

CARRBRIDGE & VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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4th May 2013

ePlanning Centre
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
INVERNESS IV3 5NX

Dear Sirs

Planning reference 13/01281/FUL erection of 96 houses in Carrbridge

The Community Council arranged a drop-in meeting on the 2nd of May to elicit the views of the community. Over 90 people attended throughout the day and gave us their views on this application. Many others have approached members independently and we have distilled the comments in this letter.

1. There is some acceptance that the village needs more houses but most people object to the size of this development which is out of proportion to the size of the village. It would adversely affect village culture, atmosphere, environment and community spirit (which were voted as the best things of living in Carrbridge [Carrbridge Survey]). There are also strong feelings that the 'affordable' houses should be spread throughout the development and not tucked away in a remote corner.

2. A major concern for most people is the use of Carr Road as access both in the construction phase and once the development is complete.

- Carr road is relatively narrow – cars can pass carefully; for a car and van/lorry one must stop – has no pavement and is therefore struggling with current volumes let alone a massive increase. Even if safety measurements are put into place, this will result in a more "city-like" appearance (e.g. by putting in speed bumps, traffic lights) and again will spoil the small village character that is the appeal to living here.
- Most of the increase is likely to be between 8:00 and 9:00am when people are going to work and some children will be using it as a walking route to school. It is part of the 'safer Routes to School' Plan. Some of these movements will be school run and therefore two-way.
- People with access to the top end of Carr Road use the back road as a route to Grantown therefore it is reasonable to assume that the residents of the development will do likewise. This is a single track road and cannot deal with such an increase in volume.
- The junction with the Main Street is not coping with current volumes and would be difficult to improve in any meaningful way.
- Their original submission was for a different access and there is no excuse for the community or the planners to make life simpler and more profitable for the developers at the expense of safety plus social and environmental concerns. The community will not accept its wishes being ignored in this matter and is prepared to take this particular issue to the Scottish Government should that be the case.

3. There are some publicly voiced concerns about the integrity of the environmental impact study. The Ecological Survey does not adequately assess how special both fields are.

- These meadows are long established, largely unimproved, flower, rare fungi and insect rich meadows. For example they contain flowers like field gentian and frog orchid. Furthermore Narrow headed ant nests have been recorded on both fields as have other rare invertebrates. Adder has been recorded near the Crannich Park site.
- The sites are known habitats for red squirrels, brown hare, badgers, roe deer and bats. They are potential wild cat habitat. Wild cat are known in the Carrbridge area.
- A high proportion of CNP butterflies are known from the proposed sites as well as the rare Cousin German woodland moth. Crested tits, crossbills, newts and lizards have all been recorded. The woodland area also contains a wealth of rare woodland fungi.
- The development would remove a buffer from existing residential development towards known capercaillie areas.
- The Ecological Survey is commissioned by the developer, and appears to be written to support the application rather than provide a balanced and objective report.

4. Phased building has been proposed (build as houses are sold), which means that direct neighbours as well as new residents, could be living near (and looking at) or on a building site for a prolonged amount of time. This is more of a condition of planning than an objection but has been raised as a concern.

Finally, although not a specific planning objection the access for comments on this application through the HC website was not operational and we fear that many people will have started on that route and given up due to the frustration of trying to use the site. This means that a number of complainants will not have had a voice and this has to be considered as a serious disenfranchisement for our community.

Yours sincerely

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