons, we are writing on behalf of the Society, and many local neighbours to express our concern and to lodge a formal objection to the above planning application.

There are a number of important grounds for our objection. In particular, the proposal is contrary to policies set out in the Midlothian Local Plan.

At the moment the site, which lies within the Lasswade Conservation area and abounds the Kevock and Broomieknowe Conservation Areas and the Mavisbank Conservation Area, is in a somewhat dilapidated state: many of the residential caravans, although relatively unobtrusive because of the mature landscape, trees, hedges and shrubs surrounding them, are clearly uninhabited and have fallen into disrepair, and there is certainly scope for improvement including some form of housing development.

However, the proposal to replace the 66 single storey flat-roofed caravans with:

- a 3 storey block of 6 flats
- 19 detached houses and 10 semi-detached or terraced houses - all 2 storey, and
- Garaging and car parking to Council Standards for these 35 dwellings,

is completely inappropriate for a site of this size in terms of density and scale and will have a hugely detrimental effect on the beauty, the character, the setting, the landscape and the biodiversity of the Lasswade and Mavisbank Conservation Areas, both of which are designated Areas of Great Landscape Value and have Protection of River Valley status in the Midlothian Local Plan.

The **Midlothian Local Plan 2008** sets out a number of Resource Protection Policies which the proposal contravenes:



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RP5 – development will not be permitted where it could lead directly or indirectly to the loss of trees and hedges which have a particular amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or other importance.

RP6 – development will not be permitted where it may adversely affect the special scenic qualities and integrity of the AGLVs. The policy which is not restricted only to development within AGLVs, also applies to development affecting the setting of any AGLVs.

The plans suggest that the proposal will result in the loss of a number of mature trees. The high density, scale and size of the proposed buildings will render the development highly visible from the AGLVs and adversely affect the setting and views of the Viaduct and the River Esk, and of Lasswade Village when viewed from the north and west particularly from the Kevock Path.

RP9 – development within the river valley protection areas of the Rivers North and South Esk will not be permitted unless the development demonstrates that it will not have an adverse impact on the landscape and conservation value of the valleys.

RP20 – development will not be permitted within existing areas, in particular within residential areas where it is likely to detract materially from the existing character or amenity of the area.

RP22 – within a Conservation Area development will not be permitted which would have any adverse effect on its character and appearance

It is difficult to accept that this high density development of large buildings could be considered anything other than inappropriate for such a small site in this very sensitive location; the proposal to erect a 3-storey block of flats in place of single-storey caravans in a conservation area where the adjacent buildings are at most 2-storey dwellings, the large number of dwellings proposed, their design, size, scale, form and the building materials to be used are not at all in keeping with the existing character of the area and will damage the appearance of the Lasswade Conservation Area and River Valley irrevocably.

RP33 – where development is permitted which will lead to unavoidable environmental loss or damage to the resources covered by the Resource Protection policies, the Council will require the developer to carry out appropriate compensatory measures

It would be interesting to know what Planning Gain will be sought from the developers for the local community if the development goes ahead. Are they going to make road improvements, crossings and new traffic lights, revamp the play area or improve School Green with a major village improvement project?

Additional Matters

The proposed mix of housing size is:

- 6 2-bed
- 9 3-bed in Phase 1 and 2 in Phase 2
- 12 4-bed in Phase 1 and 2 in Phase 2
- 4 5-bed

and the Application states the number of car parking spaces to be 'to Council Standard'.



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The Proposed Site Layout document suggests allowance for 106 cars:

- garaging for 35 cars in Phase 1 and 4 in Phase 2
- drive parking for a further 35 cars in Phase 1 and 4 in Phase 2
- for those flats and dwellings with no garaging, 12 car parking spaces in Phase 1 and 4 in Phase 2
- an additional 12 car parking spaces.

As local residents will know many of the Caravan Park units are currently empty. The significant increase in traffic that the proposed development will generate along Westmill Road and also at the junction of Westmill Road with the busy main road through Lasswade will be of major concern. The effect of this increase in traffic on the surface of Westmill Road itself will also be of concern.

In addition, Lasswade District Civic Society are very concerned that a development of this scale would have a negative impact on the current safe operation of the difficult junction of Westmill Road with the busy main road through Lasswade, and that as a consequence of all the new houses planned there will be a significant increase in traffic on the roads through Lasswade and on the Lasswade Bridge. These roads are already busy and queues are an everyday occurrence, particularly at peak hours when residents in the surrounding area leave for work in the morning and return in the evening.

It is a matter of concern that as part of the application no traffic impact analysis has been carried out by the developer to survey the problems related to access and exit to Westmill Road from the A768 at the junction with Westmill Road.

We are also very concerned that as a consequence of all the new houses planned there will be increased pressure on community facilities.

In summary, the proposal is contrary to several policies within the adopted Midlothian Local Plan and we trust you will take these grounds for objection into account in determining this planning application.

Yours faithfully

Lasswade District Civic Society Committee,

Michael Stoneham, Rosemary Mackay, Adam Lansdown, Jacquie Dunlop, Sheena Dryden,
John Blackwell, Sheila Murray