
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	6th January 2010
Report By:	Head of Planning and Housing	Report No:	09/0226/IC Plan01/10
			Major Application Development
Contact Officer:	James McColl	Contact No:	01475 712462
Subject:	New residential development (in principle) at Duchal, Stepends Road, Kilmacolm, PA13 4RS		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal relates to the estate grounds of Duchal House. Duchal House is a Category A listed building with the adjacent outbuildings Category B listed. Development is proposed within two areas of the estate at Rentons Field and Stepends. Rentons Field is located within the northern half of the estate, lying to the north of the B788 and to the west of the footpath from the public road into Milton Wood and onward to Kilmacolm. It comprises an agricultural field and encroaches on to the southern edge of Milton Wood. Stepends lies immediately to the east of the B786 and immediately to the north of Stepends cottages. The site is largely wooded with the only building being a small dilapidated agricultural shed lying on the southern edge of the site.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission in principle is sought for two housing sites. The sale of these sites would provide the necessary funds to enable the repair and upgrading of Duchal House and associated outbuildings.

Rentons Field comprises an area of approximately 2.4 hectares and is accessed via the existing track from the B788 road. Stepends comprises an area of approximately 1.9 hectares and is accessed from the B788 which lies immediately to the west of the site. It is indicated in the documentation and indicative layout submitted with the application that it is proposed to develop 16 dwellings at Stepends and 6 at Rentons Field. As this proposal is considered in principle, these details would form no part of any approval.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policy 1 – Strategic Development Locations

Priority shall be given to investment in the following locations, as identified on the Key Diagram and Diagram 4, in order to maximise the scale of urban renewal in particular to support the Metropolitan Flagship Initiatives identified in Joint Policy Commitment 1 and to sustain rural communities:

- (a) Town Centres
- (b) Urban Renewal Areas
- (c) Community Growth Areas
- (d) Rural Investment Areas

- (e) Joint Transport Priorities
- (f) Green Network Priorities

Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Green Belt

The Metropolitan Development Strategy requires the continued designation and safeguarding of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Green Belt within which there is a presumption against the spread of built up areas and the encroachment of development into the countryside. Local Plans shall define the detailed boundaries and policies to safeguard the Green Belt (as identified on Diagram 9 to take account of the requirements of SPP 21 Green Belts).

Strategic Policy 6 – Quality of Life and Health of Local Communities

The quality of life and health of the communities of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley area will be supported through the following actions:

- (a) providing and safeguarding local employment opportunities Schedule 6(a);
- (b) providing housing opportunities to meet the requirement for a continuing 5-year effective owner occupied land supply, Schedule 6(b), the need to provide for choice in terms of size and type of housing in each housing market area and the needs for social rented housing identified in Local Plans and Local Housing Strategies;
- (c) the protection, management and enhancement of Town Centres as the preferred locations for retailing and other community focused activities, Schedule 6(c);
- (d) environmental improvement, Schedule 6(d);
- (e) the provision of open space and facilities for Sport and Recreation;
- (f) the provision of an integrated network of waste management facilities.

Strategic Policy 9 – Assessment of Development Proposals

In order to accord with the Structure Plan, development proposals will require to satisfy the following criteria. Any proposal which fails to meet these criteria will be regarded as a departure from the development plan and will be required to be justified against the criteria in Strategic Policy 10. These criteria are complementary, and the fulfilment of one criterion does not over-ride the need to satisfy the others.

A. That the case for any development which exceeds the thresholds set out in Schedule 9 has been established in the terms of:

- (i) the ten-year marketable land supply for industrial and business development;
- (ii) the assessment of housing proposals (except on urban brownfield sites) against the demand and effective supply of owner occupied housing land in the relevant housing market area, Schedule 6(b)(i), and planned programmed output in the appropriate Sub-market or Housing Market Areas in Schedule 6(b)(ii); or
- (iii) a requirement identified in a local plan (Schedule 6(b)(iii)) for affordable housing as defined and categorised in PAN 74; or
- (iv) the criteria set out in Schedule 6(c)(i) and the requirements identified in Schedule 6(c)(iv); or
- (v) the assessment of aggregate mineral extraction proposals (except extensions to existing workings) against the ten year supply and demand within the Structure Plan Area; or
- (vi) its relationship to the requirements for waste management facilities set out in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Area Waste Plan.

B. That the location of the development is appropriate in terms of the need to:

- (i) safeguard and avoid the diversion or displacement of investment from the development locations identified in Strategic Policies 1, 5, 6 and 8;
- (ii) promote Urban Regeneration by:

- (a) giving preference to the use of brownfield urban land rather than greenfield land or open space;
- (b) safeguarding the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Belt, Strategic Policy 1;
- (iii) safeguard and promote the vitality and viability of town centres identified in Schedule 1(a) by:
 - (a) locating major office development within or adjoining the Strategic Business Centres identified in Schedule 5(a);
 - (b) taking a sequential approach to proposals for retail, office (Class 2), cultural and leisure development as set out in Schedule 6(c)(ii). ;
- (iv) safeguard the environmental resources listed in Schedule 7 or identified in local plans (including regard to landscape character and quality);
- (v) avoid isolated and sporadic development in the Green Belt and the wider countryside;
- (vi) promote Sustainable Transport by:
 - (a) the application of the Hierarchy of Accessibility as set out in Schedule 3(a)(i);
 - (b) the application of criteria for sustainable locational choices as set out in Schedule 3(a)(ii);
 - (c) the safeguarding of the routes for Strategic Transport Network development proposals (Schedule 4);
- (vii) implement the waste management hierarchy as defined in the National Waste Strategy and priorities identified in the Area Waste Plan;
- (viii) avoid the risk of flooding from all sources throughout the relevant water and drainage catchment area and safeguard the storage capacity of the functional flood plain;
- (ix) avoid negative impact upon Health and Safety;
- (x) contribute to the implementation of the Air Quality Strategy.

Strategic Policy 10 – Departures from the Structure Plan

Any proposal which fails to meet the relevant criteria in Strategic Policy 9 will be regarded as a departure from the Development Plan and consideration shall require to be given to the appropriateness of the development having regard to the following criteria:

A. The justification for the development in terms of:

- (i) an updated assessment agreed by the Joint Committee of the supply and demand estimates used in the Plan;
- (ii) clear evidence of a shortfall in the existing and planned supply of land for:
 - industrial, business or aggregate mineral development within the Structure Plan area;
 - housing development within the appropriate Market Area; taking account of the need to provide for choice in terms of size and type of housing, or
 - retail development within the appropriate Retail Catchment Area;
- (iii) requirements for affordable (including social rented housing) identified in a Strategic Housing Agreements or Local Housing Strategy;
- (iv) the contribution the development would make to remedying any qualitative deficiencies in existing retail provision; or
- (v) specific locational need.

B. The following criteria:

- (i) Economic Benefit
 - (a) the need to accommodate inward investment for industrial or business development that would otherwise be lost to the Structure Plan area or to Scotland;
 - (b) the protection of existing jobs or the creation of a significant number of net additional permanent jobs to the Structure Plan area;
- (ii) Social Benefit
 - (a) assisting the urban renewal or rural regeneration of the Priority Areas identified in Schedule 1(b) and 1(d);
 - (b) supporting or enhancing community facilities;
 - (c) the capacity of the settlement and surrounding area to absorb further development;

(iii) Environmental Benefit

- (a) the protection and enhancement of environmental resources identified in Schedule 7 or local plans;
- (b) the significant restoration of vacant or derelict land for environmental purposes;
- (c) improvement of air and water quality.

Local Plan Policy DS8 - Green Belt

There is a presumption against development in the designated Green Belt, as identified on the Proposals Map. Proposals will only be considered favourably in exceptional or mitigating circumstances and where the criteria for development in Policy DS10 for the 'Countryside' can be satisfied.

[cross ref to key policies DS10; H4 & LR5]

Local Plan Policy DS10 - Countryside

Development within the countryside (including the Green Belt) will be permitted only where it can be supported with reference to the following criteria:

- (a) it is required for the purposes of agriculture and forestry;
- (b) it is a recreation, leisure or tourism proposal which is appropriate for the countryside and contributes to the social and economic development of the area;
- (c) there is a specific locational requirement for the use and it cannot be accommodated on an alternative site;
- (d) it entails appropriate re-use of vacant buildings which it would be desirable to retain for their historic or architectural character; or
- (e) it forms part of an establishment or institution standing in extensive grounds; and
- (f) it does not adversely impact on the landscape character;
- (g) it does not adversely impact on the natural heritage resource;
- (h) it does not adversely affect the visual amenity of the area and is capable of satisfactory mitigation;
- (i) there is a need for additional land for development purposes, provided it takes account of the requirements of the Structure Plan; and
- (j) it complies with other relevant Local Plan policies.

Local Plan Policy H4 - Proposals for Development in the Green Belt and Countryside

Proposals for new dwellings in the 'Green Belt' and 'Countryside' identified on the Proposals Map, will be supported only if the proposed development is for a single or small group of dwellings, falls within one of the following categories and is acceptable with reference to the Planning Practice Advice Note, No. 5 regarding detailed guidance in relation to siting and design:

- (a) demolition and replacement of existing occupied dwelling houses which cannot otherwise be brought up to modern standards and where the new building reflects the scale and character of the existing one to be replaced; or
- (b) the conversion of existing buildings (see also Policy H18); or
- (c) justified by the operational needs of farms or other businesses or activities which are inherently rural in nature and where they will be located adjacent to those businesses or activities (the applicant will be required to enter into Section 75 Agreements regarding occupancy criteria) (See also Policy H19); or
- (d) the sub-division of an existing dwelling house (or houses) for the provision of one or more additional units where any new build element is clearly ancillary to the overall finished building; or

- (e) the re-use or redevelopment of large redundant institutions (see also Policy H17); or
- (f) is part of an integrated project with significant employment and/or economic benefits which is in accordance with other policies of the Local Plan and where the Council is satisfied that the housing is essential to ensure the implementation of the whole development and that such considerations are of sufficient weight to merit the Council's support.

Local Plan Policy H8 - The Character and Amenity of Residential Areas

Proposals for residential development that are acceptable in principle in terms of the Development Strategy of the Local Plan will still be required to satisfy the following development control criteria:

- (a) compatibility with the character and amenity of an area in terms of land use, density, design and materials used;
- (b) visual impact of development on the site and its surroundings;
- (c) landscaping proposals;
- (d) open space proposals (see also Policy H11 and guidance in Policy DC1);
- (e) proposals for the retention of existing landscape or townscape features of value on the site;
- (f) assessment against the Council's Roads Development Guidelines 1995 with regard to road design, parking and traffic safety;
- (g) provision of adequate services; and
- (h) accommodation of, in appropriate cases, the requirements of bus operators regarding road widths, lay-bys and turning areas.

Local Plan Policy HR1 - Designated Environmental Resources and Built Heritage

Development that would adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the natural or built heritage resources listed in Schedule 9.1 and where indicated, on the Proposals Map, will not normally be permitted.

Having regard to the designation of the environmental resource and built heritage, exceptions will only be made where:

- (a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not be compromised;
- (b) visual amenity and townscape will not be compromised;
- (c) no other site, identified in the Local Plan as suitable, is available;
- (d) the social and economic benefits of the scheme outweigh the total or partial loss of the environmental resource;
- (e) the developer has demonstrated that the impact of the development on the environment will be minimised; and
- (f) the loss can be compensated by habitat creation/site enhancement elsewhere, and where there are satisfactory arrangements to achieve this.

Local Plan Policy HR2 - Safeguarding Biodiversity

Inverclyde Council, in conjunction with its partners, and Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils, will contribute to the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan, to facilitate the management of species and habitats and enhance the biodiversity of the Inverclyde area.

Local Plan Policy HR19 - Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Development on sites in Inverclyde included in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland (refer to Supplementary Document SD No 8) will normally be permitted only where there is no adverse impact on the resource.

CONSULTATIONS

Biodiversity Officer – Concerned at the potential impact on biodiversity and the applicant's lack of regard for the SINC designation. Satisfied that with the appropriate conditions the applicant's proposed woodland management plan would mitigate against the impact on the SINC.

Head Of Environmental Services – No objections to the proposal subject to the sites being served by a road constructed to adoptable standards with appropriate sightlines for the junctions with the public roadways. A remote footpath should be provided to link the proposed developments to Kilmacolm. Flooding concerns have been satisfactorily dealt with.

Head Of Safer Communities – Standard contaminated land conditions required.

West of Scotland Archaeological Service – Identify the requirement for a full archaeological survey and that they consider this best tied in with any Section 75 agreement

Historic Scotland – The locations of the proposed development sites would not impact on the setting of the category A listed house. Concern is expressed that the sites are located within areas of designed landscape which is included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and it is noted that any future application for the detailed design of any new development would require a full detailed assessment to establish if such development would be appropriate.

PUBLICITY

The planning application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 11th September 2009 as it is contrary to the development plan.

SITE NOTICES

No site notices were required.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was subject of neighbour notification and a press advert.

6 letters of representation were received. Two letters of objection from were received from local residents and a further two letters from the Kilmacolm Civic Trust. A letter was also received from Kilmacolm Community Council who indicate their support in principle for the proposals, highlighting concerns with the Rentons Field site and noting that the development must be of benefit to the community.

The objectors' concerns can be summarised as follows:

1. The land is zoned as greenbelt.
2. Pockets of new houses remote from existing communities are inappropriate.
3. The proposal at Stepends is too large for the greenbelt location.
4. The Rentons Filed Site would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape.
5. The entrance from the Stepends site to the public road will be dangerous.
6. There is no pedestrian access to Kilmacolm.
7. There is a lack of information to justify the proposals
8. The sale of the house requires to be considered.
9. There is no assessment on alternative funding.
10. There is no evidence that the funding will sustain the house in the longer term.
11. There is no community benefit.
12. The application should not be considered in outline.

I will consider these concerns in my assessment.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of this application are the development plan, national planning guidance, the Scottish Historic Environment Policy, Historic Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes (formerly appendix 1 of the Memorandum of Guidance), the impact of the refurbishment works on the listed buildings, the impact of the proposed housing sites on the Green Belt and wider landscape, the consultation responses, the letters of representation and the applicants supporting documentation.

The proposed two housing sites are located in the Green Belt and it is noted that the development of these two sites are considered by the applicant as being the only viable method of securing the required funds to allow the required repair and upgrading of the listed buildings. As such, a full assessment to consider if such enabling development in the greenbelt is appropriate is required.

As the proposed development is within a Green Belt location, it is contrary to Strategic Policy 1 of the Structure Plan and policies DS8 and DS10 of the Inverclyde Local Plan. Considering Strategic Policy 6, the roll forward of housing land supply does not indicate any requirement for additional housing land within the Inverclyde Housing Market Area. There is no clear evidence of a shortfall in the existing and planned supply of land for housing and no specific requirement for affordable or social rented housing has been identified. However the Policy also refers to the appropriateness of a development to protect and enhance environmental resources identified in Schedule 7. Listed buildings are one such environmental resource and therefore there is potentially grounds for supporting a departure from the structure plan.

Considering Strategic Policy 9, no housing land supply shortage is identified, nor is there an identifiable requirement for affordable or social rented housing. The development would also appear to be at odds with the aim of promoting urban regeneration due to the greenbelt status of the land. As the proposal does not satisfy the criteria in Strategic Policy 9, an assessment will therefore be required against Strategic Policy 10. Section B (iii) (a) of Strategic Policy 10 also indicates the protection and enhancement of such environmental resources can be a justification for a departure.

Considering the Local Plan policy position, Policy DS8 requires assessment of the proposal in the context of Policy DS10. The development fails criterion (a) and (b) in that it is not required for agriculture or forestry and has no recreation, leisure or tourism element. With respect to criterion (c), although the proposed new development is linked to Duchal, there is no absolute specific locational need to site it at these locations other than the applicant's control over the ground. I am also mindful of the extent of the Duchal estate and the opportunity for a wide range of sites to be considered within the estate. The applicant highlights that the sites were chosen by way of a sequential approach to achieve suitable locations in all respects. The sites identified are however remote in the landscape, away from population centres and unsustainable in terms that the residents will rely almost solely on the private car. In further considering policy DS10, the proposal does not involve the reuse of a vacant building nor does it form part of an establishment or institution in extensive grounds thus failing against criterion (d) and (e). Criterion (f) – (h) have regard to the impact of the development on the landscape character, natural heritage and visual amenity. In terms of the impact on the landscape and visual amenity, the two sites are remote from any adjacent settlement and are isolated within the countryside. The Rentons Field site would be visible from the B788 and despite the wooded backdrop, would present an inappropriate isolated and sporadic development within the greenbelt, incongruous with the existing pattern of development within the countryside. The site also encroaches into the exiting wooded area, identified as a SINC. Considering the Stepends site, this is located immediately adjacent to the B786 road and to the north of two existing semi-detached cottages. The site also lies behind a large stone wall when viewed from the roadway. Any development at this location would still be visible however and such a new build development would not be typical of what would be expected adjacent to a country road. As with the Rentons Field site, it presents an inappropriate isolated and

sporadic development within the greenbelt, incongruous with the existing pattern of development within the countryside. The fact that the site lies adjacent to the existing Stepends cottages and includes the site of a former agricultural building, does not lessen the impact on the landscape. The site also significantly encroaches on a SINC. The proposal therefore fails against criterion (f) – (h) of policy DS10. As there is no need for additional land for development purposes, the proposal also fails against criterion (i).

It rests to consider however whether there are any unique circumstances or other tangible benefits which would still allow the justification of the development with reference to other appropriate development plan policies. Policy H4 of the Local Plan provides advice for residential development in the Green Belt. When assessed against this policy, the proposals do not constitute the type of development which could be justified as being acceptable. Most significantly, the application is not for a single or small group of dwellings. Policy H8 also provides advice for new residential development proposals. As the proposed development is considered in principle only, most of the criteria in this policy are not relevant. Criterion (b) however requires an assessment of the visual impact of the development. This has already been covered above. The applicant cites Policy H17 of the Local Plan as providing relevant guidance. However as this relates to large redundant buildings and institutions of which Duchal is not, I do not consider it relevant.

In considering national guidance, SPP 21 on Green Belts notes that SPP 23 on Planning and the Historic Environment sets out policy on enabling development. SPP 23 notes that it may be appropriate to consider enabling development if this can be shown to be the only means of retaining a listed building. In such case, development must be managed carefully and a high quality end product achieved which protects the listed building and its setting and is the minimum necessary to enable its conservation and re-use. The new development should be designed to retain and enhance the special interest, character and setting of the listed building. Given the proposed new development is remote from Duchal House and not located in its immediate grounds, I am satisfied that the setting of the listed building would be unaffected by the new development. This alone however, is not justification for departing from the Greenbelt policy.

I am also mindful that much of Duchal Estate is identified as a designed landscape, included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Rentons Field encroaches on, and Stepends is located entirely within this area and Historic Scotland express concern at the potential impact, noting that any future application for the detailed design of any new development would require a full detailed assessment to establish if such development would be appropriate. An assessment of the proposal is therefore required against Policy HR19 of the Local Plan which notes that development on sites included in such areas will only be permitted where there is no adverse impact on the resource. The unacceptable impact on the wider landscape has been fully assessed above and the proposal would undoubtedly result in an inappropriate and unacceptable development within the designed landscape included on the Inventory. Given this, the proposal fails against Policy HR19 of the Local Plan.

The applicant whilst acknowledging that the new development is contrary to the planning policy relating to new development in the Green Belt, contends that the proposed new development can be justified on the basis that the preservation of a historic asset outweighs other material interests. The applicant also accepts and indeed supports the use of a Section 75 Planning Agreement to ensure that both the upgrading of the listed buildings and the enabling development element are acceptable and that the proceeds of the sale of the housing sites are used in their entirety for the repair, upgrading and future maintenance of the listed buildings. The applicant also indicates that this is a recognised approach to the funding model which has been used elsewhere. Any Section 75 Agreement could also detail requirements regarding the phasing of construction and other related design and layout matters. The use of a Section 75 Agreement alone however would not make an otherwise unacceptable and unjustified development acceptable.

The significance of Duchal, its history and its importance as both a national asset, underlined by the Category A listing and a local asset, is widely highlighted by the applicant. The applicant highlights the benefits to the local community afforded by the estate including public access to

estate land, community woodland scheme, the use of Knapps field for the local agricultural show, free fishing for the local angling club and the promotion of core paths. In addition the applicant also proposes to arrange open days to highlight the local historical interest of the house and gardens. With the exception of these occasional open days, the benefits to the local community listed currently exist and there would appear to be little tangible benefit to the local community against which any development could be justified. Duchal House would remain as a private residence largely for the benefit of those living there.

The applicant also highlights the lack of Local Plan policy in relation to supporting listed buildings and providing guidance on enabling development. The lack of a specific policy in the Local Plan does not prejudice the assessment of this proposal. In considering development in the Green Belt, policy DS8 allows such development in exceptional circumstances. In considering whether the proposed enabling development falls within this category, it would be reasonably expected that the development would have an acceptable impact on the setting of the listed building, the applicant can demonstrate beyond doubt there are no other funding sources available, any new build is being kept to a minimum, any new build having an acceptable impact on the existing landscape and the funds from the sale of any new development being used entirely for the funding of renovations to the listed building. These considerations can be effectively assessed with regard to other development plan policies.

It rests to consider if the enabling development can be justified on the basis as the only available source of funding. The applicant notes that the size and design of the building results in the fact that it doesn't lend itself to alternative uses and its natural function is a large domestic dwelling. The applicant notes that the level of funding required is unavailable from Historic Scotland by way of grants and that it is not possible to undertake a compartmentalised sale of land and buildings due to existing leases and tenants. The supporting documentation provides little in the way of a full assessment of all funding options to put together a robust case to justify that all other funding sources have been exhausted and enabling development is the sole and only source of possible funding with no other funding or combinations of funding being available. A full assessment of how other similar properties within Scotland sustain themselves detailing why such uses, activities or funding sources are unavailable or unsuitable for Duchal could also have been reasonably expected from the applicant to justify the enabling development as the sole source of available funding.

Ultimately, the sale of Duchal House to an individual or organisation with the resources to undertake the required upgrading must be considered as a viable alternative to enabling development within the Green Belt. The sale of the property has been dismissed by the applicant in favour of enabling development with the house remaining in current ownership. This alone results in the argument that there are no other possible avenues for the funding of the restoration of the listed building to fail.

Notwithstanding the above, it is also appropriate to consider other similar developments within Inverclyde. The use of enabling development to provide resources for the re-development and refurbishment of large or redundant listed buildings is not without precedent. Examples within the Inverclyde area include Auchenbothie House in Kilmacolm, the former Balrossie School in Kilmacolm, the former Bridge of Weir Hospital in Quarriers Village, the former Broadfield Hospital in Port Glasgow and Langhouse in Inverkip. In each of these cases, the listed building in question was either a derelict property such as Auchenbothie House or a large institution such as Balrossie and the former Bridge of Weir Hospital. In each case consent was granted for the listed building to be converted and subdivided for residential use, with enabling new build development in the immediate grounds. These developments were considered acceptable in terms of their impact on the wider landscape. There is no precedent for such enabling development to both fund repairs to a private residence and be located both remotely from the building itself and are remote from any significant existing groupings of buildings or larger settlement.

The granting of planning permission for the development in question could itself create a precedent for the use of enabling development by owners of privately occupied listed properties in order to

fund renovations to their homes, particularly where these listed buildings lie within the Green Belt. Granting consent for this application would make it difficult to resist similar proposals. It may also be difficult to refuse further applications relating to Duchal in the future if additional works are required.

In considering the outstanding points raised in the consultation responses, I note concern from the Biodiversity officer that the sites encroach on identified SINCs and the inevitable impact on local biodiversity. In order to mitigate against this, the applicant proposes to prepare a woodland management plan to promote the woodlands within the estate, a proposal the Biodiversity Officer is supportive of in principle, subject to having sight of any proposed conditions to be attached to the consent in place to ensure such a plan is prepared and implemented. There is therefore no conflict with the aims of policies HR1 and HR2 of the Local Plan. The Head of Environmental Services offers no impediment to the proposal in terms of access and road safety subject to the demonstration that acceptable visibility splays can be achieved. A remote footpath to link the developments with Kilmacolm would also be required. As footpaths exist within Duchal Estate through to Kilmacolm, I am satisfied that the developments can be safely accessed from Kilmacolm by pedestrians. A condition requiring the footpaths to remain open for this use could be imposed if required. Whilst I note the West of Scotland Archaeological Service note the requirement for a full archaeological survey and that they consider this best tied in with any Section 75 agreement, this is more routinely dealt with by way of a planning condition.

Assessing the outstanding points raised by the objectors, there is nothing to prevent enabling development in this instance being considered as an application for planning permission in principle as the sites are remote from the listed building and if acceptable full control can still be retained over any buildings on site.

In conclusion, the proposals for housing development in the Green Belt, at two separate isolated sites, well removed from both any population centre or significant grouping of buildings and Duchal House itself, aimed at funding the repair and renovation of Duchal House does not accord with Strategic Policies 1, 6, 9 and 10 of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan and policies DS8, DS10, H4, H8 and HR19 of the Inverclyde Local Plan. Whilst the works required to the listed buildings are not in question, the applicant has failed to demonstrate conclusively that all other funding options, including the marketing of the house on the open market for a sustained period, have been exhausted. Crucially however, the proposed housing sites would lead to development which has an unacceptable impact on the exiting landscape creating two unsustainable clusters of buildings in a rural location where much of its visual charm has been achieved by the preservation of open countryside rarely interspersed by buildings. To grant permission for this development, even subject to a Section 75 agreement ensuring all proceeds from the sale of the enabling development sites go towards the repair and maintenance of the building and to ensure appropriate phasing of the works, would also create an undesirable precedent and result in it being difficult to refuse similar proposals, even on a smaller scale, from similarly placed occupants of listed buildings. To grant permission would seriously undermine the objectives of the Green Belt policy. As such I am unable to support the proposed new housing development.

RECOMMENDATION

That the planning application be refused.

Reasons

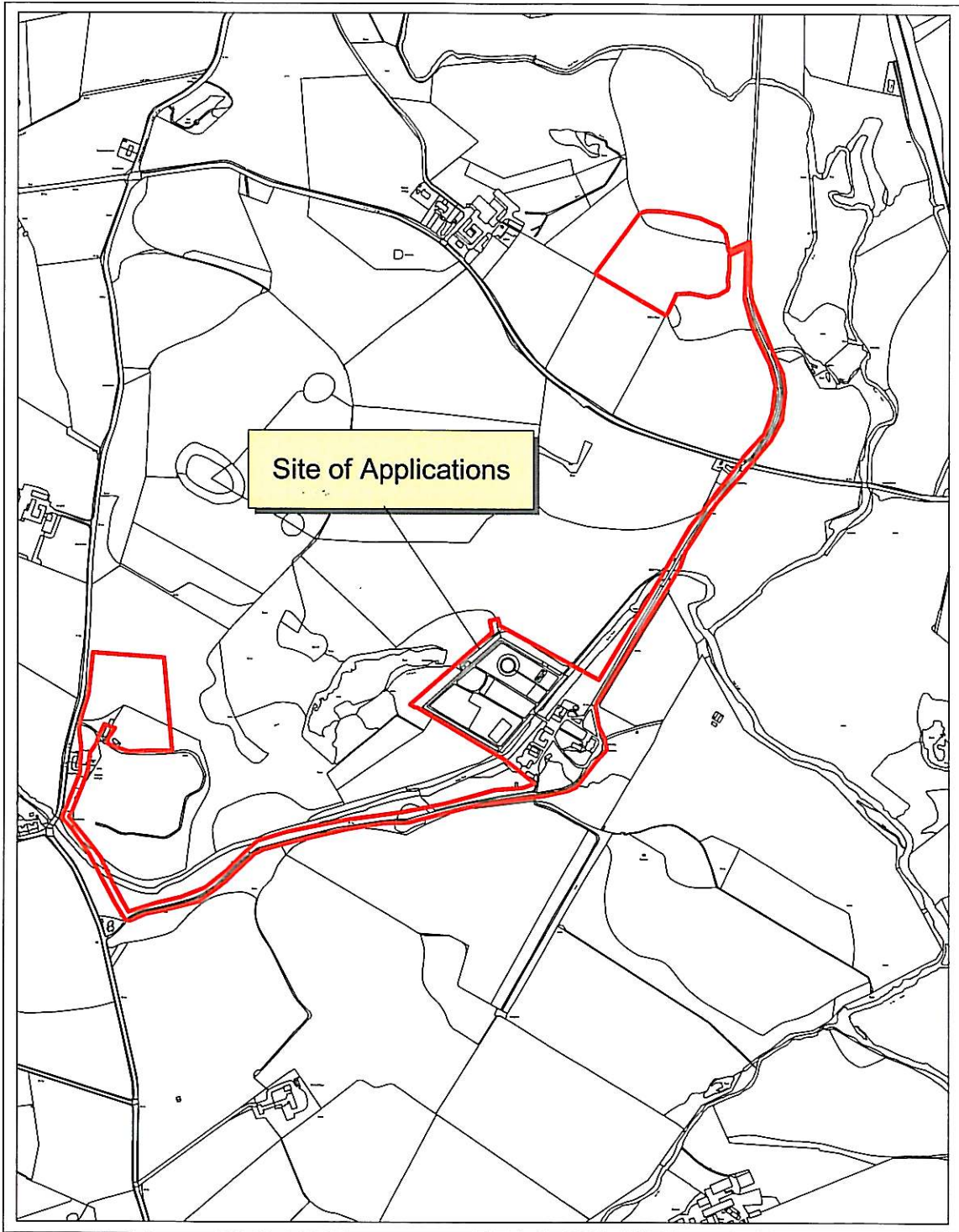
1. The proposed new housing sites are inappropriate and unjustified which would undermine the Green Belt designation by leading to isolated and sporadic development within the Green Belt, incongruous with the existing pattern of development within the countryside and having an unacceptable impact on the existing landscape.

2. It has not been adequately demonstrated that all available methods of funding or combination of methods of funding have been exhausted and no other options exist for securing funding in order to repair and upgrade the listed building.
3. The proposal does not accord with Strategic Policies 1, 6, 9 and 10 of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan
4. The proposal is contrary to Policies DS8, DS10, H4, H8 (b) and HR19 of the Inverclyde Local Plan.

F. K WILLIAMSON
Head of Planning and Housing

Background papers

1. Application forms
2. Application plans
3. Applicant's supporting documentation
4. Consultation responses
5. Letters of representation



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