

Agenda Item 3(a) (addendum)

For the purpose of expediency, in view of the fact that this is our A.G.M., I have prepared the following report on my discussions with G.D.C. Planning Department regarding development of Kirkstyle and I have also made some specific observations regarding the other two proposed sites at Leschangie Road and Monymusk Road.

As requested at K.C.C. meeting of 23 February 1995 (minuted item 3c), I phoned Mr M McLaughlin, G.D.C. Planning Department, on 24 February 1995 to invite him to our March meeting in order to discuss the two sites identified for housing in Kemnay and in addition, the site owned by [REDACTED] at Kirkstyle. Mr McLaughlin declined our present invitation on the basis that he will be arranging meetings in the near future at which all aspects of the proposals relating to Kemnay can be fully discussed.

I continued to request further information regarding Kirkstyle in the event that we would be better able to understand the reasons for excluding Mr [REDACTED] site as a suitable site for housing. In this respect, the Director of Planning agreed to write to me to clarify the issue and I attach a copy of this letter dated 01 March 1995. In addition to reasons contained in this letter I have ascertained that the following considerations were taken into account regarding Kirkstyle:

1. Development of Kirkstyle would amount to further expansion of the village boundaries which is not considered to be necessary or desirable by the Planning Department and has to date always been opposed by Kemnay Community Council.
2. The approach to the Kemnay from the direction of Aberdeen is presently unaffected by any major visual impact in the form of housing; the only visible housing is that at the very edge of the settlement along the ridge which is formed along Fraser Place and which effectively screens the bulk of housing development in the village. Development of Kirkstyle would produce a "cascade development" which would have a major visual impact on the landscape at the entrance to the village.
3. Due to the fact that G.D.C. have now taken a decision NOT to develop their ground at Fraser place for housing, development of Kirkstyle would not link naturally with the existing settlement.
4. General comments were made with regard to the operations of the adjacent quarry which involved blasting operations producing noise, vibration and dust, all of which are not conducive to any neighbouring residential development; and there was also reference made to the current regulations for adequate buffer zones, which may make development prohibitive.
5. Mr Hind of G.R.C. Water Services confirmed that development of Kirkstyle would require 1200 mtrs. of new surface water sewer (£100.00 per mtr), and major upgrading of the foul sewer, the cost of which would be likely to prohibit development. Such works would also result in the whole width of Victoria Terrace and Grove Road being closed to any form of vehicular traffic for the duration of the works (similar to trunk sewer renewal in Inverurie High Street), which would require traffic diversions along Station Road and Aquithie Road.

There can be little doubt that G.D.C. are opposed to the development of Kirkstyle, which is mainly due to drainage difficulties; they will not therefore be a willing party to any proposals that include the development of their sites at Fraser Place. Development of this site would put G.D.C. in direct conflict with their own aims and policies which advocate "resource efficiency" as per Aim 11 (page 14), and Housing Policy D1 (a) (g) (page 21).

COMMENTS REGARDING SITES ON PROPOSALS MAP AT LESCHANGIE ROAD AND MONYMUSK ROAD

ROADS & ACCESS

1. The development of 100 houses will result in at least an additional 100 cars. The majority of people commute to Aberdeen or to a lesser extent Inverurie and it is fair to surmise that this trend will continue during the life of this Local Plan. Development of the Monymusk Road site would result in a left turn for the majority of commuters and it is readily acknowledged that turning left on to a highway is a safer manoeuvre than turning right and the return journey from Aberdeen will involve turning right but against minimal traffic flow from the Monymusk direction. Development of the Leschangie Road site would necessitate a right turn on to Victoria Terrace and the sight-line visibility to the west is extremely poor due to the bend in the road at the junction with Kendal Road.
2. The road pattern on the present Malcolm Allan site is obviously designed to be a distributor road which will eventually continue to the south west and link up with the Monymusk Road. This would certainly be beneficial to residents on the existing development who would have the choice of two means of access from Monymusk Road and would also more readily satisfy the needs of the emergency services, who ideally require two means of access to a new development and presently rely upon an emergency access from Riverside Road.
3. Access to the Leschangie Road site is unclear but would certainly result in loss of mature trees if taken from Victoria Terrace and there will be a need for some road widening for maybe 300 metres along the very narrow Leschangie Road. Due to the parking problems experienced during football matches, suitable road widening along the length of the playing fields may be beneficial. However, there is no alternative route to the community at Leschangie and any works carried out on this road, including drainage works, will represent a major form of disruption to people whose properties are served by the road.
4. To a certain extent, the B.993 along Victoria Terrace/ Grove Road/ Monymusk Road, presently represents a convenient and safe village by-pass. Not all facilities are to the north of this road but the bulk of development is, which means that the village is effectively by-passed by through traffic. This represents a considerable planning gain in terms of safety and natural resource efficiency, especially when measured against actual and environmental costs of constructing by-passes. Development at Monymusk Road would enable the village to retain this facility, whereas development at Leschangie Road would be a considerable erosion.

DRAINAGE

1. Development of the Leschangie Road site would necessitate extensive and expensive new infrastructure particularly in the form of new drainage, whereas adequate appropriate infrastructure is already in existence and indeed underutilised at Malcolm Allan's site at Monymusk Road. Development of Leschangie Road would be contrary to Aim 3.a (page 12), which advocates "maximising the potential of existing environmental assets" and also Aim 11. (page 14), which advocates the need to "maximise the use of existing infrastructure and minimise the need for new public expenditure." There may however be some form of planning gain in that flooding to the east in Victoria Terrace may be alleviated to a certain extent.
2. The high infrastructure costs of developing the Leschangie Road site may reduce the amount of funds available for community facilities under Policy CS3. A developer will consider community contributions as a development cost which will be reflected in the amount he will eventually offer for the site. In this respect, the Monymusk Road site will be less expensive to develop, the land offers will tend to be higher and this will clearly be more favourable towards maximising the contribution for community development.

3. The new infrastructure required to develop the Leschangie Road site would result in considerable disruption to traffic in Victoria Terrace and Grove Road in the form of prolonged excavations and temporary traffic lights. Services are readily available for the Monymusk Road site without the need for any form of disruption.

AMENITY

1. Development of Monymusk Road site would provide housing with high natural amenity being situated between the Village Golf Course and the River Don, with panoramic views to the north across Bennachie. The development would represent a natural extension to the existing development by Malcolm Allan and would provide a defined edge to the existing settlement. Development of Leschangie Road site would also have the considerable amenity of being close to and overlooking the pleasure park. The development is not a natural extension but does to some extent "round off" the development at Parkhill Glebe.

2. Development of the Leschangie Road site may result in a loss of not only the car park for the pleasure park but also a substantial number of mature trees. The developer may be willing to provide a replacement car park in a more suitable location on the site. Personally speaking I would oppose the destruction of the mature trees, which must be many hundred years of age, for the sole purpose of access or maximising housing density.

3. If Monymusk Road site is developed, the layout should take account of the scale and character of the house "Finnercy"; housing in the vicinity should be of a similar status but should not be plotted up to the boundary of this house and there should ideally be some imaginative and sympathetic landscaping to create a suitable buffer zone between old and new. If the Leschangie Road site is developed, the "Grey Stone" should be retained as a natural feature.

GENERAL

1. The present Malcolm Allan site at Monymusk Road is only in the initial stages of development and zoning a further site in the village would naturally encourage concurrent development of two separate major sites within Kemnay. Whilst this is not altogether desirable for a village of this size, the problems caused by doubling the amount of construction traffic would be further exacerbated if the two major developments were at opposite ends of the Village. By developing the Monymusk Road site, the bulk of construction traffic and inherent disruption would be mainly confined to one particular end of the village. However, developers may wish to have the opportunity to develop at Leschangie Road in order to provide greater choice of location to prospective purchasers.

2. In the event of a recession in the housing market during the term of the revised plan and if the Leschangie Road site was developed, we would be left with two major sites partially developed, of poor overall aesthetic value and with vastly underutilised infrastructure. The impact of any such recession could certainly be minimised and more effectively controlled by zoning the Monymusk Road site.

3. As outlined in item "ROADS item 2." above, the present existing road pattern indicates a clear future intention to continue south west and link up with Monymusk Road. This will not escape the attention of developers and if the site is not zoned in the replacement Local Plan, it will indeed be a site on the edge of our settlement which is clearly vulnerable to speculative planning applications and which may be approved under Policy H.2. This would be in contention with Policy ENV1. (page 47, paragraph 1), which seeks to "relieve pressure on vulnerable areas, particularly on the edge of settlements where demand exists".

David Evans