



Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Gatehouse of Fleet Community held at 7 pm on Thursday 6 December 2007 in the Murray Arms Hotel.

Community Councillors Present: Franca Bruno (Chair), Shaun Burnie, Mary Cousins, Ron Forster, Suzette Harris, Ian McConchie, Gerard Macnamara (*Dean of Guild*) Liz Modrate, Alison Steel, Adam Stephenson (*Secretary*), Chris Walker (*Depute Provost/Treasurer*)

In Attendance: Steven Sloan (*Director – South Vale Homes*), Charlie (*Director South Vale Homes*), Eric Wilson (*Mark Potter*), 42 members of the local community.

Apologies: Mark Laird (*Provost*)

Plans were available for public viewing from 6 pm and the meeting commenced at 7 pm.

1. Chris Walker opened the meeting and welcomed the representatives from South Vale Homes and everyone for attending. Cllr Walker informed the meeting that Franca Bruno would chair the meeting due to his conflict of interest over the housing development.
2. Cllr Bruno gave a brief history of the garage site. Previously approval was given by the Planning Department for 8 dwellings. Plan for 17 houses was put before planning but was withdrawn. In February/March an application for 26 units was withdrawn. South Vale have tweaked their previous plans for 26 units and will present their plans tonight.
3. Presentation from South Vale – Cllr Bruno asked the developers to give a brief account of the plans for the development as it stands today. Eric Wilson informed the meeting that the development will be 2-story with external appearance similar to other properties in Gatehouse of Fleet. The development would involve some tree loss, but a plan of landscaping has been designed. The courtyard will house parking bays for 33 cars and a play area.
4. Cllr Bruno then asked for questions/comments from the public. **(P)** – Public Comment/Question. **(D)** – Developer response/statement.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Concern that the plans presented are an over development of the site. A plan for 17 dwellings was withdrawn as planning officials believed this to be a gross over development of the site. **(D)** – The withdrawal of plans for 17 dwellings was not purely as a result of over development, 5 reasons for refusal were given in total. The current plans for 24 units have the appearance of 12 dwelling houses. Detailed supporting statements/studies/surveys have been submitted with the application. Developer does not believe that the proposed plans are an over development.
 - ❑ **(P)** – View on approach into the town is unacceptable. Woodside development is very loose compared to other areas of the town. Development should be pushed further back into the site. **(D)** – not uncommon to see this type of gable end on entry into an urban town. The development would be a much more attractive sight than the garage.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Garage is currently hidden by trees on approach to town. Asked the developer for their estimated selling price of units and why even though there are less flats than the previous plans, the sizes of the units are now smaller

- than before? **(D)** – Costs are currently being put together for removal of garage and hazardous waste. Costs are therefore not available at present.
- ❑ **(P)** – Concern expressed over the sizes of parking bays and also the difficulty there will be in emerging from the development onto the main road. **(D)** – The development is within the 30-mph zone. During discussion with Roads Department, they have agreed with the site lines in relation to the road. During consultation with Police Force, concern was expressed over parking at the edge of development.
 - ❑ **(P)** – concern was expressed over the type of people that may reside in the development.
 - ❑ **(P)** – concern was expressed over the additional pressure on parking with the addition of visitors. **(D)** – Visitors to the development have been factored in to calculations for the number of parking bays, as is required by the planning department and which they have deemed an acceptable number of bays.
 - ❑ **(P)** – what will be the function of the lade? **(D)** – A proposed plan for drainage is in place. The two water courses will discharge into the lade. The drainage plans should eliminate flooding problems.
 - ❑ **(P)** – What would happen in the event of a flash flood, would the system be able to cope? **(D)** – Scottish Water has accepted the proposal put forward for the drainage system.
 - ❑ **(P)** – proposals are better than the previous plans at meeting concerns of the last public meeting.
 - ❑ **(P)** – The new Planning Act Scotland (2006), which is not yet implemented, requires that developers consult with the local community. The Gatehouse of Fleet Development Initiative (GDI) has commissioned a CADISPA study through the University of Strathclyde, why did the developer refuse to co-operate with the University? **(D)** – Developers were unaware that there was an approach by the University. They requested further details of this approach and will investigate.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Local resident has been adversely affected by the flooding at the garage, with the result of water entering the house and extensive repairs being necessary. **(D)** – Tanks will be put in the drainage system to collect excess rain water. A representative from the Roads Department has met with developers and been given the background of the flooding problems. SEPA/Scottish Water have been contacted and they are confident with proposals that have been put forward.
 - ❑ **(P)** – SEPA have not yet formally commented on the development. **(D)** – SEPA have been contacted and proposals have been looked at by them.
 - ❑ **(Q)** – Who will be responsible for maintaining the drainage system? **(D)** – Scottish Water will adopt the drainage system.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Expression of gratitude to the developers for attending the meeting. Design is better than previous plan, but still not good enough. The plans do not conform to the original design of Gatehouse of Fleet. Housing in Gatehouse of Fleet has a variety of sizes and individuality. The preview of the CADISPA report shows that feeling within the community is that flats are not a priority.
 - ❑ **(P)** – If flats are bottom of the opinion poll, then why are they being developed? Older people unlikely to purchase due to no lift being installed. Concern that the flats will become holiday/second homes. What will happen if the majority of units become holiday homes, who will maintain the grounds? **(D)** – Grounds maintenance will be contracted and owners will require to pay an annual fee.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Who will maintain the exterior of the property and will owners be able to paint the outside any colour, meaning there will be differences? **(D)** – The charge for maintenance will include exterior. Within the missives there will be a control mechanism concerning painting the exterior.
 - ❑ **(P)** – Concerned that there was a toxic dump buried under the garage, which has never been discovered by any other agency before. Concerned over the limited number of bore holes used during study. **(D)** – More exploratory work

will be carried out once the garage has been removed. Feel that they have a good understanding of the content of contaminants.

- ❑ **(P)** – What will be done with the contaminated materials? **(D)** – These will be removed from the site. They will remove what needs to be removed.
- ❑ **(P)** – Will developers guarantee that all contaminants will be removed? **(D)** – Expert advice has been sought to manage the site. Everything legally required will be done.
- ❑ **(P)** – Most contamination will be left at the site? **(D)** – South Vale Homes have employed a number of consultants to give advice and ensure the site is safe.
- ❑ **(P)** – South Vale was not aware of the situation (with regard to contamination) before purchasing the site and are now trying to save costs.
- ❑ **(P)** – Gatehouse of Fleet is an area of conservation and deserves a quality development. On plans why is there reference to mock chimneys, slate, sash windows... when current residents must go to the expense of using the traditional materials. **(D)** – Council will scrutinise the proposals and make judgements. The Councils Conservation Officer will feed into this.
- ❑ **(P)** – The installation of mock chimneys will not allow the opportunity for residents to use alternative methods of fuel, such as wood burning stove, in the future. **(D)** – The Planning Department requires that mock chimneys are used.
- ❑ **(P)** – Too many flats and too much car parking in less than an acre of land. Proved too dangerous a location for use as a medical centre (in view of traffic issues). **(D)** – Parking requirements set down by local authority.
- ❑ **(P)** – Surprise that the Roads Department have approved without additional speed control measures with the possibility of 35 cars coming and going.
- ❑ **(P)** – Rare to see a car or a van not setting off the secret sign warning motorists that they are travelling over the 30-mph speed limit.
- ❑ **(P)** – Who is the target market for the development? Flats at Tannery Brae were low cost and targeted at local people, but there was little interest from local people and are now mainly used as second homes. **(D)** – Targeted at first time buyers and people down sizing.
- ❑ **(P)** – Local builders have estimated that the flats will be sold for £135 – 160,000. **(D)** – Prices are not available at present, but this price was excessive.
- ❑ **(P)** – Gatehouse of Fleet has a unique charm. Many would support a more superior project.
- ❑ **(P)** – Would a written guarantee be provided to a local resident, that has been affected by flooding from the garage site, that their house will not be flooded. **(D)** – Everything has been done to address drainage problems – consultation with a variety of agencies has taken place to include solutions in the design.
- ❑ **(P)** – Would the developer consider looking at specific problems. **(D)** – Yes.
- ❑ **(P)** – The community has been informed that the town has a capacity on sewage. **(D)** – Scottish Water have said they do not have a problem with the development and its impact on sewage.
- ❑ **(P)** – Previously the site has received approval for 8 properties. Would the developer consider this option, or is it only economically viable for 24 units/flats? **(D)** – Do not feel that 8 houses is viable and would not be a suitable option.
- ❑ **(P)** – Virtually no landscaping to the development. All trees, bar a few, will be cut away. Wildlife currently living in the area would be destroyed. **(D)** – Developers have been informed that the trees on site are not of exceptional quality and would be no loss (D&G Council). A landscape plan is in place, prepared by landscape consultants. (Plan not available at the meeting).

Cllr Bruno thanked the developers for their attendance at the meeting. The public were then asked to consider what they would like the development to be, to allow the developers to take ideas away with them.

- ❑ **(P)** - Build houses, suitable for families, rather than flats.
- ❑ **(P)** - There are no people present at the meeting that have an interest in buying one of the flats.
- ❑ **(D)** - Developers said that building 8 units will not happen and the land will remain as is, if this was the only option. Other options may have been available if it had not been for the abnormal costs of removing the contaminated land.
- ❑ Turn the site back into a Mill Pond.
- ❑ Would 12 houses be considered rather than flats?
- ❑ **(P)** - Are the developers going to consider the comments/ideas expressed at the meeting? **(D)** – Previous plans have been revised and consultation has taken place with various agencies and all this information will go before the planning committee and see the outcome from this.

Cllr Walker closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Community Council will meet on Tuesday 11th December to go through the comments expressed at the meeting. This meeting is open to the public.