



THE ROYAL BURGH OF ST ANDREWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

1st November 2014

Attention: Ms. Elspeth Cook
Development Central
Enterprise, Planning and Protective Services
Fife Council
Kingdom House
Glenrothes KY7 5LY

Dear Ms. Cook,

**14/02249/ARC - Application Required by Condition for the erection of a secondary school
(Class 10) with associated facilities including access, car parking/bus stance, playing fields,
regrading of land and alterations to path
Land To The North Of Pipeland Farm Largo Road St Andrews Fife**

The Royal Burgh of St. Andrews Community Council (StACC) wishes to continue to lodge an OBJECTION to the new versions of the planning application documents uploaded on the 6th October. Almost all the points from our previous objections to this planning application remain valid objections to these new documents.

New Grounds for Objection:

1. Traffic problems are unresolved

Most of the traffic problems that were highlighted during the consideration of the application 13/02583/EIA for this site remain unresolved. As indicated at the Pre-Determination hearing on that application, the implication of the figures presented by SKM Colin Buchanan in their Transport Assessment and Transport Addendum is that locating the school at Pipeland will, with ever-increasing frequency, result in lengthy queues and delays on the main north-south arterial route through the town.

Congestion on the Largo Road between Lamond Drive and the Community Hospital junction is likely to produce rat-runs through the adjoining residential areas. The problems at the beginning and end of the school day that have been suffered by residents near Lawhead School may well be dwarfed by those produced by the much larger number of parental vehicles accessing the new school. The Transport Assessment made the implausible assumption that, of those parents taking



their children to the school by car, 50% would drop them off in Scooniehill Road. A more plausible scenario is that parents will drop off children at a wide variety of points in that sector of the town, some of which will be inadvisable in terms of either road safety or the impeding of traffic flow, or both. The relatively narrow width of most roads in the area means that stationary vehicles, often poorly parked as only a short stay is intended, are likely to cause congestion and irritation to residents. The impact on the quality of life in the area, and consequently on house prices, may well be significant.

2. Threat to adjacent properties

The terracing that is needed to create level sports pitches implies major re-modelling of that part of the southern hillside. It would produce a steep bank that would completely dominate the properties on the upper side of Jamie Anderson Place. Residents would be entirely justified in feeling that the environment of their homes would be irretrievably damaged by this change. It is hard to imagine that Fife officials or Fife councillors would happily contemplate having such a huge bank behind their own properties. The Letter from the Agent (6 October 2014) says, "The level of the sports pitches has been raised slightly to balance cut/fill requirements and to reduce the exportation of material from the site". It is not possible to distinguish any visible difference between the two submitted versions of the plans on this point. Is that true? Whilst residents need a much more precise statement of what further deterioration is now being proposed, the reality is that the previous version of the plans was already unacceptable.

The plans do show that the size of the bank would curtail the hours of the day for which these properties will be in sunlight, whilst after dark the floodlighting of the sports pitches would be highly intrusive.

Those who know this area will recall that, on a number of occasions when there has been heavy rainfall, residents of the Scooniehill area have found sizeable volumes of earth from their back gardens swept into the middle of Scooniehill Road. Questions have therefore to be asked about whether the huge quantity of earth that would create the proposed terracing will remain stable in the face of severe climatic events. Climate change over the last twenty years has meant that levels of precipitation traditionally believed to occur only once in a hundred years are now in fact occurring much more frequently. Section 2.6 of the Design and Access Statement, in listing the constraints of the Pipeland site, acknowledges "potential retaining issues". Rigorous assessment is essential if local residents are not to feel threatened.

Please see the diagram at the end of this letter, which the StACC believe shows how much higher the sloping hillside would have to be for the new pitches.



3. Continued Flooding Concerns

The StACC is still concerned about the inadequate information presented regarding the potential for flooding of the surrounding area to the north of the site. In particular we note that the recent Consultee response from SEPA also continues to raise concerns about the calculations and adequacy of the flood prevention measures being incorporated into the plans. The StACC continues to object to this whole development as we do not believe adequate flood prevention can be accommodated on the site alongside the school.

4. Inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the documentation

Section 5.2 of the Design and Access Statement says, "Access to Pipeland cottage and farm buildings will continue to be from the A915 through shared access with St Andrews Community Hospital and the school". This conflicts with the information given on the site layout plan which shows access to Pipeland cottage being taken from Lamberton Place. On the site layout plan, Pipeland Cottage is one of two properties labelled as Pipeland Farm Cottage.

Section 2.1 of the Design and Access Statement (put on the web on 6 October) says, "The projected school roll is up to 1450 pupils and the approximate floor area is 14500 sqm with an overall project budget up to a maximum of £40m gross." It was reported at the Community Council on the same day that the cost had risen to £42.7m.

Given the previous StACC understanding of the exceptional non-educational costs of moving the gas main, the old water works and earth moving on the hillside the StACC estimates that the cost of the budget will have to rise by a few more million in order to guarantee a similar level of school and educational facility spending to match other recent developments within Fife. We find this unacceptable.

Previous Grounds for Objection:

From our previous OBJECTIONS to planning application 13/02583 and the first version of 14/02249, the StACC still OBJECTS to the proposed development for the following reasons detailed in those objections and repeated here:

1. Significantly Contrary to the Development Plan (Both TayPlan and the St. Andrews and East Fife Local Plan), in that it breaches Policies 2B, 2E, 3 and 6, and Action Plan Item 17 of the TayPlan,



and Paragraphs 18 and 75 and Policies E1, E15, E17, E18, and E19 of the St. Andrews and East Fife Local Plan.

2. There is nothing in the local plan that allows the development of this building in the St. Andrews Green Belt.
3. Scottish Planning Policy (2010) was taken into account by the Reporters for the Local Plan, and the Reporters specifically stated that this area should not be built upon.
4. The Alison Grant Landscape Study, commissioned by Fife Council, also indicates that this area should not be built upon. Alison Grant stated that "Development is inappropriate because of its potential impact on the landscape character, scenic quality or visual attributes of St. Andrews and its setting."
5. Excessive Budget on additional items. Inadequate Budget for the school.

The StACC objects to the excessive and non-educational additional costs that are associated with the proposed building of the school at Pipeland Farm. Examples of these costs are:

- a. Excessive Cost of the Land
 - b. Removal of Gas-Main
 - c. Excavation of the Southern Hillside
 - d. High Quality Building Materials required for a building in Green Belt.
6. Traffic Issues on Largo Road have not been fully assessed. The proposal does not take into account any increased traffic from the western development when it has been built. In particular the analysis of the Traffic Assessment by Dr. Goudie in February is of particular concern to the StACC, as he clearly demonstrates that Largo Road will not be able to cope with the additional traffic.
 7. The StACC believes the proximity to mobile phone masts on the southern hillside may be detrimental to children's health. Studies have shown that mobile phone masts should not be located close to schools, and this advice has been ignored.