

ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

REVIEW 2022

OBJECTION TO MIR

In respect of Site B0305 : Gateside Farm

1.0 Introduction

This objection is lodged in respect of the failure of the MIR to allocate Site B0305 Gateside Farm, as suitable for residential development. In particular, objection is taken to the 'justification' for the recommendation that development on the site would be 'undesirable'.

As elaborated in more detail below, it is not felt that the checklist score or the assessment of the constraints fairly reflects the factual position on the site.

2.0 Objections to MIR

There are several points under 'Justification', which are challenged. For example, (under aspect) the MIR states both that the site is south facing, yet that it slopes towards the Denburn. These statements are contradictory. The attached level survey demonstrates that only the northern part of the site slopes towards the Denburn, while the majority of the site slopes southwards towards Queens Road. Most of the northern part of the site will be taken up as a landscaped buffer to the Denburn, and will not be developed.

The MIR further states that the site has poor drainage. This is certainly not the case. Although a part of the site may look 'reedy' this has only arisen recently while the site has not been farmed regularly and prepared for cropping.

The suggestion that the site is an essential part of the Green Space Network (GSN) buffer, separating Aberdeen from Kingswells is clearly not sustainable. The site is in fact the southern half of a single field, the northern half of which has already been zoned for development as part of the Maidencraig

Masterplan (LDP 2017 Site OP 31). In addition, there is existing housing to the south east of the site, while the land immediately to the east of the site has been allocated for development under LDP Site OP 111.

It is clear therefore that the site is in fact the remaining small corner of a large area where substantial mixed use development has been deemed to be acceptable.

In the mixed use Masterplan for the OP 31 site, a variety of uses are proposed, including retail (Dobbies Garden Centre, and a Tesco Supermarket have already been built, as has a gym – at the former Cockers Site), and commercial space. Further, a new health centre, is also anticipated to be developed within the timescale of the next LDP period. With a core path adjoining the site, these would all be within reasonable walking or cycling distance. The suggestion that the site will be remote from facilities (during the life of the LDP) is accordingly difficult to sustain.

As regards the suggestion that the land is highly visible, The level survey attached demonstrates that while the western edge of the site is a 'high point' in the landscape, the site actually falls away from there, towards the south east. In addition, the roads adjoining the site are at a much lower level, and it would not be possible to see into the site from them. In longer views, the site will be seen against a background of built development – either on OP 31 (where Dobbies already sits higher than all surrounding development) , the existing treed curtilages adjoining the site, or OP111.

Further, taking account of the fact that there will require to be screen planting between the roadside edges of the site, and any housing development, the extent to which development on the site will be distinguishable in the wider landscape is highly questionable.

Turning to the question of potential noise nuisance affecting the amenity which future residents might enjoy, it should be pointed out that the extant zonings which the Council have already sanctioned would have the same relationship with the surrounding roads as the bid site. It is known that acoustic screen fencing on those sites has been deemed acceptable amelioration.

In addition to these general corrections, objection is also taken to some of the scoring undertaken to underpin the 'acceptability matrix', and justify rejection

of the site.

In particular, it is not accepted that any of the single 1 scores given, are a true reflection of the site characteristics.

For example, under *drainage* it is said that the site appeared 'boggy'. However this is explained by the fact that the site has been uncultivated for several years. The reality is that that part of the site slopes towards the Denburn, and could not retain water as a result of ground conditions and the slope.

Similarly, under *landscape fit*, the evaluation ignores the fact that the site will itself be landscaped, and that the ground to the north of the site (towards and above Dobbies) is even higher than the bid site.

Under *land use mix*, the fact that the site will be integrated with the remainder of the mixed use Maidencraig Masterplan, is not acknowledged. Further, and contrary to what is said, additional housing adjoining OP31 will certainly add to the attractiveness of the area for retail and commercial operators.

It is similarly difficult to appreciate why, under *proximity to facilities*, this site is criticised, whereas the adjoining residential sites at OP31 and OP111 are deemed acceptable.

A similar argument could be made in relation to the criticism of the site as regards *land use conflict*. The issue raised is potential noise nuisance, yet both OP31 and OP111 have similar relationships to the highway network.

It is also noted that the northern half of the site is described as 'potentially contaminated'. It can be confirmed however, that this area was infilled with uncontaminated cut material, which arose from the excavation required to realign the Lang Stracht, immediately to the west of the site.

Had all these attributes been scored fairly (in a similar fashion to adjacent land) then the total score for the site would have been at least 8 and potentially 10 points higher, taking its score to a more than acceptable level.

3.0 The Case for Development

The Case for Development has been touched on in several of the specific objections to the text of the MIR noted above.

However, it should in particular be noted that the area of land which the

Council is being asked to re-allocate, is the southern half (extending to only 1.95 Ha, 4.8 acres) of a larger field. The northern half has already been zoned for residential development. This whole field is the only part of Gateside Farm which remains to the east of the re-aligned Lang Stracht. Access is currently taken to the southern half (the dev site) via the northern half, from the Lang Stracht. This access is already difficult, and has on occasion, required Police assistance to oversee the operation. When the northern half is developed, farm traffic will have no direct access from the main farm across the Lang Stracht, and will have to detour along Queens Road. This will mean transporting livestock by float.

Small farm units are marginal at the best of times, and with these added travel and time costs, it would clearly not be viable to continue to farm this small parcel on its own, once its northern half is developed. The reality is that the land will become increasingly neglected and derelict, which would not be a good neighbour for the adjacent houses.

As all the remaining land to the east of the Lang Stracht has already been zoned for residential use, that would also be the logical preferred use for the development site. As noted above, OP31 lies to the north and north-east, while OP111 lies to the east. Although it is a wholly residential proposal, OP111 has been accepted, presumably given its relationship to the multi-use masterplanned proposal OP31, which will include retail as well as business uses. It is accordingly not understood why OP111 is deemed acceptable, but this bid site (with an even closer relationship) has not.

The issue of GSN has been touched on above, and it has been confirmed that the important green link between the Denburn Valley on both sides of the Lang Stracht, will be retained undeveloped, and with an open character, facilitating the unrestricted passage of wildlife. The Outline Site Layout Plan attached shows how this will be achieved.

From this plan it can be seen that the Denburn gorge will not be built on nor will the area extending to 30m from the burn – on either side. This reflects the set-back of development which has been deemed acceptable further east in OP31.

It can also be seen from this plan that the higher parts of the site are to be retained as a landscape screen, both to contain the development and screen it. Along with an acoustic screen, it will also assist to ameliorate any traffic noise and air pollution from the roundabout and highway network. The landscape belt will be at least 10m wide, which is an improvement over what has been accepted in the developed areas of OP31.

The layout further demonstrates that the site can comfortably accommodate 40 new homes, including 10 (25%) affordable flats.

It should particularly also be noted that the site is readily deliverable, with gas, electricity, water, and mains drainage already on or very near the site. That the site has already been accepted as free from any flood risk (with the Denburn running some 3m below the site) surely adds to its acceptability as a strong candidate for release for development.

4.0 Conclusion

For all these detailed reasons, the Council is asked to reject the recommendations in the MIR, in respect of this attractive gap site. It should rather be regarded as a logical 'rounding off' of development in the area.

Its availability for early delivery and development for much needed housing is both reasonable, and indeed the logical use for the remaining part of a field which has already been part zoned for such use.

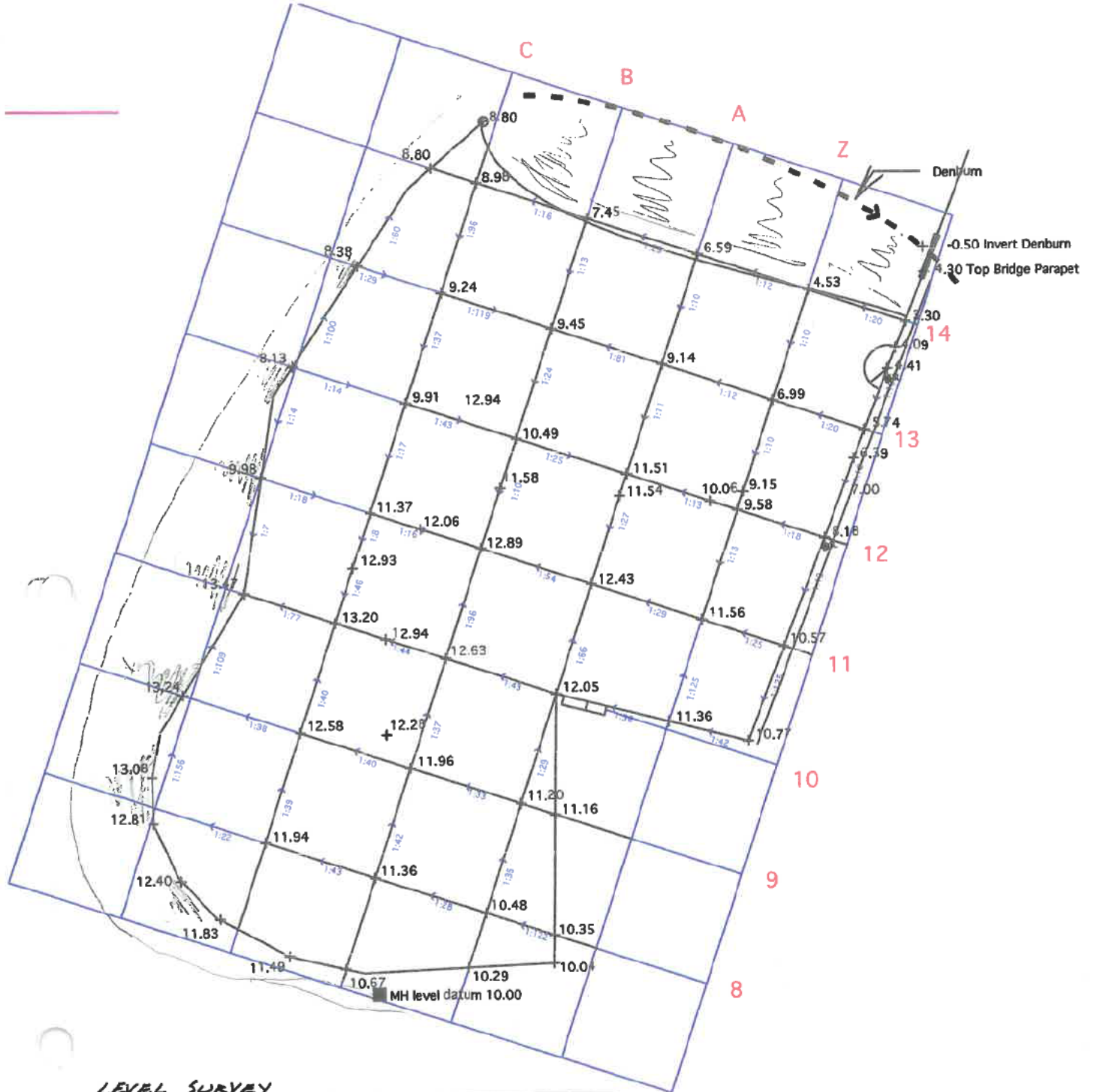
Objection submitted on behalf of G and P Simpson, who are the landowners.

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LEVEL SURVEY.


**GATESIDE FARM
EAST FIELD**
Scale 1:2500





OUTLINE SITE LAYOUT.

**GATESIDE FARM
EAST FIELD**
Scale 1:2500
1:1250 @ A4 PRINT.



40 UNITS. INCLUDING 10 AFFORDABLE FLATS.
26 HOUSES & 14 FLATS

