

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 3 September 2025

Report By: Interim Director - Regeneration

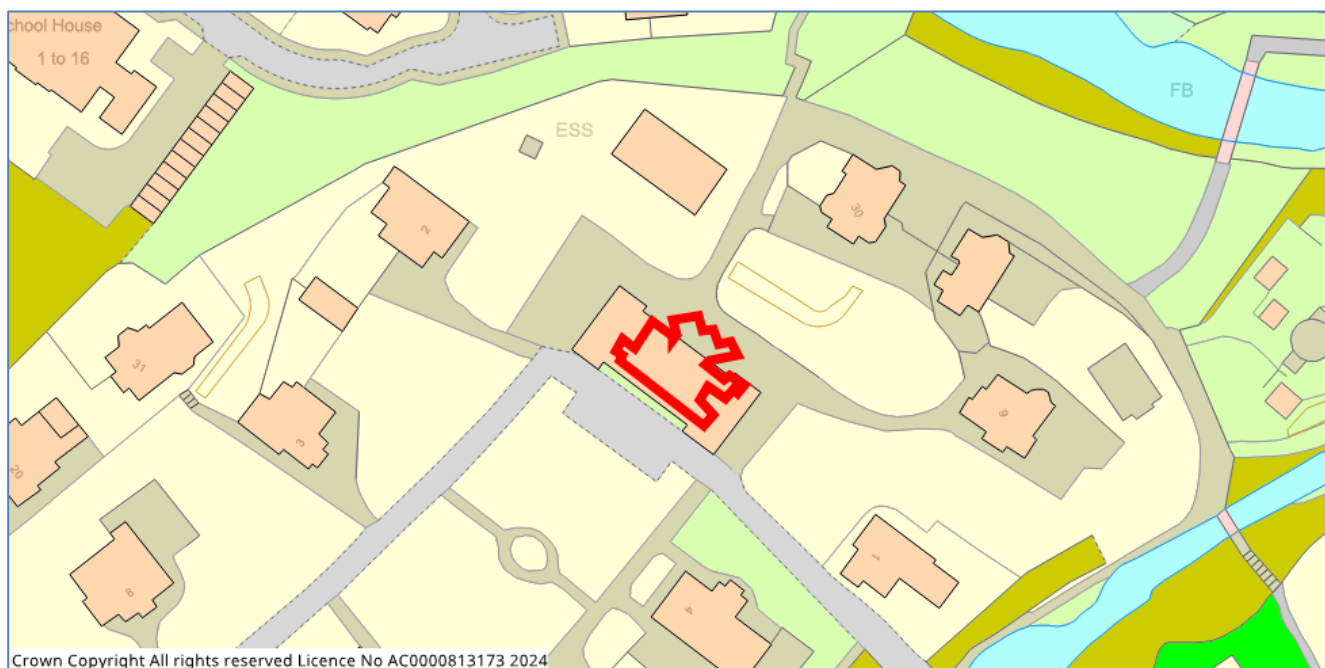
Report No: 25/0088/IC

**Local Application
Development**

**Contact
Officer:** Colin Lamond

Contact No: 01475 712422

Subject: Change of use of ground floor from cafe (Class 3) to production bakery (Class 5) (in retrospect)
at
Sommerville Weir Hall Building, Faith Avenue, Quarrier's Village



SUMMARY

- The proposal is acceptable when assessed against National Planning Framework 4.
- The proposal accords with the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plans.
- Eight representations were received, seven objecting to the proposal and one making neutral comments.
- The recommendation is to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions.

Drawings may be viewed at:

<https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=RP59FTIML7T00>

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is part of the ground floor of Sommerville Weir Hall, Faith Avenue, Quarrier's Village. The hall was constructed (then known as Central Hall) in 1878 as part of the Orphan Homes of Scotland Charity settlement. The early history of the building included uses as a place of worship and a school.

The two storey stone built period property is constructed in a free classical style with a slate roof and decorative detailing. Windows are predominantly sliding sash and case (white coloured).

The production bakery occupies the central portion of the ground floor and incorporates a food preparation area, a bake area (with canopy and flue), various storage rooms, washing areas and a packaging area. Access points are north (directly from street), west (shared public entrance) and east (shared emergency exit).

The building is owned by the Quarrier's business and charity with the upper floor utilised for training and community events. Part of the ground floor is occupied by the bakery/café with the remainder used for sports changing facilities (consented via 25/0088/IC).

PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

Since 2011 the unit has operated as a café, with an ancillary use as a commercial bakery; providing off site sales of baked goods which included wholesale supply, farmers markets and online retailing. As the café could not operate due to Covid restrictions, the unit continued to operate solely as a commercial bakery from 2021 until the present day. The café facility did not reopen after 2021.

Consent 12/0064/IC (Part change of use to create sporting facility) changed the use of part of the ground floor to a sports changing facility. The remainder of the ground floor (kitchen and dining area) remained the central component of the café and bakery business.

A certificate of lawfulness (24/0002/CPE) was submitted then withdrawn. The application was to determine whether the lawful use of the ground floor unit was a bakery. The position of the Planning Authority was that the established use was café (Class 3).

As the primary use of the unit had changed to commercial bakery an application for a change of use is required.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to continue use of the ground floor unit for the purposes of a commercial production bakery. The previous use (until 2021) included a kitchen and 55 seat dining area. The present use includes a food preparation area, a bake area (with canopy and flue), various storage rooms, washing areas and a packaging area. There is no longer any specific public area within the unit. The bakery produces hot savoury products, baked goods and cakes which are supplied as wholesale to stockists; sold as fresh at farmers markets and sold through online retail. 'Pop up' retail sales directly to the public occur one Saturday per month.

One articulated HGV delivery occurs each Monday to supply raw products. Further commercial traffic typically includes one further wholesale delivery and one or two postal service deliveries. Collection of outgoing retail online orders occurs once per day via Royal Mail.

The commercial bakery operates between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday with five full time and two part time staff operating two shifts. Staff work at weekends when business operation is selling goods at a market. This typically involves three light goods vehicles leaving in the morning and returning by 5pm.

The application is not fully retrospective because the use as commercial bakery was established as ancillary to the café operation. However, the repurpose of the unit for the primary and sole use as commercial bakery does require planning consent.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

National Planning Framework 4

NPF4 was adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 13th February 2023. NPF4 forms part of the statutory development plan, along with the Inverclyde Local Development Plan and its supplementary guidance. NPF4 supersedes National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014). NPF3 and SPP no longer represent Scottish Ministers' planning policy. The Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan and associated supplementary guidance cease to have effect from 13th February 2023 and as such no longer form part of the development plan.

NPF4 contains 33 policies, and the following are considered relevant to this application.

Policy 1

When considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.

Policy 7

d) Development proposals in or affecting conservation areas will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced. Relevant considerations include the: i. architectural and historic character of the area; ii. existing density, built form and layout; and iii. context and siting, quality of design and suitable materials.

e) Development proposals in conservation areas will ensure that existing natural and built features which contribute to the character of the conservation area and its setting, including structures, boundary walls, railings, trees and hedges, are retained.

Policy 9

d) Development proposals for the reuse of existing buildings will be supported, taking into account their suitability for conversion to other uses. Given the need to conserve embodied energy, demolition will be regarded as the least preferred option.

Policy 12

a) Development proposals will seek to reduce, reuse or recycle materials in line with the waste hierarchy.

b) Development proposals will be supported where they: i. reuse existing buildings and infrastructure; ii. minimise demolition and salvage materials for reuse; iii. minimise waste, reduce pressure on virgin resources and enable building materials, components and products to be disassembled, and reused at the end of their useful life; iv. use materials with the lowest forms of embodied emissions, such as recycled and natural construction materials; v. use materials that are suitable for reuse with minimal reprocessing.

c) Development proposals that are likely to generate waste when operational, including residential, commercial and industrial properties, will set out how much waste the proposal is expected to generate and how it will be managed including:

- i. provision to maximise waste reduction and waste separation at source, and

- ii. measures to minimise the cross contamination of materials, through appropriate segregation and storage of waste; convenient access for the collection of waste; and recycling and localised waste management facilities.

Policy 14

a) Development proposals will be designed to improve the quality of an area whether in urban or rural locations and regardless of scale.

b) Development proposals will be supported where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places:

Healthy: Supporting the prioritisation of women's safety and improving physical and mental health.

Pleasant: Supporting attractive natural and built spaces.

Connected: Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency.

Distinctive: Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted, literally or creatively, into designs to reinforce identity.

Sustainable: Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience, and integrating nature positive, biodiversity solutions.

Adaptable: Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can be changed quickly to accommodate different uses as well as maintained over time.

Further details on delivering the six qualities of successful places are set out in Annex D.

c) Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported.

ADOPTED 2019 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Policy 1 - Creating Successful Places

Inverclyde Council requires all development to have regard to the six qualities of successful places. In preparing development proposals, consideration must be given to the factors set out in Figure 3. Where relevant, applications will also be assessed against the Planning Application Advice Notes Supplementary Guidance.

Policy 11 - Managing Impact of Development on the Transport Network

Development proposals should not have an adverse impact on the efficient operation of the transport and active travel network. Development should comply with the Council's roads development guidelines and parking standards. Developers are required to provide or contribute to improvements to the transport network that are necessary as a result of the proposed development.

Policy 28 - Conservation Areas

Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area, are to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to any relevant Conservation Area Appraisals or other information relating to the historic or architectural value of the conservation area.

PROPOSED 2021 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Policy 1 - Creating Successful Places

Inverclyde Council requires all development to have regard to the six qualities of successful places. In preparing and assessing development proposals, consideration must be given to the factors set out in Figure 2 and demonstrated in a design-led approach. Where relevant, applications will also be assessed against the Planning Application Advice Notes and Design Guidance for New Residential Development Supplementary Guidance. When assessing proposals for the development opportunities identified by this Plan, regard will also be had to the mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

Policy 12 - Managing Impact of Development on the Transport Network

Development proposals should not have an adverse impact on the efficient operation of the transport and active travel network. Development should comply with the Council's roads development guidelines and parking standards, including cycle parking standards. Developers are required to provide or financially contribute to improvements to the transport network that are necessary as a result of the proposed development.

Policy 20 - Residential Areas

Proposals for development within residential areas will be assessed with regard to their impact on the amenity, character and appearance of the area. Where relevant, assessment will include reference to the Council's Planning Application Advice Notes Supplementary Guidance.

Policy 28 - Conservation Areas

Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area, are to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to any relevant Conservation Area Appraisals or other information relating to the historic or architectural value of the conservation area.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Public Protection - advises the following: the applicant should submit a detailed specification of storage facilities for waste and recycling, including details of the areas for storage; deliveries should not be carried out between 23:00 and 07:00 hours. Other issues related to the potential imposition of advisory notes are that the applicant should be aware of the Construction Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015); structural compliance with food safety and health and safety at work legislation should be confirmed with Public Protection; changes in cooking and food preparation should be reported; external lighting should be in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

Head of Service - Roads and Transportation – advises:

- The parking requirements for the existing use as (Class 3) café is one space per 5sqm. The GFA of the building is 198sqm. The total parking requirement is 40 spaces.
- The parking requirements for the proposed use as (Class 5) general industrial is one space per 50sqm. The GFA of the building is 198sqm. The total parking requirement is four spaces.
- The applicant has proposed three new allocated spaces and there are 10 unallocated spaces to the west of the building.
- As the parking requirement for the proposed use is fewer than the existing use then the proposed parking is acceptable.
- At least one parking space or 5% of total car park capacity (whichever is greater) shall be disabled bays. The applicant shall demonstrate how this will be achieved.

The applicant has confirmed the provision of one accessible parking space in accordance with national parking standards.

- All surface water should be managed within the site to prevent flooding to the public road network.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 30th May 2025 as a development affecting conservation areas.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted on 30th May 2025 for development affecting conservation area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was the subject of neighbour notification. Eight representations from seven households were received, with seven objecting to the proposal. The grounds for objection are summarised as follows:

- Factory has zero benefit to the public and would be better suited to an industrial estate.
- Loss of café and social element of having a meeting place.
- Bakery uses a space that could be repurposed as a café/restaurant.
- Poor vermin control and inadequate use of refuse bins.
- Pick up service causing traffic problems.
- Inappropriate building as the property is historically significant.
- Poor relationship between operators and public.
- Superior alternative sites are available.
- Poor waste management.
- Impacts on the private road surface.
- Lack of financial contribution to private road network.
- Anti-social behaviour occurred when operating as a café.
- Requires traffic management due to commercial vehicles.
- Pop up shops may cause traffic congestion.
- Pest control measures harm wildlife and domestic pets.
- Delivery and dispatch vehicles unsuited to narrow roads.
- Impacts of vehicle movements on vulnerable children and adults.

One comment was also received neither in support nor objecting to the proposal. The representation states that although there is no intensification of the present use, restrictions on the use should be considered to reduce the impact on the local area. Deliveries to and from the bakery should be restricted in terms of number and timing to protect amenity. The bakery operator does not contribute to the road upkeep.

Kilmacolm Civic Trust do not object to the proposal however have stated that the loss of the café facility is detrimental to the settlement of Quarrier's, despite the parking pressures created by the use as a café. The use of the building as a commercial bakery does not bring discernible benefits to the settlement however does support employment.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in determination of the application are the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4); the adopted 2019 Inverclyde Local Development Plan (LDP); the proposed 2021

Inverclyde Local Development Plan (LDP); impact on the conservation area; and the consultation responses.

Policy 1 of NPF4 requires consideration of the global climate and nature crises to be given to all development. NPF4 Policy 14 states that development proposals should be designed to improve the quality of the urban area and supported where consistent with the six qualities of successful places, also referenced in Policy 1 of the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plan.

Policy 14 of NPF4 and Policy 1 of both LDPs refer to qualities of successful places. All six qualities in Policy 14 and all the qualities of being 'Distinctive', 'Adaptable', 'Resource Efficient', 'Easy to Move Around' and 'Safe and Pleasant' in Policy 1 of both LDPs are relevant to this proposal. Considering Policy 1 of both LDPs, the proposal seeks to continue the established repurpose of a building, avoiding creating a building that will become neglected or obsolete. This meets the quality of being 'Adaptable' and complies with the quality of being 'Resource Efficient' through making use of an existing building. The continued reuse of an existing building (which is still in appropriate condition for re use) can also be supported under criteria d) in Policy 9 of NPF4 and will minimise the impacts of the proposal on climate change, in accordance with Policy 1 of NPF4. In considering whether the proposal meets the quality of being 'Distinctive', the characteristics of the building remain unchanged in light of the continued use.

Policy 7 of NPF4 requires the retention of natural and built features that contribute to the merits of the conservation area. Proposals in or affecting conservation areas will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced. As the proposal is to continue an established use of the ground floor, with no external alterations taking place, it can be considered to preserve the character and appearance of the area. There is no discernible loss of natural or built features of relevance to the conservation area.

Policy 28 of the adopted and proposed LDP states that development proposals in conservation areas will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced. Factors include the architectural and historic character of the area; existing density; built form and layout; context; suitable design and materials. As the proposal is to continue an established use of the ground floor, with no external alterations taking place, it can be considered to preserve the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy 28 of both LDPs, as well as contributing positively to historic places, meeting the quality of being 'Distinctive' in Policy 1 of both LDPs.

In assessing the proposal against Policy 11 of the adopted LDP and Policy 12 of the proposed LDP, and whether it meets the quality of being 'Safe and Pleasant' by minimising the impact on traffic and parking in the street scene, the consultation response from the Head of Service - Roads and Transportation indicates no objection to the proposal in terms of traffic management and road safety, noting that the proposed use of the site requires a lesser level of parking than the previous use. The previous use of the unit included both a cafe and bakery (which also provided finished goods for sale off premises). The level of parking provision required for the previous use exceeds the requirement for the continuing use as commercial (production) bakery. The repurpose of the unit for the exclusive use of the production bakery is not a significant material change from the parking requirements of the combined café and bakery. On request, the applicant provided evidence of a further parking bay for accessible users. It should be noted that shared and public areas at Quarrier's often include the immediate curtilage of buildings and residential properties. However, car reliance is significant within the settlement as public transport options are limited.

It is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the efficient operation of the transport and active travel network. The proposal accords with Policy 11 of the adopted LDP and Policy 12 of the proposed LDP, as well as meeting the quality of being 'Safe and Pleasant' in this regard.



Principal (communal) exterior of café/bakery

A list of sites where Class 4, 5 and 6 uses will be supported is provided in both the adopted and proposed LDPs. The location of the production bakery (Class 5) is not included in the list of business and industrial opportunities. However, both LDPs provide a general statement; *“there is a need to attract private sector businesses and investment into Inverclyde, as well as supporting existing businesses to grow and new small and medium-sized businesses to set up. This is key to Inverclyde’s future prosperity as it will widen the business base, create new job opportunities, help retain the existing population, attract new people to the area, and support and enhance local services”*.

The continued use of the bakery broadly aligns with the general statements of both LDPs by the provision of local employment and support for small and medium sized businesses.

Quarrier’s Village has no defined town or local centre and the conservation area is largely dominated by residential property. The location of Class 5 (general industrial) use in such a location is relatively unusual. However, there is no specific exclusion of such a use. The established use of the ground floor was a café/restaurant with ancillary use as a commercial bakery. The repurpose of the unit as solely a bakery is not entirely new however does involve a change in intensity of the previous ancillary use (bakery), making it the primary use of the floorspace. There is no evidence to suggest that the continued repurpose of the unit as a bakery causes an amenity impact demonstrably worse than the previous combined use. Many of the processes remain similar, or the same as previously undertaken; areas are set aside for food preparation, storage and washing; stock supplies delivered by commercial vehicles (which would have been the case under the previous operation of the café/bakery operation), and employees involved in food production. Some additional traffic movements are noted such as courier/postal services for mail order goods. However, these are limited in number and generally time specific. Additional traffic movements for occasional direct retail sales are regular however limited in frequency. The previous primary use (café) would have resulted in frequent and occasionally continuous traffic movements as a result of patrons arriving and leaving.

Further mitigation regarding amenity impact can be addressed via conditions restricting hours of operation and deliveries.



Parking area, side elevation

Public Protection have stated a requirement for information on waste recycling and storage, which can be conditioned should the application receive consent. Delivery and operational hours can be restricted by condition, should the application receive consent, for the purposes of the protection of residential amenity. The proposal therefore meets with the waste management requirements of Policy 12 of NPF4.

Policy 20 of the proposed Local Development Plan requires development within residential areas to be assessed with regard to their impact on the amenity, character and appearance of the area. As discussed throughout this report, the setting of Quarrier's Village is unique, and the settlement lacks the conventional arrangements of a defined centre with business and retail uses. The use of a building for a Class 5 use in this context is unusual. However, the characteristics of the use differ from other Class 5 uses. It is noted that the use does not generate significant and unacceptable levels of traffic and has a parking and traffic impact not entirely disassociated with the previous cafe use. The business does not require high volumes of staffing, nor are the working processes markedly different from those of the previous (combined) use. It is concluded therefore that the business can operate (subject to conditions) within a residential area without adversely impacting the amenity, character and appearance of the residential area.

Regards issues contained in representations that are not addressed above; the issue of locational justification has some merit as Class 5 uses are unusual in unique settlements such as Quarrier's Village. However, the applicant has stated that alternative sites are cost prohibitive and may be impractical in relation to staff relocation. There is no specific policy exclusion for a Class 5 use in this

location, and the impacts of the bakery should be taken on their own merits and not on the basis that the location is wholly unsuitable for a Class 5 use. As discussed elsewhere in this report, there are no significant amenity impacts that cannot be addressed by condition.

The loss of the café in terms of a local service with community benefit is largely a commercial decision on the part of the operator. This assessment is based on the continued repurpose of the unit as a bakery.

As discussed throughout this report, traffic generation is not considered unacceptable by the Head of Roads and Transportation, and the volume and frequency of traffic is commensurate with the previous operation. It is also noted that the bakery has operated as the primary use since 2021. Parking provisions are satisfactory for the continued use and are commensurate with the parking requirements of the previous combined use. The road network is considered satisfactory for the continued use. Road safety issues are not considered to be significant. Normal adherence to road and public safety standards would be expected.

Regards vermin control, previous or ongoing issues can be addressed via Public Protection. Should the application receive consent, the provisions for waste recycling and storage must be provided for the approval of the Planning Authority and Public Protection.

The use of a period property with historical significance is generally supported, subject to other considerations. Repurpose or continued use of such buildings keeps the property in active use and the appropriate reuse of building space is also supported under brownfield policy.

There are a number of points raised in representations that are not material considerations in the planning assessment. Financial contributions for the maintenance of the partial private road network are a civil matter that cannot be addressed in this assessment. Incidences of previous anti-social behaviour related to the previous use also cannot be considered as part of the assessment. Similarly, the historic relationship between the owners/operators and members of the public is not a material consideration. Safe and correct use of pest control measures would not be considered in a planning assessment (other than measures for the storage of waste) however may be subject to other legislative controls.

Summary

The continued repurpose of the ground floor supports the active ongoing use of a building. The business also supports seven staff members and is likely to result in a net economic gain for the local economy (although the exact local economic benefit is difficult to quantify). Public Protection has no issues with the food preparation established by the bakery, aside from a requirement (via condition) to provide details of recycling and waste storage and disposal. Inverclyde Council Roads and Transportation Service are satisfied with the level of parking provision, and the established use does not result in an adverse impact on the local road network. It is accepted that a Class 5 use in this location is unusual however the characteristics of the commercial bakery are such that residential amenity is not significantly impacted (subject to conditions). The characteristics of the conservation area are not impacted as there are no physical changes to the fabric of the building, and the bakery operation will not impact on the function and role of the conservation area.

The benefits of this development are considered to outweigh any adverse impacts and it is therefore considered to be acceptable when assessed against the relevant policies of National Planning Framework 4 and the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plans. There are no material considerations that outweigh the policies.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within 3 years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).

2. Deliveries or collections to and from the site shall not be carried out between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00.

Reason: In the interests of public amenity.

3. The bakery hereby approved shall be restricted to operational hours of between 08:00 and 20:00 hours Monday to Sunday. For the avoidance of doubt, and in accordance with Condition 2 above, deliveries to and from the site can be carried out between the hours of 07:00 and 23:00 Monday to Sunday.

Reason: In the interests of public amenity.

4. No later than two months from the date of this decision, the applicant shall submit to the Planning Authority a detailed specification of the containers to be used to store waste materials and recyclable materials produced on the premises as well as specific details of the areas where such containers are to be located. The above details (and any equipment and any structural changes) will require to be approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the immediate area, prevent the creation of nuisance due to odours, insects, rodents or birds.

5. All surface water flows are to be contained within the site and limited to that of green-field run-off.

Reason: To prevent flood risk.

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Regeneration

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – Background Papers. For further information please contact Colin Lamond on 01475 712422