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26/7/2016

Dear Darren Westmacott

Re Notice of Review: Planning application 16/00513/APP Erect three Holiday Chalets at Land at North Covesea Village

Thank you for the invitation to make representations.

I understand the Council's decision to refuse the application was made on the grounds that the application did not meet the criteria of Moray Development Plan's Policies E7, E8, ED7, ED8 and IMP1, as clearly explained in the Planning Officer's "Analysis". None of the exceptions provided for in the policies applies, not least because of the very special nature of this headland site in the Coastal Protection Zone, and adjacent to the AGLV. This was also the basis of my original objection which I continue to hold.

To add to the relevant planning history cited in the Report of Handling, I would add the additional unbroken record of refusals for development here:

On this site to east of Covesea Village:

89/00593 - House and garage – refused and dismissed on appeal in 1990.

96/02002/OUT and 96/02003/OUT – houses and garages - refused.

00/01630/FUL - 2 (no) farm workers' cottages (advertised as at Plewlands Farm although on this site east of Covesea Village) – refused after a Public Hearing.

On land immediately south of Covesea Village:

92/0292-301 – 10 houses - refused and appeal dismissed in 1993; associated applications for 2 houses, 92/1131 and 92/1132, also refused.

The reasons given by the Council and Scottish Executive/Government Reporters are still valid, despite minor changes in planning legislation and Council Development Plans, and the different usage currently proposed for the buildings in this application.

The applicant and his agent have gone to very great lengths to prepare their case for application for review while essentially adding nothing new. I would expect the attached policies to be already familiar to those determining the case! Their arguments set out under each policy, and remarks in the "Summary" and elsewhere do not make a convincing case, despite the liberal use of language implying a concern for a sensitive environment – which they seek to exploit and destroy by building chalets. How will chalets here "inform, educate, protect and enhance the area" rather than spoil the view, currently enjoyed by so many people? I agree that in many ways the site is unique as they state, and for their reasons: beautiful views over the Firth and natural amenities. However, the site still has these attributes only because of protective planning policies.

Arguments about "agricultural diversification" are fanciful. The area of the site was only removed from agricultural use by erection of a wire fence in conjunction with a previous planning application. Wood burning stoves still require solid fuel to be brought in. This is not a "Rural Community" and has no supporting services such as public transport. The plan to upgrade the track makes no reference to the consequent loss of the whin hedging, nor the Burnett roses, Restharrow and other wildflowers. These

and other statements do not offer a net environmental gain, certainly not greater than leaving the land fallow as it has been for some years.

The applicant continues to emphasise the lie of the land restricting views of the site from the south (ie landward), but this is not the key aspect in terms of intrusion in the landscape. Far more important, sited on the headland, the chalets and their attendant occupancy will be visible from the north, the Moray Firth, and the east, the beach. In no way has the Officer over stated the issue of prominence. In fact, the applicant's statement that the "proposed chalets will not be viewed on the skyline from any public vantage points" is just not true, and the suggestion they "will settle easily in to the landscape straight away" as a direct result of design and material finish, is wishful thinking!

Development of tourism in Moray is most welcome, but not at the expense of its assets which would be counterproductive. There is no locational justification for this site. Chalets of this type, suitably screened and nestling in a rural setting, sound an ideal proposal, with potential profits to those in the Business Plan to be made without the same loss of public amenity. Like everyone else, the chalet users would have the opportunity to visit and enjoy an unspoilt Covesea.

I hope that the original decision on this application will be upheld on review.

Yours sincerely

Janet (and John) Trythall

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