

REPORT TO: Planning Committee
MEETING DATE: Tuesday 18 June 2013
BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)
SUBJECT: Application for Planning Permission for Consideration

Application No. **13/00229/AMM**

Proposal Alterations and extensions of golf club house to form a 100 bed hotel and golf club house, erection of greenkeeper's shed and compound, club store/trolley store, alterations to golf course and associated works.

Location **Whitekirk Golf Club
Whitekirk
North Berwick
East Lothian
EH39 5PR**

Applicant Whitekirk Consortium Ltd

Per KBAD

RECOMMENDATION Consent Granted

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Although this application is for the approval of matters specified in conditions of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT it has to be determined as a major development type application because the area of the application site is greater than 2 hectares and the gross floor space of the proposed hotel building would exceed 5,000 square metres. Accordingly the application cannot be decided through the Council's Scheme of Delegation. It is therefore brought before the Planning Committee for a decision.

In June 1999 planning permission (Ref: 98/00748/FUL) was granted for an extension to the existing club house of Whitekirk Golf Club to contain function rooms and a 30 bedrooms hotel. The approved extension was to adjoin the northeast corner of the club house so as to be aligned at a right angle to the existing building, creating an L-shaped footprint. The approved extension was to be two storeys in height. Development of the extension did not commence and planning permission 98/00748/FUL lapsed in June 2004.

In June 2011 planning permission in principle (Ref: 08/00078/OUT) was granted for the development of a 100 bedroom hotel, a new club house, relocation of a greenkeeper's

compound, a new 18 hole golf course, 21 holiday lodges and 42 houses on some 138 hectares of land in the countryside to the north and east of Whitekirk. A docketed masterplan indicates how the different components of development could be laid out within the site.

The site the subject of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT is bisected into two parts by the A198 road, which runs north-eastwards from Whitekirk towards North Berwick. The majority of the land within the north-western part of the site is in golf and leisure use, under the operation of the Whitekirk Golf and Country Club. It includes an 18 hole golf course, golf driving range, practice area, maintenance compound, club house and leisure facility and associated car parking.

This further application seeks approval of matters specified in conditions of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT for the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the 100 bed hotel and golf club house, greenkeeper's shed and compound, club store/trolley store and alterations to the existing golf course, the means of access, the landscaping of the site and of other principles of development.

The application site has an area of some 66 hectares and forms part of the site the subject of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT. It does not include the land of the larger site that is approved in principle for 42 houses. Neither does it include the land of the larger site that is approved in principle for a new 18 hole golf course and the 21 holiday lodges.

The majority of the land within the application site consists of the operational land of Whitekirk Golf and Country Club. It also includes a length of the A198 road and an area of farmland that is immediately to the southeast of the A198 road. That land is lower lying than the part of the site that is to the northwest of the A198. The application site is mainly bounded by farmland. It is bounded partly to the southeast by the Peffer Burn. The land immediately to the east of the Peffer Burn forms part of the Tynninghame Designed Landscape. At its nearest point, the village of Whitekirk is located some 50 metres to the south of the application site.

The central southern part of the application site is within the Whitekirk Conservation Area. The remainder of the application site is within the North Berwick-Dunbar Coastline Area of Great Landscape Value.

There is a burial cairn located within the application site that is an ancient monument scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Amended plans have been submitted showing:

- (i) amended drainage proposals; and
- (ii) changes to the layout of the proposed kitchen and slight amendments to the greenkeepers shed and one of the cleaner's stores within the proposed hotel.

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that the application be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan is the approved Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015 and the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008.

Relevant to the determination of the application are Policies ENV1C (International and National Historic or Built Environment Designations), ENV1D (Regional and Local Natural and Built Environment Interests) and ENV1G (Design of New Development) of the approved Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan 2015 and Policies DC1 (Development in the Countryside and Undeveloped Coast), NH4 (Areas of Great Landscape Value), ENV4 (Development within Conservation Areas), ENV7 (Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Sites), DP1 (Landscape and Streetscape Character), DP2 (Design), DP6 (Extensions and Alterations to existing Buildings), DP22 (Private Parking) and T2 (General Transport Impact) of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008.

Material to the determination of the application is Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the Scottish Historic Environment Policy: July 2009 and Scottish Planning Policy: February 2010.

Scottish Planning Policy echoes the statutory requirements of Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 that a planning authority must have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in exercising its responsibilities in the determination of any application for planning permission for development affecting a conservation area. It is stated in Scottish Planning Policy that proposed development that would have a neutral affect upon the character or appearance of a conservation area (i.e. does no harm) should be treated as one which preserves that character or appearance. The design, materials, scale and siting of new development within a conservation area should be appropriate to the character of the conservation area.

It is stated in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy: July 2009 and Scottish Planning Policy: February 2010 that scheduled monuments are of national importance and that they should be preserved in situ and within an appropriate setting. Where works requiring planning permission would affect a scheduled monument, the protection of the monument and its setting are material considerations in the determination of whether or not planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

One written objection to the application has been received. It is from The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. The Society objects to the banal design and regimented appearance of the new and extended hotel and golf club buildings.

A copy of the written objection is contained in a shared electronic folder to which all Members of the Committee have had access.

Dunpender Community Council were consulted on this application but have not provided any comments on it.

By the grant of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT approval has been given for, amongst other things, the principle of a 100 bedroom hotel, relocation of a greenkeeper's compound and a new club house. There can therefore be no objection in principle to such use of the site.

In the masterplan docketed to planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT, it was shown that the existing club house and leisure facility building could be retained and could provide the leisure and restaurant components of the new hotel. It was also indicatively shown on the submitted master plan that a replacement club house building could be located some 90 metres to the southwest of the existing club house and leisure facility building.

It is not now the intention of the applicant to build a replacement club house building. Rather it is now proposed that the existing club house and leisure facility building would be retained for use as a club house and leisure facility. The applicant has confirmed in writing that the leisure facilities and the restaurant of the club house would be used by hotel guests. There is nothing in the grant of planning permission 08/00078/OUT that requires the provision of a replacement club house and there would be no justifiable basis to refuse this further application on the basis that a separate replacement club house is not now proposed.

In the consideration of this application the requirement is to determine whether or not the proposed details of the hotel and leisure development of the site are consistent with the principles of development set for such development by planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT and whether or not the development would be appropriate to its place.

The proposed hotel would have 100 guest bedrooms, a function room, a bar area, restaurant and new kitchen facilities. The 100 bedroom component of the proposed hotel would adjoin part of the north-western (rear) elevation of the existing club house and leisure facility building. It would have a broadly L- shaped footprint with the principal component of it running parallel to the existing club house and leisure facility building and would be three storeys in height, with the top floor being contained within the mansard roof of the extension. The function room and bar area of the proposed hotel would project out from the existing club house and leisure facility building in a southeast direction. This component would be broadly linear in form and would project out some 45 metres from the south-eastern elevation of the existing club house and leisure facility building. The walls of the proposed extensions would be finished in a white coloured render. The roofs of the extensions would be clad in natural slate.

It is proposed to erect a new greenkeeper's shed at the northern end of the application site in a position some 90 metres to the west of the proposed hotel. The greenkeeper's shed would have a rectangular footprint. Its walls would be finished in blockwork and profiled steel sheeting. Its roof would be pitched and gabled and clad in profiled steel sheeting. A compound would be formed immediately to the west of the proposed greenkeeper's shed.

It is intended that the majority of the 18 holes of the existing golf course would remain unaltered. However alterations to 6 of the holes are proposed. The proposed alterations include the formation of new greens, bunkers, tees and lengths of fairway.

What is proposed for the development of the application site would be a sympathetic expansion of the existing golf and leisure use of the Whitekirk Golf and Country Club with due regard to its existing layout and built form. The proposed layout is broadly consistent with the Masterplan docketed to planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT.

The proposed hotel would essentially consist of 3 components, the central one of which is the existing club house and leisure facilities building of Whitekirk Golf and Country Club. The largest component of the proposed hotel building, which would contain the 100 guest bedrooms, would adjoin part of the north-western (rear) elevation of the existing club house and leisure facilities building. In that position, it would be within the gully that currently contains a part of the 18th hole of the existing golf course. Consistent with planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT, that component would be linear in form and would not be significantly higher than the roof of the existing club house and leisure facilities building. It would be built in to the sloping ground, which falls away to the club house with an element of step down. By virtue of its size the guest bedrooms component of the proposed hotel would be visible within its landscape setting. However the local landform would give some degree of visual containment to it. In its position, and by virtue

of its architectural form, height and layout, the guest bedrooms component of the proposed hotel would not have an unacceptable visual impact on the surrounding area. The other component of the proposed hotel, which would contain the function room and bar area, would project out from the existing club house and leisure facilities building in a southeast direction. It would be sited essentially in the same general position as the hotel that was approved by the grant of planning permission 98/00748/FUL, although it would not project out as far as the previously approved hotel building. Whilst this component would undoubtedly be visible in views from public places, it would nevertheless be less prominent than the hotel building the subject of planning permission 98/00748/FUL. The architectural style of the function room component of the proposed hotel would be in keeping with that of the existing club house and externally finished in materials to match it.

The proposed guest bedroom and function room components of the hotel and the other works associated with the proposed hotel, including the proposed club store/trolley store, would not by their presence appear so intrusive, incongruous or exposed as to be unacceptably harmful to the landscape character and visual amenity of the Area of Great Landscape Value of which the application site is a part. Due to their distance away from and the nature of the intervening landform they would not have a harmful impact on the setting of Whitekirk Conservation Area or of Tynninghame Designed Landscape.

The proposed greenkeeper's shed and compound are designed for the functionality of their intended use. Nevertheless the proposed shed would have a similar form and appearance to many agricultural buildings that are located within the East Lothian countryside. Moreover, when seen in public views from the north and north east of the application site the proposed greenkeeper's shed and compound would be viewed against the backdrop of rising ground and would not appear visually prominent or intrusive in its landscape setting. Within this landscape setting, it would not be harmful to the landscape character and visual amenity of the Area of Great Landscape Value of which the application site is a part. The proposed greenkeeper's shed and compound would not have a harmful impact on the setting of Whitekirk Conservation Area or of Tynninghame Designed Landscape.

The proposed alterations to the existing golf course would require the carrying out of limited land engineering works. In the simple design of the altered golf course the purpose is to make full use of the existing landform of the site with the minimum of physical change. The new greens, bunkers, tees and lengths of fairway would be seen in relation to the existing golf course and would not have a harmful impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the Area of Great Landscape Value of which the application site is a part. The proposed alterations to the existing golf course would not have a harmful impact on the setting of Whitekirk Conservation Area or of Tynninghame Designed Landscape.

The Council's Policy and Projects Manager raises no objection to the details of the proposed development, being satisfied with the proposed scheme of landscaping.

The burial cairn on Whitekirk Hill, which is a scheduled ancient monument would not be directly impacted on by the proposed development and would not have its setting adversely affected.

In their consultation response, Historic Scotland do not object to the proposed development on the basis that it would harm the setting of the Whitekirk Hill Cairn scheduled monument or the conservation objectives of the Tynninghame Designed Landscape.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) initially objected to the proposed development, raising concern about the technical viability of a private treatment system at this location, and also over the principle of achieving a sustainable foul drainage system. In response, the applicant has augmented the level of treatment to take account of the strict discharge standards that will be required to be met in order to obtain a license from SEPA under the statutory provisions of the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. In light of this, SEPA have withdrawn their previous objection to the proposed development. They do however recommend that the discharge of surface water to the water environment should be in accordance with the principles of the SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Manual C697 published by CIRIA. This planning control can be secured by a condition imposed on the approval of matters specified in conditions for the proposed leisure and tourism development.

Scottish Water were consulted on this application but have not provided any comments on it.

The different components of the proposed scheme of development would be erected at some distance from residential properties in the area, the majority of which are located within the village of Whitekirk.

Conditions 8 and 9 of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT require that the leisure and tourism development should be constructed in accordance with a construction method statement and a method statement for the routing and management of construction traffic, both of which should be submitted to and approved in advance by the Planning Authority.

The Council's Environmental Protection Manager has considered this application in respect of the environmental impacts that might arise from the proposed development. He is satisfied that those conditions are sufficient to ensure that the construction activities would not have a significantly harmful impact on the environment or on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties. The Environmental Protection Manager raises no concerns in respect of the future operation of the proposed leisure and tourism development.

In view of this advice it can be concluded that the proposed development would not harm the privacy or amenity of neighbouring properties.

The Council's Food Safety Officer raises no objection to the details of the proposed leisure and tourism development.

The existing club house and leisure facility is served by an existing private road that provides access from the A198. The existing private road would be retained to provide access to both the hotel and the existing club house, although its junction with the A198 road would be altered. A new length of road would be formed to the south of the realigned junction to provide access from the A198 road to the site approved in principle for the 21 holiday lodges by planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT. A car park with 187 spaces would be formed in a position immediately to the south of the proposed hotel and golf clubhouse building.

The detailed access arrangements are in accordance with the principles of the means of accessing the leisure and tourism development established by the grant of planning permission in principle 08/00078/OUT.

The Council's Transportation service raise no objection to the detailing of the access arrangements. They do however make the following recommendations:

- (i) a Travel Plan Coordinator should be appointed to implement, promote and deliver the range of measures contained in the Travel Plan that was submitted with this application;
- (ii) an independent road safety audit of the proposed new junction with the A198 road should be completed with any findings included within the final design of the junction;
- (iii) no rooms in the proposed hotel should be occupied until the proposed new junction with the A198 road has been completed; and
- (iv) wheel washing facilities are provided during the construction phase of the leisure and tourism development.

All of these requirements can reasonably be made conditions of the approval of matters specified in conditions for the proposed development.

The Transportation service are satisfied with the number and layout of car parking spaces proposed for the leisure and tourism development.

Based on the planning assessment given above the proposed leisure and tourism development is consistent with Policies ENV1C, ENV1D and ENV1G of the approved Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan 2015 and Policies DC1, NH4, ENV4, ENV7, DP1, DP2, DP6, DP22 and T2 of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008 and with the Scottish Historic Environment Policy: July 2009 and Scottish Planning Policy: February 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

That approval of matters specified in conditions for the proposed leisure and tourism development be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 No development shall take place on site unless and until final site setting out details have been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority.

The above mentioned details shall include a final site setting-out drawing to a scale of not less than 1:200, giving:

- a. the position within the application site of all elements of the proposed development and position of adjoining land and buildings;
- b. finished ground and floor levels of the development relative to existing ground levels of the site and of adjoining land and building(s). The levels shall be shown in relation to an Ordnance Bench Mark or Temporary Bench Mark from which the Planning Authority can take measurements and shall be shown on the drawing; and
- c. the ridge height of the proposed shown in relation to the finished ground and floor levels on the site.

Reason:

To enable the Planning Authority to control the development of the site in the interests of the amenity of the area.

- 2 A schedule of materials and finishes and samples of such finishes for all components of the development, including ground surfaces and boundary enclosures shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to the material and finishes being used in the development. The materials and finishes used in the development shall accord with the schedule and samples of them so approved.

Reason:

To enable the Planning Authority to control the materials, finishes and colour to be used to achieve a development of good quality and appearance in the interest of the visual amenity of the area.

- 3 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping. The scheme shall provide details of : the height and slopes of any mounding on or recontouring of, the site; tree and shrub sizes, species, habitat, siting, planting distances and a programme of planting. The scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, details of any to be retained, and measures for their protection in the course of development.

All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason:

In order to ensure the implementation of a landscaping scheme to enhance the appearance of the development in the interests of the amenity of the area.

- 4 The discharge of surface water to the water environment shall be in accordance with the principles of the SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Manual (C697) published by CIRIA.

Reason:

To ensure adequate protection of the water environment from surface water run-off.

- 5 Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall appoint a Travel Plan Co-ordinator in consultation with the Planning Authority. The Travel Plan Co-ordinator shall be in post at least prior to any use being made of the hotel hereby approved. The Travel Plan Co-ordinator shall implement, promote and deliver the range of measures contained in the Travel Plan that is docketed to this approval of matters specified in conditions.

Reason:

In the interests of ensuring sustainable travel patterns in respect of the leisure and tourism development hereby approved.

- 6 Prior to the commencement of development, an independent road safety audit of the design of the proposed new junction with the A198 road shall be completed and any findings included within the final design of the new junction.

The new junction shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the findings of the independent road safety audit and prior to any use being made of the hotel hereby approved.

Reason:

In the interests of road safety.

- 7 No work shall be carried out on the site unless and until an effective vehicle wheel washing facility has been installed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to its installation. Such facility shall be retained in working order and used such that no vehicle shall leave the site carrying earth and mud in their wheels in such a quantity which causes a nuisance or hazard on the road system in the locality.

Reason

In the interests of road safety.