

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

PROPOSED ERECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSE

(AS MANAGER'S ACCOMMODATION)

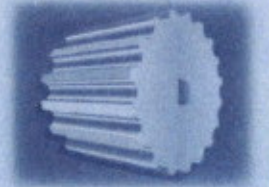
OAKWOODS FARM, CROFTAMIE G63 OEX

JAMIE & INGEBORG MARTIN



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Architecture • Town Planning • Building Control • Project Management • Project Safety



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INTRODUCTION

This Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Planning Permission that is being submitted to Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority on behalf of Jamie & Ingeborg Martin for the above project.

The application will be submitted online using The Scottish Government's e-planning portal.

BACKGROUND

The background to the Planning application lies in the transformation of Oakwoods Farm by Croftamie in the 1990's away from the rearing of beef cattle and diversifying into tourism capitalising on the farm's location close to Loch Lomond.

Until then a small part of the farm's income was generated through the provision of bed and breakfast rooms within the farmhouse, operated by Mrs Martin on an ad hoc basis during holiday periods. The BSE crisis, however, forced the farm to find alternative sources of income and with a young family it was decided to invest in holiday letting lodges as a longer-term business. The existing farm outbuildings were deemed to be the most appropriate site for the proposed lodges, being on level ground near to the farmhouse and with a vehicular access onto the A811 road, and Planning Permission was eventually secured. The outbuildings were subsequently demolished and the new lodges erected in their place.

After developing the business into a very well-regarded tourist facility towards the southern end of Loch Lomond a fourth lodge was introduced a few years later. This, of course, increased the demands upon the family and as a result the three generations of the Martin family are involved in the day-to-day running of the business covering from early morning departures through mid-day arrivals to late evening arrivals, with the administrative, cleaning and maintenance requirements ongoing throughout the day.

These are, of course, also 7 days a week tasks and therefore could not be covered solely by one person. For these reasons, but also wishing to retain it as a family-run business, Mrs Martin engaged her husband, mother and children to assist on a rotational shift basis. Having operated the B & B business for 5 years and the holiday lodges since 1999 it is now time to look to the future and it is intended that their daughter Evelyn will assume the main management role thereby allowing Mrs. Martin to continue in a reduced and less demanding capacity. To

this end Evelyn has been studying Business Administration at University and is due to qualify in 2017/18. At this point in time she will take over the full-time management of the business allowing her parents to take a back seat to some extent.

At the same time, or as soon as possible thereafter, she will also be given occupancy of the existing farmhouse and to do so the wheels are being set in motion to seek permission for the erection of a new house for Mr & Mrs Martin a short distance away. In this way they will remain close at hand for assisting in the business but will nevertheless have a degree of privacy from the occupants of the lodges.

From a farming perspective Oakwoods Farm is located alongside the A811 Balloch-Drymen road, to the south of Loch Lomond, and has been reduced in size from 120 acres to now having 30 acres as the surrounding fields have been leased then sold to neighbouring farms as the focus changed from cattle to tourism. A small herd of cattle was kept by Mr Martin until recently but the time demands of his contracting business and for the maintenance of the lodges were such that he did not have enough time for both and the cattle were sold. His intention is to now re-introduce a small herd of Highland cattle, perhaps 15-20, as these are perfectly suited to the ground conditions at Oakwoods, and also 20 or so pedigree Texel sheep, to be fully in situ once the lodges business has been transferred to Evelyn and he has retreated from contracting. For wintering these livestock will use the existing barn located in a clearing in the woodland to the rear of the lodges.



Looking south towards the application site from the access roadway.



The application site lies to the right hand side of the bund and shed.



The application site to the right, the bund to the left and the existing shed in the background. The new gate and driveway would be formed at this corner.

THE APPLICATION SITE

The application site is located within a belt of woodland to the south-west of the existing house and lodges, this being the meeting point of the Burnhouse and Catter Woods. It has a small level clearing, enclosed by post & wire fencing and surrounded on three sides by mature trees, within which an agricultural barn is located and the intention is to erect the new house next to it to create a small

steading. A private access track leads uphill for 100m or so to the site from the A811 to the north while another path through the trees links it to the rear garden of the house and the lodges.

Good daylighting is available into the site from the open southerly aspect while the surrounding woodland offers a degree of shelter from northerly and easterly winds and any road noise or views from the A811.

DESIGN AIMS.

During the very early discussions with the clients they indicated that a traditional looking yet eco-friendly and thermally-efficient style of house, using standard but up-to-date construction methods and materials, is their aim and that it should offer easy accessibility from room to room, with some spaces being open-plan to each other. The house should sit comfortably within the rural setting, it should not be open to a risk of becoming dated in terms of appearance or materials, it must be able to be easily constructed (and built within a fixed budget), easily maintained and, most importantly, the project must also be of a scale that would be affordable to them. It should also encapsulate green energy ideologies to some extent (although ground source heating is not favoured).

The house should have a good-sized and functional kitchen where most of the daily activities would take place, directly linked to a relatively small lounge, just two bedrooms and also an office. A utility room and either a front porch or recessed doorway would also prove to be practical inclusions in this rural and occasionally exposed location.

In terms of location within the site, which can be windy on occasions, the house should (i) face northwards towards the access road and Loch Lomond but benefit from the open aspect to the south, (ii) create a sense of privacy / shelter / self-containment, and (iii) incur as much daylighting and solar gain as possible, but at the same time should (iv) endeavour to use the existing woods and shed to gain a degree of shelter from northerly and easterly winds. Finally, whilst mains services for water and electricity are available the house would need to introduce a private septic tank.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned above, in order to allow the business to be transferred to the next generation, being their daughter Evelyn, Mr & Mrs Martin hope to build a smaller house next to the barn. In this way it will be in close proximity to the holiday lodges but sufficiently apart for mutual privacy. The site is, of course, also convenient for the welfare of the animals.



Two views looking northwards from within the application site highlighting the mature woodlands to both sides. The photo-voltaic panels will be located on the rear roof plane (i.e. to the right hand side).



They would like to ensure the house is appropriate in terms of scale and design for the rural location and feel that the woodland would assist in integrating it into the landscape. Furthermore a single-storey house would be less noticeable, it will be less exposed to the weather whilst also offering all apartments on the one level for

ease of accessibility. A fairly traditional scale of house, in the style of a U-shaped lodgehouse, has therefore been designed in order to meet their requirements and expectations. Complementing some natural random stonework to the entrance porch and rear courtyard walls, it will have a wet dash rendered finish to the walls below 35 degree roofs clad with natural slate. To the rear, however, a more contemporary style of glazed units will highlight the raised ceiling heights whilst also taking maximum advantage of the southerly aspect for solar gain and outward views. These glazed units will also be positioned in order to minimise any effects of high winds.

To avoid interfering with the appearance of the house, and to take advantage of the sizeable south-facing roof plane on the barn, it is proposed to use this for the siting of photo-voltaic panels to serve the house.

A car parking and turning area will be formed within a curtilage defined by post & wire stock fencing with the remainder of the garden simply being laid as lawn. By restricting the house curtilage this will allow the retention of a small paddock immediately to the rear of the house for any young or sick animals, and within which is a natural spring giving drinking water for the livestock.

Mains water and electricity services are understood to be available but in the absence of mains sewerage a septic tank leading to a total soakaway is anticipated, this being positioned to the north of the house to utilise the falling ground levels within the unused part of the field.

SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST.

With regard to renewable energy considerations, the new house will benefit from a southerly orientation. In particular the kitchen, lounge, central hallway and master bedroom will take maximum benefit from solar gain.

By adopting the suggested footprint the new house will also benefit in terms of shelter from not only the trees to three sides but also from easterly winds by the shed to the east, with this outbuilding giving an element of protection in some instances.

With regard to heat retention / thermal efficiency, although the house will have a traditional scale and appearance it will be founded upon a 150mm timber frame construction, it will have wall, floor and ceiling insulation throughout in accordance with the latest Building Standards Technical Handbook (Section 6) and all windows and glazed doors will be double glazed units. At the Building Warrant stage Carbon Emission Calculations will be prepared to illustrate the energy efficiency of the new house.

As they have in the existing house and has proven to be very efficient, the primary source of heating and hot water will be a 14kw wood-burning stove located in the lounge making use of the ample reserves of fallen or harvested timber throughout the area. As mentioned above, this will be supplemented by a series of photovoltaic panels located on the rear / south-facing roof plane of the shed. Finally, back-up heating will be provided by a high efficiency oil-fired boiler, again with a performance in compliance with the latest (October 2015) Building Standards.

The house itself will be ~~100% draught-proofed (unlike a renovation for example)~~, it is also intended that the new house will be naturally-ventilated and will be fitted with at least 75% low energy lights throughout. All white goods will be energy-efficient (per the EU Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme) and there will be an internal clothes drying facility in the ventilated utility room and an external drying area to the rear of the house.

To further ensure the new house will be suitable for the existing and future generations its internal room arrangement is such that it will be readily accessible in terms of disabled / elderly access. By having all facilities incorporated on the one level from the outset the property should be suitable for all generations and abilities.

In addition to using a structural timber frame for the building all internal wall studs, floor and ceiling joists and doors will also be timber from renewable sources. Although the existing properties all have tiled roofs natural slate for the roof cladding will also be a fundamental criterion to achieve the more traditional appearance.

Foul drainage from the house will be treated by a suitably-sized septic tank with the grey water being channelled (piped) to a total soakaway, all in accordance with current SEPA requirements.

With regard to climate change, the plot sits well above sea level (approx 40m AOD), other than a spring in the field there are also no watercourses nearby that could create a risk of flooding should they overflow and as such it should not be susceptible to flooding, even in the worst of 1 in 200 year cases.

Aside from the existing livestock there are no known ecology / wildlife issues that could be adversely affected by the introduction of the proposed house.

With regard to noise and light pollution considerations, although it will form part of the grouping of buildings the proposed house will be set sufficiently apart from the other house and lodges so as not to be noticeable to each other. Likewise, although some external lighting will be necessary, most likely PIR-controlled with daylight cut-offs for efficiency, the absence of street lighting etc allied to the mature woodlands should ensure the proposed house will retain a rural character.

Overall it is believed that the proposed house will have a limited ecological impact upon the environment, in part by virtue of being in accordance with current Building Standards and SEPA criteria. As such we are comfortable that the principle and design of the new house is sound in terms of solar gain, wind protection, security over the access, fields and adjacent barn, etc. The new house will also be significantly better than the existing house in terms of appearance, external materials, thermal efficiency, accessibility, longevity and flexibility of use for future generations.

Aside from sustainability considerations we are also of the opinion that the blend of traditional scale and materials with a few slightly more contemporary design features is appropriate in terms of Planning and Building Control considerations whilst meeting the anticipated needs and budget constraints of the applicants, their family and their business.

ACCESSIBILITY & PARKING

As mentioned above, the internal layout of the house will be suitable for all generations and abilities while externally the car parking and footpath accesses will also be in compliance with the requirements of the Building Standards. Car parking bays will be laid with gravel, for reasons of surface water drainage, whereas a hard-surfaced parking bay and path will also be introduced giving access to the front door.

There will be provision for at least 3 car parking spaces.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

It is appreciated that any proposal for new housing development in the countryside requires to meet the criteria defined within the Local Plan, both in terms of the principle and thereafter design considerations. In this case, being intended to allow the applicants to semi-retire from their tourist business and return to small-scale farming, the proposed house meets the principle terms of Policy HOUS5. The business is long established, it carries a good reputation within tourism circles and is approaching the time when its management will pass to the next generation. As such the principle for the development is therefore within Local Plan Housing expectations. The re-introduction of farming, albeit on a limited scale, also accords with Local Plan aims.

In terms of SUSDEV and ENV policies, and in particular the siting, there are practical as well as visual impact justifications for positioning the house within an existing woodland clearing that is nevertheless in close proximity to the existing buildings and services connections. The location will offer ready access to the

existing shed and the surrounding fields whilst also having a short access track to the existing house and lodges. It can sometimes be exposed to winds but the U-shape format and surrounding mature woodlands should help to reduce the impact of this whilst also taking advantage of the open southerly aspect. Furthermore, by being uphill from the public road and set within the Burnhouse and Catter woodlands that run along the ridge and downwards from it, and allied to an small landscaped bund that has been formed from topsoil, any views towards the house will be limited. Indeed it is likely that only the top part of the front roof plane will be visible from the A811 whilst any distant views from the B-class road to the south will also be minimal.

With regard to the scale and design aspects it is believed that by adopting the styling and materials of a traditional lodgehouse its visual impact and integration into the landscape should also meet the expectations of LLTNPA. The use of wet dash render below a slated roof will ensure a traditional appearance that sits comfortably within the landscape whilst the one or two contemporary glazing features towards the rear of the house will add internal and external visual interest (without affecting the overall traditional character) whilst also taking maximum advantage of the solar gain and open aspects to the south.

There are no adverse environmental, ecological, agricultural, services connections or transport issues and the requirements of SEPA and Building Standards can be met.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that there is a suitable justification for allowing the introduction of a new dwellinghouse in this instance. By offering additional accommodation for part of the family, and by tying occupancy to the well-established business, the proposal meets the requirements of HOUS5 of the LLTNPA Local Plan. Furthermore the scale, design and siting can be justified in terms of the landscape setting, its proximity to the business and the farming activities, and the resultant visual impact and as such meets the terms of the ENV and SUSDEV policies.

Overall it is believed this proposal accords with LLTNPA aims and expectations and as such, by governing future occupancy of the proposed house, it is believed the Park Authority and other statutory consultees should be able to lend their support to the application.

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