



Case reference	NA-FLK-041
Application details	Substantial demolition of former farm steading to form 12 affordable dwellinghouses, erection of 69 affordable dwellinghouses, 30 affordable flatted dwellings, formation of roundabout, landscaping and SUDS pond
Site address	Woodend Farm, Hallglen Road, Hallglen, Falkirk
Applicant	Mr Paul McLay, Corporate & Housing Services
Determining Authority	Falkirk Council
Local Authority Area	Falkirk Council
Reason(s) for notification	Category 1 (significant departure from the LDP and Council interest)
Representations	1
Date notified to Ministers	23 April 2020 but not fully documented until 27 April 2020
Date of recommendation	12 June 2020
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- The application (Council reference P/19/0453/FUL) seeks full planning permission for the substantial demolition of the Category C listed Woodend Farm Steading and its redevelopment to form 12 affordable houses; and the erection of 69 affordable houses and 30 affordable flats on the surrounding land, with associated landscaping, drainage pond, access road and roundabout.
- The attached Annex A contains an annotated aerial photograph of the site and surrounding area, a map extract from the adopted Falkirk Local Development Plan 2015 (LDP), and the masterplan of the proposed development.
- The application site is just over 7 hectares and most of it is used for grazing. It is immediately adjacent to the Hallglen residential area of Falkirk, however is outside the 'urban/village limit' as shown in the adopted LDP. The northern boundary is defined by the Category C listed boundary walls of Callendar Park, which is also designated as an Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape. New Hallglen Road runs along the southern and western boundaries of the site.
- Falkirk Council owns the site, and is both the applicant and the planning authority in this case.

EIA Screening:

- The planning authority undertook an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening exercise, as the development is an infrastructure (urban development) project over 0.5 hectares. It decided that the development was not likely to have

significant environmental effects, and therefore that an EIA was not required. PAD considers that the Council's screening opinion is reasonable.

Consultations and Representations:

- There were no objections from statutory consultees.
- SEPA had no objection but provided advice including on heat network issues, the water environment and drainage.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) provided advice on bat licensing issues, and supported the proposal to retain a hedgerow and trees near the John Muir Way which runs along the eastern boundary of the site.
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES) had no comments to make.
- Only one representation (an objection) was received in relation to the application, raising concerns about access to and from Callendar Wood through the boundary wall, and associated risks of dogs and deer roaming out of the woods onto roads. These concerns are addressed in the committee report.

Assessment:

1. The planning authority has notified Scottish Ministers of its intention to grant permission for the development. Notification was required under the terms of Town and Country Planning (Notification of Applications) (Scotland) Direction 2009. This is because the authority has an interest in the development and considers the development is significantly contrary to the Local Development Plan (given the scale of the proposed housing within an area designated in the current LDP as countryside, outwith the defined settlement limits).

2. The committee report on the application notes that Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) advises that where a shortfall in the 5 year effective housing land supply emerges, development plan policies for the supply of housing will not be considered up-to-date. It then highlights that the Council's 2018/19 Housing Land Audit indicates there is such a shortfall. The planning authority consequently concludes that the 'presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development' is a significant material consideration in this case (again as per SPP).

3. The committee report discusses the benefits and adverse impacts of the proposed development, having regard to the principles in SPP. Amongst the benefits identified are the significant contribution the development could make to the effective housing land supply; the construction of 111 affordable houses which would contribute to reducing the Council's social housing deficit; and the retention and adaptation of a listed building. Identified adverse impacts include that the site is greenfield land in the countryside, outwith the urban limits as defined in the (adopted) LDP. The Council considers the development therefore displays some principles of sustainable development and on balance that it would bring significant benefits in terms of reducing the housing allocation deficit and would provide 111 affordable homes. In addition, the site is allocated in the forthcoming LDP2, which gives a clear indication of the Council's future intentions. The Council believes that these considerations justify a departure from the development plan in this instance.

4. The Proposed Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 ('the proposed LDP') was submitted in July 2019 to Ministers for examination. The current application site is included within the boundary of the revised 'urban/village' limits as shown in the

proposed LDP, and is proposed to be allocated for housing (Site H42) with a capacity of 90 units. The committee report on the application states that the development would accord with the requirements of this (proposed) allocation.

5. The proposed LDP examination report (issued on 27 March) notes that there was only one representation in relation to site H42, which sought the addition of a requirement for a 50 metre wide buffer between development and ancient woodland (Callendar Wood). The reporters did not consider this appropriate, but instead recommended the addition of a reference to the ancient woodland. The reporters did not recommend any other change to the proposed site H42 allocation.

6. The committee report includes a comprehensive assessment of the proposals in relation to relevant LDP policies and detailed matters, including on sustainable design principles and impacts on listed buildings, Callendar Park Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape, archaeological investigations, ancient woodland and agricultural land.

7. In view of all the above, PAD considers that the Council has provided adequate reasons to depart from the development plan in this instance and grant permission for this development. It does not appear that a conflict of interest has influenced the Council's decision-making, and it is clear that it has taken full account of the issues raised. It is not considered that this proposal raises any issues of national importance to warrant intervention by Scottish Ministers.

Decision/Recommendation:

8. It is recommended that this application be cleared back to Falkirk Council to issue permission.

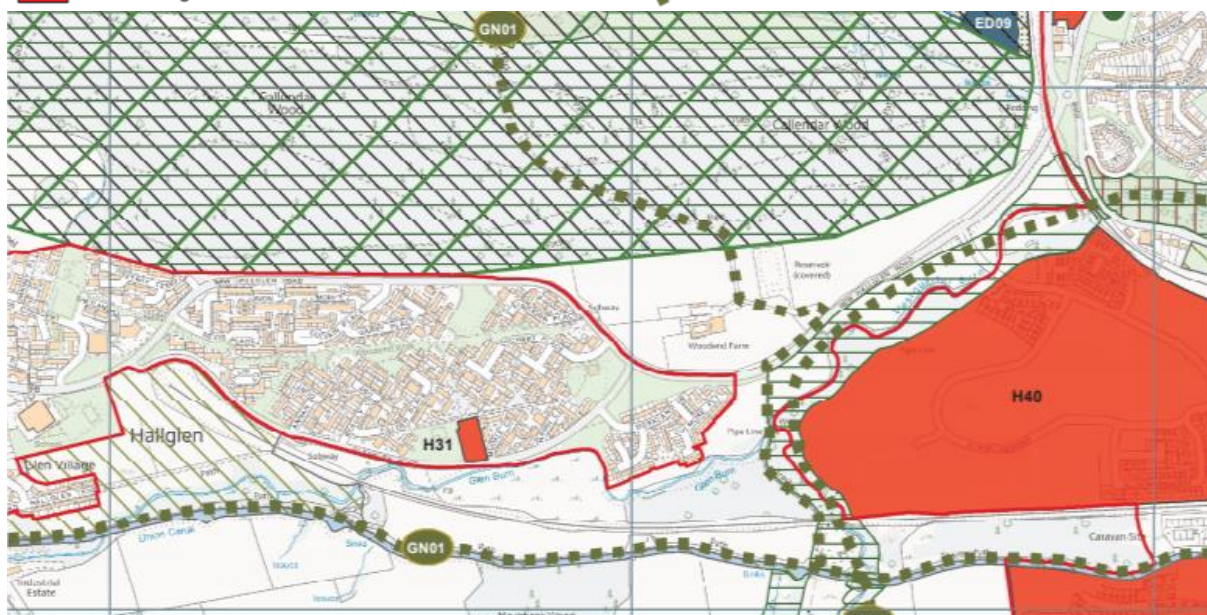
Annex A

Annotated aerial photograph:



Extract from Local Development Plan map:

- Urban/Village Limit (CG01)
- Green Belt (CG02)
- Housing
- Wildlife Sites (GN03)
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (GN03)
- Falkirk Green Network



Masterplan:

