

# **AGENDA ITEM 5**

## **APPENDIX 3**

**2017/0284/DET & 2017/0285/LBC**

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
COMMENTS**

The community council was requested to meet to discuss the Redevelopment of the Old School. The meeting was arranged as an emergency meeting and advertised through normal channels. 20 people attended from the community representing the residents of Abergeldie Road and School Lane. The community council was represented by Wendy Miller, Jo Croll & Fiona Presslie. Whilst those members of the council present and all those residents attending, support the concept of affordable housing and the redevelopment of the Old School there were several concerns raised regarding the development as currently submitted:

Over development of the site; including density of the housing for the size of the plot, insufficient parking spaces, lack of green spaces, poor quality of accommodation in size terms. As such the existing residents believe the quality of life for new residents will be poor.

Impact on existing properties including the close proximity of the new builds, privacy impacted by overlooking windows and some five properties will be severely impacted by loss of light.

Vehicular access will be via School Lane, this is a narrow lane with on road parking for residents. The road currently has narrow pavements unsuitable for wheelchairs or buggies. The residents believe it is not suitable for the volume of construction traffic for the redevelopment of this size. Concern was also expressed regarding emergency service access, refuse collection and heating oil delivery. Walls on the corners of both end of School Lane have recently been rebuilt due to vehicles not being able to negotiate the angle. The increased number of cars from the redevelopment will impact the safety & integrity of the surrounding roads, some of which are already in a state of disrepair. One resident expressed concerns on the impact of the traffic on the foundations of her property. Due to the number of parking spaces on the plot, concerns were raised that parking would over fill on to the street making access even more difficult.

The drains in the area frequently back up, there is no provision to replace/expand the existing system. Concerns were raised about the ability of the current system to meet the increased demand.

Concerns were raised regarding the plans to remove the asbestos and whether sufficient time had been allowed for, and whether health implications on neighbouring residents been considered.

Any redevelopment should meet with local council and park recommendations regarding the number of units in a cluster to avoid the creation of social divides. The existing residents believe an additional 50 residents in such a congested manner will detrimentally impact the village.

The existing residents have questioned the allocation process of these units and whether priority will be given to locals.

Concerns were raised regarding the design of the development and whether it is sufficiently sympathetic for a conservation area, given that previous minor planning applications e.g. for a dormer window have been rejected.

There are two tourism based businesses in School Lane and concerns were raised regarding the impact of the length of the construction period would have on business.

As a Community Council we fully support the redevelopment of the Old School and the provision of affordable housing. In representing the community in this matter we pass on these concerns in particular the over development of the site. We request that the concerns above are addressed and that this application is given sufficient focus, in particular we believe that a site visit by the Planning Committee would be advantageous and ask that this application is reviewed during one of the CNPA Planning meetings held in Ballater.

Dear Katherine

Application 2017/0284/DET and 2017/0285/LBC

On behalf of Ballater & Crathie residents we wish to object to the above application.

Whilst in principle we agree with the concept of affordable housing within the area, we do not agree with this proposal on the grounds that there are too many units for the site available and no allocation for those living within the area already as set out by Grampian Housing Association's allocation process. We think that a development of half the size would be suitable as set out by the report by Groves Raines.

Since the Co-operative amalgamated in March 2015 to one shop on Golf Road we have seen a huge level of congestion on Gold Road and Viewfield Road, which would only be made worse if a development like this gets the go ahead. We have evidence of the congestion problems we currently face and have been consulting with Aberdeenshire Council to try and alleviate the current issues since May 2017.

We also think that although Ballater is a conservation area, it appears to be acceptable to lower the wall on School Lane but not to remove part of the wall on Abergeldie Road which would give safer access to the development. The wall on School Lane has been knocked down accidentally and rebuilt on 2 occasions already, bearing in mind that School Lane is a single lane street with no turning point.

We think the resubmission has not addressed any of the original complaints and as such we object to this application.

Yours sincerely

Anne Reid

Secretary Ballater & Crathie Community Council

**Response to the CNPA for the redevelopment of the Old School, Ballater (Application 2017/0284/DET and 2017/0285/LBC)**

As a Community Council we fully support the redevelopment of the Old School and the provision of affordable housing within our community. However in representing the views expressed by the Community we still recommend that the CNPA rejects the current proposed development by GHA.

The main objections are density, access, parking, safety and allocation of affordable homes to the residents of the Ballater area.

The fundamental objection is still the density of the site. In the Resubmission Amendments Summary the Architect refers to the revised re-submission of the application made in November 2017 having addressed a number of items of concern from the Community. The revised plans have only reduced the number of units by one, from 27no to 26no, the number of residents to occupy the site reduced by only four from 87no to 83no people and parking, the number of spaces reduced also by four from 28no to 24no. The general opinion is that the density remains far too high for this site.

Another concern was access. Whilst we support preserving historical features within our Community where possible, we still consider the importance of the recommendation to preserve the historic Listed boundary wall to Abergeldie Road is outweighed by the unsuitability of School Lane being the sole entrance/exit to this site. Older members of the community report that when this site was previously used as a school and then an activity centre access was always a problem and this was in the days of fewer and smaller vehicles than we have today. The residents of School Lane and the surrounding approach roads already have issues of congestion and parking which will only be worsened by sole access in and out through School Lane. Whilst in principle the revised drawings make the access look viable for this number of cars and larger vehicles to pass freely, this in practice cannot be the case. The community's view is that congestion and safety are still an issue for objection.

An additional concern is the allocation of these affordable homes not going to those residing in the Ballater area. GHA's initial Development Case stated that 78% of the lettings would go to those residing in the Ballater area on the assumption that all applicants have the same housing need priority. However at a subsequent public meeting a representative of GHA stated that it was unlikely that those living in the Ballater area would necessarily meet the same priority as those applying from outside the area. A recent Community Survey carried out by the Ballater and Crathie Community Council to develop a Community Action Plan highlighted that residents feel very strongly that there is a need for affordable housing and priority should go to local residents.

In the Architects Design Amendment Statement they state that these design reconsiderations have brought development of the Old School by GHA to the brink of becoming unviable. As they also state we have a beautiful Listed former school building of such importance to Ballater in terms of it's heritage that can be saved for the Community, but the emphasis must be to find a way forward for an alternative viable solution that works for all.

The Ballater and Crathie Community Council therefore recommend that an alternative design should be considered for the Old School to ensure that it meets the local need for affordable housing, but that it is also sympathetic to the neighbouring properties, is supported by the local community and that these affordable homes are more likely to be allocated to residents of the Ballater area.