



# Landscape Appraisal

for

## Garden Centre & Restaurant, Fairlie

Prepared by

**DWA Landscape  
Architects Ltd**

on behalf of

**David Castelvechi**



# **Landscape Appraisal**

In relation to

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Restaurant, Fairlie**

On Behalf of

**David Castelvechi**

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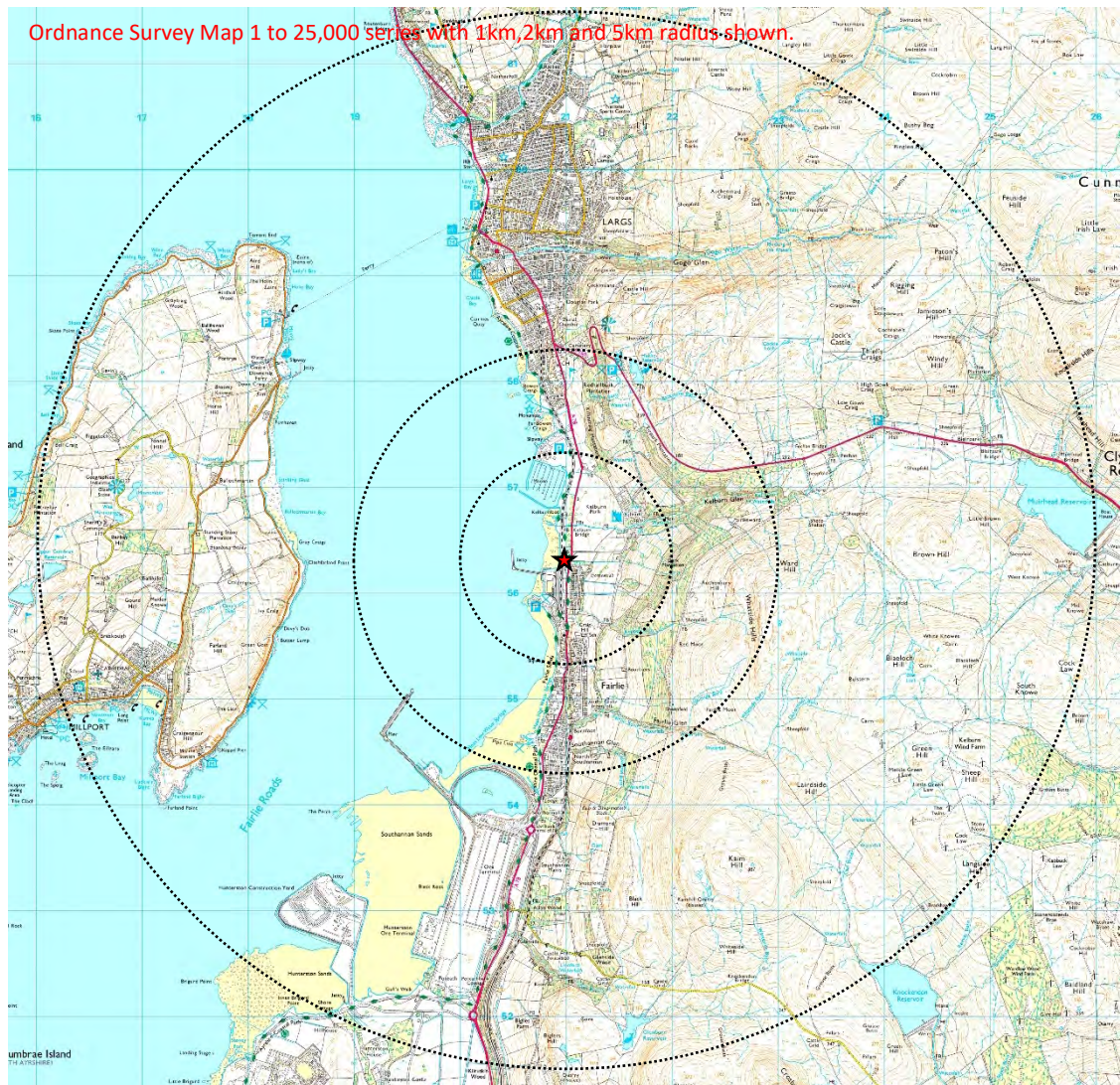
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following Landscape Appraisal has been undertaken in relation to a proposed new Garden Centre and Restaurant to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club which sits at the northern end of the village of Fairlie in North Ayrshire. The proposals would incorporate a one and a half storey group of buildings along with parking court which would be accessed via the existing entrance to the bowling club south of the site.
- 1.2 The site was previously the subject of an approved planning application for a similar development in 2013, but this permission has since lapsed. As part of this process a landscape assessment was prepared by Landscape Architect Ann Nevitt which concluded that the site, whilst being designated as part of the Countryside, was in fact suitable for the proposed development due to its location, context and the likely impact of the development relative to its current use. This view was upheld by the planning committee when planning permission was granted and, despite the 10 years which have passed, relatively little has changed in the physical characteristics of the surround landscape since that time.
- 1.3 This Landscape Appraisal seeks to assess the potential physical and visual impacts of the refreshed proposals in the context of the current landscape, townscape, and planning policy. It will follow the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) in format and scope and has been tailored to suit the scale of the proposals in terms of the detail of assessment of impacts. The methodology for such studies has been developed over several years by DWA Landscape Architects Ltd through undertaking several hundred landscape assessment of varying kinds.
- 1.4 It will initially begin with a desktop study of the context of the site, taking into consideration of the surrounding landscape, settlements, transport links, historic features, and nature conservation designations over a radius of 5km. It will also consider planning policy designations for the Current Local Development Plan 2 (Nov 2019) and any implications relating to Landscape Character as identified in the Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot) suite of LCA documents. From this a baseline of the landscape conditions will be established to assess any potential impacts against. The physical characteristics of the site itself and any visual impact upon the surrounding area will then be assessed through on-site analysis and the findings set out in this document. This will be supported by a photographic study. Finally, any conclusions will be presented and recommendations for mitigation set forth.

## 2 Location and context

- 2.1 The site lies at the northern edge of the village of Fairlie on the western coast of North Ayrshire. It lies along the coastal shelf which runs along this area of the Clyde Estuary between the water and the steep rise of the Clyde Muirshiel uplands which are a designated Regional Park. A string of coastal settlements line the coast along this shelf area with the larger towns of Largs to the north (1.5km) and West Kilbride to the South (5km). Directly to the west lie the islands of Great Cumbrae (2.4km) and Little Cumbrae (6.2km).



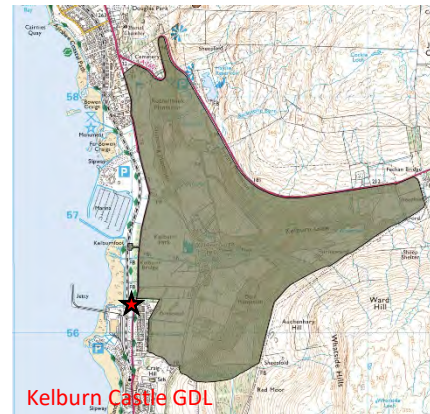
- 2.2 These settlements are linked along the coastal shelf by the A78 road which passes through Fairlie and the immediate east of the site. On the western edge of the site is the passenger railway linking the town on the coast with Glasgow. The coastal location means that the area is popular for recreation and there are notably two large marinas close to the site. One immediately to the south west and another at the southern edge of Largs, northwest of the site. A small rocky beach lies between the marinas on the west of the railway.
- 2.3 The village of Fairlie lies to the south of the site for the most part but extends on the east side of the A78 adjacent to the site at Kelburn Avenue and Bailey Road. To the north of Bailey

Road, a mature tree belt, which is designated as Ancient Woodland, encloses the settlement to the north and east as it wraps around the village, and sets the settlement boundary. The settlement boundary is less well defined on the west of the A78 with the Bowling club sitting within the northern extent of the tree belt. A small watercourse emerges from this tree belt, under the A78, and crosses the northern part of the application site marking the natural extension of the woodland boundary.



Aerial photo showing the site to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club

- 2.4 To the north east of the site, in the landscape between Fairlie and Largs, and on the east of the A78, lies the large Kelburn Estate. This is a Designated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) with a conservation status. It is also a large and popular tourist attraction with a golf course and family visitor facilities set amid mature tree cover. There are several listed structures within the estate, mostly associated around the core of the castle and gardens, but also including the gate features along the A78.
- 2.5 There are no significant international, national, or local natural heritage features within 2km of the site with the eastern coast of Great Cumbrae Island being designated as a Site of Specific Scientific Interest. Other areas of coastal landscape to the south are also designated as SSSIs but are reasonably distant from the site.
- 2.6 The Ayrshire Coastal Path passes to the east of the site between the A78 and main body of the site. This is a Core Path and stretches across from Glen App to Skelmorie over 12 “stages”.



Kelburn Castle GDL



Coastal SSSIs

### Conclusions

- 2.7 There are no specific constraints arising for the location or contextual circumstances of the site. There is in fact a strong argument for extending the settlement boundary towards the north to match the strong boundary of the woodland belt to the east of A78. By restricting the development to the south of the watercourse, this would set a defensible settlement boundary on the north west of Fairlie.

### 3 Landscape Related Planning Policy

- 3.1 The current Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted in November 2019. The interactive map which is associated with the LDP shows that the site is designated as being part of the Countryside – being out with the current settlement boundary, and within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). These designations are relatively recent and replace what was previously Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). As part of the process of redefining the AGLV, many more SLAs have been designated across Scotland. An excerpt from the LDP Plan is shown below.



#### Countryside

- 3.2 In regard to the countryside designation, the LDP states

*“The Countryside Objective*

*We recognise that our countryside areas play an important role in providing homes, employment, and leisure opportunities for our rural communities. We need to protect our valuable environmental assets in the countryside while promoting sustainable development which can result in positive social and economic outcomes.....”*

- 3.3 The policy goes on to say (where relevant):

*“We also recognise that, in general, countryside areas are less well suited to unplanned residential and other developments because of their lack of access to services, employment and established communities. We will seek to protect our prime and locally important agricultural land from development except where proposals align with this spatial strategy.*

*In principle, we will support proposals out with our identified towns and villages for:*

*.....*

*d) tourism and leisure uses, where they would promote economic activity, diversification, and sustainable development, particularly where they develop our coastal tourism offer/ infrastructure.*

*f) sensitive infilling of gap sites consolidating existing developments where it would define/ provide a defensible boundary for further expansion.*

*.....”*

- 3.4 As stated, and accepted, in the Ann Nevitt assessment, the site is enclosed to the west, south and east by the railway, bowling club and A78 respectively and is therefore separated from the open countryside. The location south of the enclosing ancient woodland belt to the north of Fairlie also suggests that it is within a natural boundary to the settlement. The small water course of the north of the site would mark the extent of the built form proposed and allows for a defined natural extent to the village which is consistent with the extent on the east of the A78. The location close to the coastal path and two marinas also allows for a contribution to the coastal tourism offer. The site is currently designated as within the Countryside but its inclusion within the settlement boundary would not result in any significant impact upon the wider landscape, nor any significant loss of prime agricultural land.

#### **Special Landscape Area**

- 3.5 The LDP Policy 15 states in relation to Special Landscape Areas:

*“Special Landscape Areas We will only support development which affects Special Landscape Areas where it would not have an unacceptable impact on their special character, qualities and setting.....*

*For all development with the potential to have an impact on either Landscape Character or Landscape features (including their setting), appropriate mitigation measures should be considered as part of any planning application. Where there is potential for development to result in significant adverse landscape/visual impact, a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) will be required. The Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 1998) and North Ayrshire Settlement Development Strategy (Entec, 2008) provide further information on designations such as Local Landscape Character Areas and the Potential Limit of Development Expansion areas as shown on the map on page 81 and on our online proposals map. These landscape assessment documents, and any new or updated landscape assessments, will be key considerations in determining whether development proposals would be acceptable within the landscape.”*

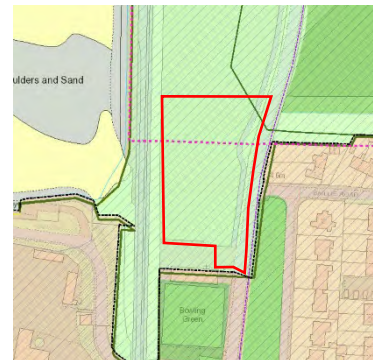
- 3.6 There does not currently appear to be any specific information on Special Landscape Areas provided by North Ayrshire Council (or at least present amongst the wider suite of guidelines and documents published online), however the extent of this area covers the landscape to the north and east and is in many regards similar to that designated as Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The site makes up a very small part of this designation. Provided that the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development are within a reasonable level and do not



significantly affect the wider SLAs character then this should not be a prohibitive constraint to development

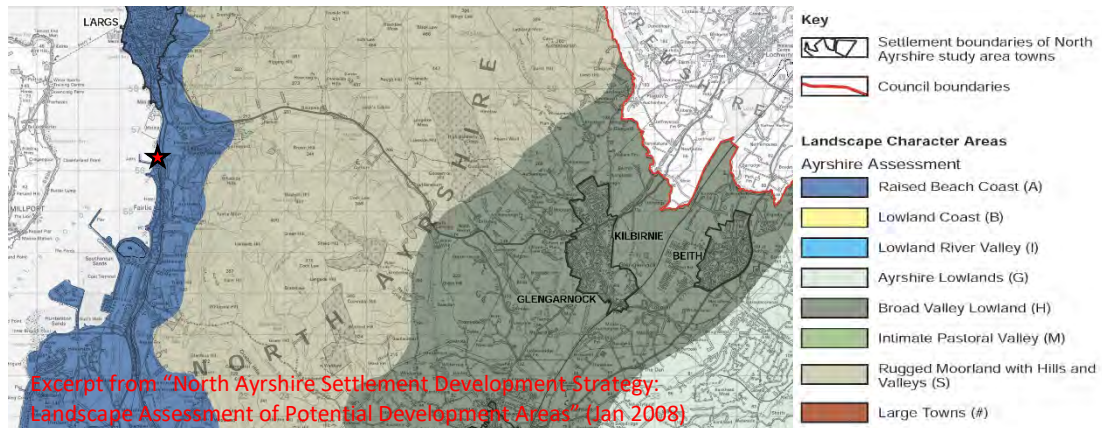
### Conclusion

- 3.7 The site is currently designated as being Countryside in the LDP. This is due to its current agricultural use, although it was previously used for grazing and is now fenced off. As described previously the village of Fairlie extends further north on the east side of the A78 and the settlement boundary is set by a well-established woodland belt. This extends along the east side of the village but terminates at the north west at the A78. The northern extent of the woodland is also marked by the watercourse which crosses the site and by developing the site as proposed the extent of the settlement can be firmly established along the watercourse – as stated in section f of the LDP section.
- 3.8 The LDP also considers that developments which improve the Coastal Tourism Offer may be acceptable as stated in part d of the same section.
- 3.9 There is no apparent detailed information available relating to the specific character of the Special Landscape Area but the LDP policy 15 states that provided landscape and visual impacts are acceptable then this should not be a significant constraint on its own.
- 3.10 A very small section of the site to the north is within the Regional Park boundaries (shown in the LDP excerpt by the magenta dotted line) but the impacts upon the designated area would be negligible. A more logical boundary to the park would be the watercourse on the northern boundary rather than across the field on no obvious marker. The potential constraints relating to the Countryside designation were previously in place when the 2010 planning permission was granted and were not deemed prohibitive.



## 4 Landscape Character

- 4.1 The Local Development Plan Policy 15 Landscapes and Seascapes states that potential acceptability for development would be determined in relation to the Landscape Character of the area. This has been identified as Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs in the North Ayrshire Settlement Development Strategy: Landscape Assessment of Potential Development Areas (Jan 2008), Ayrshire Landscape Assessment prepared by Land Use Consultants and published by SNH in 1998, and the updated SNH National Landscape Character Assessment in 2019. This describes the landscape as (where relevant, with information specific to Arran omitted):



### "Location and Context

*Location and Context* The Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs Landscape Character Type occurs in seven areas in Ayrshire, focused on thin strips of land on the western coastal edge of the mainland, facing towards the Firth of Clyde, and around the north-western and north-eastern coastal edge of the isle of Arran.

### Key Characteristics

- Raised beach, visible as a level shelf backed by a steep, sometimes craggy escarpment representing the former cliff line, above which lies more gently rising land.
- Rocky coastline, sometimes with cliffs, with narrow sand and shingle beaches, and mud flats in estuarine locations.
- Varied land uses but mainly farmed; the raised beaches also provide a level terrace for settlement and communication.
- Small, historic settlements sit comfortably against the steep former cliff line and use building materials which reflect the local geology.
- Landscape of visual drama and contrast with a strong sense of seclusion, and where less accessible a strong sense of remoteness.
- Views tend to be longer distance and focussed seaward.

### Landscape Character Description

**Landform** - Post-glacial sea-level changes have left a raised beach which comprises an important feature of the Ayrshire coast, both along the mainland and on islands within the Firth of Clyde, particularly Arran. This Landscape Character Type occurs where areas of higher ground reach the coast and where the raised beach is visible as a level shelf backed by a steep, sometimes craggy escarpment, representing the former cliff-line. Thus, although termed 'raised beach', this landscape type comprises the former beach, cliff, and areas above.

*Although raised beaches do occur within the lowland areas, they are less significant as landscape features in their own right. ....*

**Landcover** - *Raised beach areas vary in land use, but are mainly farmed. While some of the narrowest or more exposed sections are not viable, elsewhere the raised beach provides some of the most productive agricultural land in Ayrshire, supporting, for example, potato cultivation. In the north, the steep escarpment slope is invariably clothed in rich, broadleaf woodland (dominated by beech) with dramatically wind sheared canopies. ....*

*The broader sections of raised beach, for example between Largs and Ardrossan, provide some of the most productive agricultural land in Ayrshire. In some of the narrower sections, particularly where land has become fragmented or developed, the raised beach is less intensively used, and other activities such as nurseries have developed.*

**Settlement** - *The raised beaches probably provided fertile areas for the earliest forms of settlement in the area, as evidenced by occasional archaeological finds. The defensive nature of this coastal landscape and the importance of the raised beaches in providing a corridor for communications are reflected in the presence of a number of hillforts and castles. .... Several of these historic sites formed the centre of later designed landscapes (e.g. Knock Castle), adding richness to the wooded landscape. Other examples include Skelmorie Castle and Kelburn Castle.*

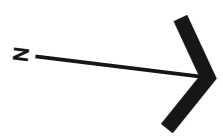
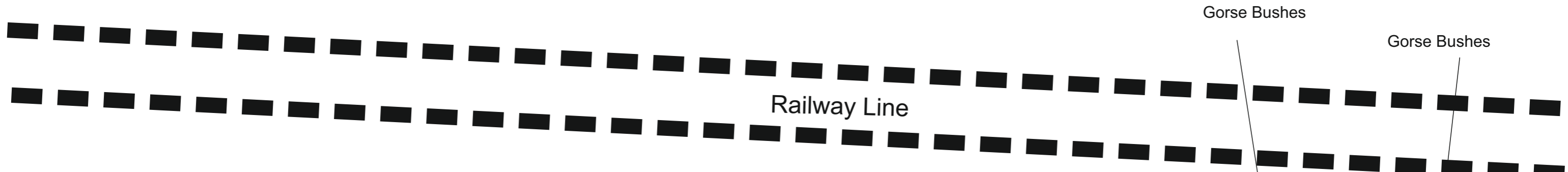
*In subsequent centuries, historic settlements such as Largs have expanded beyond their original sites and have spread along the narrow sections of raised beach. While small, historic settlements (such as Portencross) sit comfortably against the steep former cliff line, some the 20th Century growth has taken the form of ribbon development along the coastal road. .... Most settlements here are small and functional. ....*

*Historically, building materials reflected the local geology. At Largs, for example, red sandstone is a common stone, reflected both in tenement buildings and in grander structures such as churches. ....*

**Perception** - *This is a narrow landscape where the cliffs and headlands can appear higher than they are. This emphasised vertical scale creates a sense of visual drama. Well settled sections of the coast contrast with secluded and dramatic sections of headlands and cliffs. The rocky, rugged coastline and semi-natural vegetation reinforce the sense of naturalness. This is a highly visible landscape around the coastal edge, with the coastal headlands (e.g. the Heads of Ayr) forming highly visible prominent landmark features in views along the coast and from the sea. The abrupt upper edge of the raised beach creates a very prominent skyline when viewed from much of the coastal road. Views tend to be long distance and focused out to sea and the landmark islands of Arran and Ailsa Craig often form the focus of the view. ...."*

## **Conclusions**

- 4.2 The landscape character description makes no specific mention of Fairlie and the description is of the Landscape Type is broad. Of potential relevance is the claim that the area has the best agricultural land in Ayrshire. This point was addressed in the previous landscape assessment in 2010 which concluded that only the section of the site north of the watercourse is identified by the Macauley Institute (now part of James Hutton Institute) as being potential farmland, so no permanent loss of agricultural land would result.



**GARDEN CENTRE & RESTAURANT, FAIRLIE**  
Site Description  
June 2021



**DWA**  
Landscape Architects Ltd

## 5 Site description and Landscape Impacts

- 5.1 The drawing on the previous page shows the details of the site as it currently is. The site is approximately 5,350m<sup>2</sup> within the red line boundary and is comprised of a single parcel of land enclosed by the small watercourse which crosses from east to west on the northern boundary, before passing under the railway embankment towards the rock shore on the opposite side.



### Boundaries

- 5.2 The boundaries of the site are set to the south and west by a post and wire fence. This is also the case to the east but with the addition of the line of the Ayrshire Coastal Path which runs along the space between the main site and the A78. This section of the path is lined on each side by the same style of post and wire fence.



- 5.3 At present access to the site is via a gate to the southeast corner which is accessed via the Fairlie Bowling Club Car Park (although within the developers ownership). This lies immediately to the south of the site with the club house on the southern side of the car park and the green to the south of that.

- 5.4 To the west the railway line runs north and south along a raised embankment sitting approximately 1-2m above the level of the site. To the north of the watercourse lies open fields used for grazing sheep and to the east is the line of the busy A78 road.



- 5.5 The location of the site within the coastal raised beach shelf means that the topography of the site is largely flat, varying by only 300mm at most across the main body of the site. The watercourse which bounds the site flows through a shallow channel approximately 1m deep at most.

### Vegetation

- 5.6 The site has four trees to the south east along the line of the Ayrshire Coastal Path. These are three sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and a single Poplar tree (*Poplar nigra*). The three sycamore trees sit in a line within the tarmac surface of the coastal path at present – as seen in the photograph. The poplar sits separately to the north between the path and the A78.



- 5.7 Elsewhere upon the site are stands of Gorse bushes (*Ulex europaeus*) in small groups and along the course of the watercourse. Ground cover is rough grassland.

### Proposed Development

- 5.8 The drawing on the following page shows the proposed development layout for the site. It shows the built development, car park, access point and associated infrastructure all located within the parcel of land south of the watercourse. The course of the Coastal path would be straightened (as originally approved) and retained with the three Sycamore trees also retained. Indicative buffer planting is proposed around the west and northern boundaries along the watercourse.

### Landscape Impact Conclusions

- 5.9 Development of the site will take place on the field parcel south of the watercourse, with some additional works required to form the access. This will fall in the same location as the current car park entrance however, so impact would be minimal. The course of the Coastal Route would be slightly realigned, but this would have no material impact upon the accessibility or function of the path. This would mean the loss of the Poplar tree, but the three sycamores would be retained. Other scrubby gorse vegetation across the site would be lost, but this should not be considered a significant impact. In fact, some of this vegetation has already been recently removed by Amey as part of other works. Lost vegetation could also be mitigated by replacement buffer and planting which would improve biodiversity and amenity.

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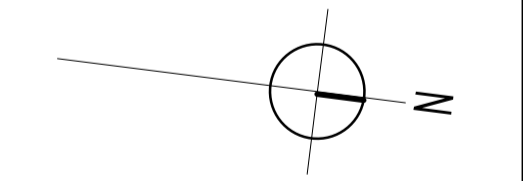
# PLANNING

REVISION	DESCRIPTION	DATE
A	PARKING LAYOUT REVISED	
B	NURSERY FIELD ACCESS & GATE NOTE ADDED SITE PLAN ANNOTATIONS UPDATED UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE	19.11.19 13.01.20
C	UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE BOUNDARIES CLARIFIED ANNOTATIONS ADDED	14.01.20
D	UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE CLIENT INFORMATION ADDED ANNOTATIONS ADDED & AMENDED	30.03.20
E	SITE BOUNDARY REVISED	02.11.20
F	UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE CLIENT INFORMATION ADDED ANNOTATIONS ADDED & AMENDED	20.05.21



PROPOSED SITE PLAN 1:250

- 66 NO. PARKING SPACES INCL. 3 NO. ACCESSIBLE SPACES
- APPLICATION SITE BOUNDARY AND EXTENT OF APPLICANT OWNERSHIP - 5983.25 M<sup>2</sup> AREA
- MODIFIED LINE OF CYCLE PATH
- INDICATIVE EXTENT OF FAIRLIE BOWLING CLUB CAR PARK AND RESIDUAL SURFACING
- ASPHALTED CROSSOVER TO NAC SPECIFICATION
- PAVING SLABS (PERMEABLE)
- BITMAC / PC KERBS SURROUND
- PERMEABLE PAVINGS
- ACCESSIBLE PARKING



NOTE: READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH STEWART ASSOCIATES DRAWINGS NOS 1934 / P01 TO 1934 / P07 INCLUDING DESIGN STATEMENT DOCUMENT NO. 1934 / P06.

**STEWART ASSOCIATES**  
 Architects & Development Consultants

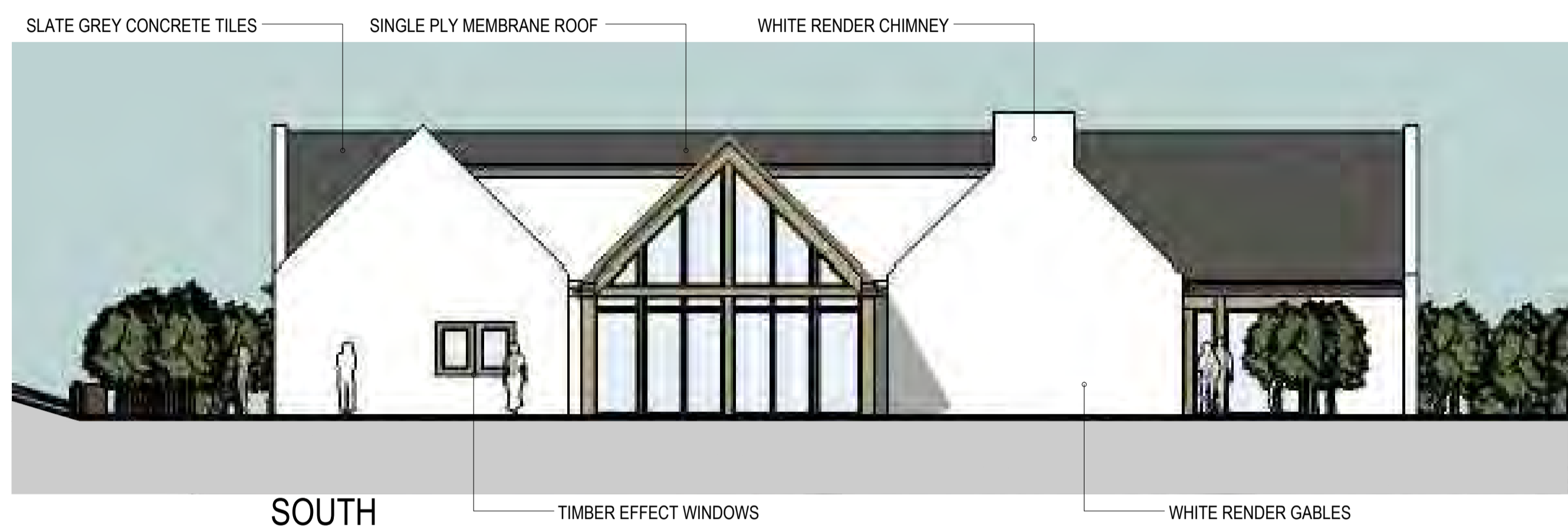
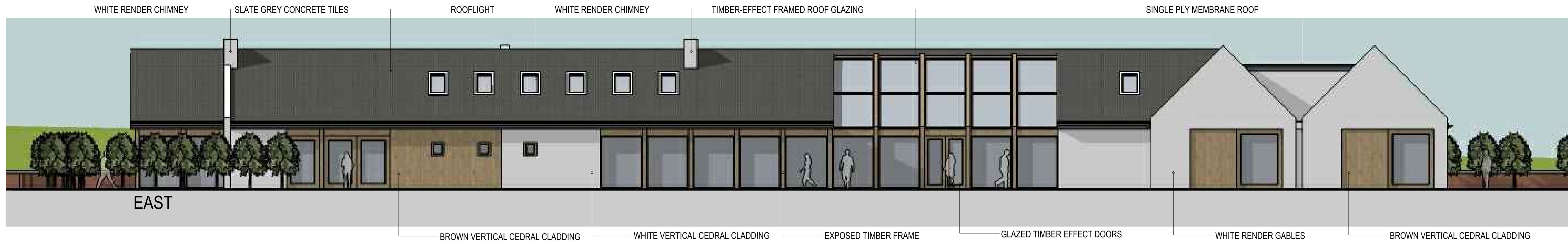
THE STUDIO  
 9 WATERSIDE STREET  
 LARGS  
 AYRSHIRE  
 tel : 01475 670033  
 fax : 01475 673103

TITLE	PROPOSED GARDEN CENTRE & RESTAURANT, SITE NORTH OF FAIRLIE BOWLING CLUB
CLIENT	DAVID CASTELVECCHI
DRAWING	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
SCALE	1:250 AT A1
DATE	29.10.19
DRAWN	JM
CHECKED	BAS
NUMBER	1934 / P02 F

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**PLANNING**

REVISION	DESCRIPTION	DATE
A	UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE EXTERNAL WALL FINISHES UPDATED, CLIENT INFORMATION UPDATED, ANNOTATIONS UPDATED	30.03.20
A	UPDATED FOR PLANNING ISSUE CLIENT INFORMATION UPDATED	28.02.21



0 1 2 3 4 5  
 SCALE (METRES)  
 ELEVATIONS 1:100



AERIAL VIEW FROM S-E



STREET ASPECT FROM S-E



STREET ASPECT FROM N-E



AERIAL VIEW FROM N-E

NOTE: READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH STEWART ASSOCIATES  
 DRAWINGS NOS 1934 / P01 to 1934 / P07 INCLUDING DESIGN  
 STATEMENT DOCUMENT NO. 1934 / P06.

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TITLE	PROPOSED GARDEN CENTRE & RESTAURANT, SITE NORTH OF FAIRLIE BOWLING CLUB	
CLIENT	DAVID CASTELVECCHI	
DRAWING	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS & VIEWS	
SCALE	1:100 (A1)	DATE 19.07.20
DRAWN	JM	CHECKED BAS
NUMBER	1934 / P05 B	



## 6. Visual Impacts

### Visual Appraisal

- 6.1 The following is a brief visual appraisal of the potential impacts based on an onsite assessment of the potentially sensitive and impacted visual receptors identified in the baseline assessment of the surrounding landscape described in section 2 of this document. No ZTV computer simulation has been undertaken nor detailed assessment of all potential visual receptors have been presented but full consideration has been given to any affected receptors and incorporated into the appraisal below.

### Views from the North

- 6.2 The landscape to the north of the site is open countryside but is flat, extending over the raised beach shelf between Largs and Fairlie. The Ayrshire Coastal Path passes through the area between the A78 and the coast, and the Kelburn Castle GDL lies to the east of the A78. This flat topography allows views to extend over ground which is open, but equally allows tree cover to screen views where it exists. The Ayrshire Coastal Path runs adjacent to the A78 for approximately 250m north of the site before turning west to pass under the railway embankment and run adjacent to this on the western side. This means that there will be views to the site in the 250m area of open fields to the north of the site and then these will be screened by the vegetation, tree cover and railway embankment. The image below is taken from the section of path that turns west before views are screened. The Bowling Clubhouse can be seen in the distance and the proposed development would sit in front of this and would be of an approximately similar height. It would represent a relatively small element in the landscape but would be visible. Impacts would be medium to low as this would sit against the already existing view of the clubhouse.



- 6.3 Just beyond this point to the north the Listed Kelburnfoot Lodge lies, but there would be no clear views of the proposed development due to screening vegetation and its orientation towards the west. Similarly, there would be no clear views towards the site from the Marina to the south west of Largs or housing within Largs itself
- 6.4 The images below show a series of images taken from the A78 heading south from Largs. The first shows the views when descending from the raised area to the south of Largs where views across the Raised Beach Shelf briefly extend in this direction. Here the orientation of the road allows a brief view across the marina over the shore towards the site and the Bowling Clubhouse can be seen. A brief glimpse of the development would also likely be possible but the

various elements in the landscape, including the mass of boats in the marina, would mean that impacts would be negligible.



- 6.5 Further south on the A78 the elevation of the road descends to a similar elevation as the site and tree cover in the landscape between Largs and Fairlie will screen views from the road. The image below is taken from one of the two gateway points to Kelburn Estate. This screening effect can be seen.



- 6.6 The third image from the A78 is taken from the southern gateway to the estate. This is much closer to the proposed site and views will be possible from this section of road. The Bowling club can be seen, as can the large hangar buildings at the marina to the south west. Some low-level vegetation helps to screen the proposed site, and this would help to mitigate impacts. There would be a degree of visibility of the proposed building which would be a similar height to the bowling clubhouse. The existing backdrop would have a mitigating effect and visual impact would be medium. This could be further mitigated with the proposed buffer planting to the watercourse on the northern boundary of the site.



- 6.7 Views from Kelburn estate will be limited by the estate wall which runs along the length of the A78 boundary. The majority of the Listed features lie well within the estate near the Castle amid mature woodland and would be well screened from any views. The entrance gate pictured above is likely the only part of the estate and GDL where any notable visual impact would occur and this is unlikely to be an area where visitor will stop, being the main entrance to the estate.

#### **Views from the south**

- 6.8 To the south of the site lies the Village of Fairlie. The immediate southern boundary is occupied by the Bowling Club with its Clubhouse. This building would be on an approximately similar height and would help to screen views of the new building which is set back from the road to the west of the site. Additionally, the entrance the Marina complex south west of the site rises to cross over the railway line via a large earthwork embankment. The image below is taken from this embankment which is a restricted access with no through route. The embankment itself creates a visual barrier to the site from the south and would prevent any visual impact from the majority of receptors within the village.



- 6.9 From the A78 within Fairlie views will quickly diminish with travel south. The image below is taken from the Bus Stop on the eastern side of the road near Kelburn Avenue. The Bowling Clubhouse can be seen to the left of the road. The proposed building would be behind this building and the trees and would not be visible from here, although the proposed entrance and parts of the associated parking would perhaps be visible without mitigation. Visual impact from the south, within Fairlie, would overall be very low.



#### Views from the East

- 6.10 Views from the east will be relatively clear from the A78 directly adjacent to the site although the three remaining Sycamore trees would have a screening effect to some degree. Beyond the road, views would quickly be screened by the tree belt north of Bailey Road. The image below is taken from Bailey Road close to the junction with Kelburn Avenue. Views into the site from the road would be possible through the trees from this close location and some views would be possible from houses to the east at the end of the Cul-de-sac.



- 6.11 To the south east at Kelburn Avenue views to the site may be possible from the small privately owned section of the street looking across the area of planted open space between it and the A78. Here views of the southern part of the proposed building would be possible and would partially obscure views of the water from here. This is a small window of view however as

vegetation in the open space seen in the foreground collectively screens views to the north and south of this location. Visual impact from the east of the site would be medium but as part of a townscape environment should not be considered an unreasonable constraint.



### Views from the West

6.12 Views from the west are heavily influenced by the presence of the railway line and embankment and the shoreline immediately to the west of this. The elevated rail line forms a visual barrier which would partially screen views in this direction through forming a physical barrier although travellers on the trains would have views into the site. This would be part of a moving scene through the landscape where views are more likely to be directed seaward and would be briefly experienced whilst entering the settlement of Fairlie. Impacts upon rail travellers would be low. Beyond the railway there is limited access to the shore at this point due to the railway and the presence of the small burn (Kel Burn) which emerges to the north of the site and prevents access along the shore from the north. There is a small stair from the access to the marina to the south, but this is not obvious or well signposted. Further west, across the water views would theoretically be possible from Great Cumbrae Island's east coast road but this would be at almost 2.4km and any visual impacts would be negligible.

### Conclusions

6.13 The site is well screened to the south by the Bowling Clubhouse and embankment leading over the Railway. Visibility to the west is also restricted by the presence of the railway and the limited access to the shore. This shoreline is narrow and the Island of Great Cumbrae is sufficiently distant that no significant impacts would be experienced from its eastern shore road. To the east views will be possible from the A78 adjacent to the site and from sections of Bailey Road and Kelburn Avenue close to the site. These will be partial views and softened by tree cover.

6.14 In the landscape to the north views will be possible from the Ayrshire Coastal Path to a distance of approximately 250m before it turns west and then passes to the other side of the railway line. The A78 will have a brief and not significant view from the edge of Largs as the road descends onto the raised beach shelf and then views will be obscured by tree cover across the flat terrain until approximately 250m from the site. Here broken views of the building will start to be possible against the backdrop of the bowling clubhouse and Hangar buildings at the Marina. Screen planting to the north boundary of the site and watercourse would help to mitigate any impacts. There will be no significant impacts from Kelburn estate due to the estate wall and mature tree cover, beyond a brief view from the southern entry gate.



**GARDEN CENTRE & RESTAURANT, FAIRLIE**

**PHOTO POINTS**

June 2021



**DWA**  
Landscape Architects Ltd

## **7. Summary of Conclusions and Potential Mitigation**

### **Contextual Conclusions**

- 7.1 There are no specific constraints arising for the location or contextual circumstances of the site. There is in fact a strong argument for extending the settlement boundary towards the north to match the strong boundary of the woodland belt to the east of A78. By restricting the development to the south of the watercourse, this would set a defensible settlement boundary on the north west of Fairlie.

### **Planning Designation Conclusions**

- 7.2 The site is currently designated as being Countryside in the LDP. This is due to its current agricultural use, although it does not currently appear to be used as grazing. As described previously the village of Fairlie extends further north on the east side of the A78 and the settlement boundary is set by a well-established woodland belt. This extends along the east side of the village but terminates at the north west at the A78. The northern extent of the woodland is also marked by the watercourse which crosses the site and by developing the site as proposed the extent of the settlement can be firmly established along the watercourse – as stated in section f) of the LDP section.
- 7.3 The LDP also considers that developments which improve the Coastal Tourism Offer may be acceptable as stated in part d of the same section.
- 7.4 There is no apparent detailed information available relating to the specific character of the Special Landscape Area but the LDP policy 15 states that provided landscape and visual impacts are acceptable then this should not be a significant constraint on its own.
- 7.5 A very small section of the site to the north is within the Regional Park boundaries but the impacts upon the designated area would be negligible. A more logical boundary to the park would be the watercourse on the northern boundary rather than across the field on no obvious marker. The potential constraints relating to the Countryside designation were previously in place when the 2010 planning permission was granted and were not deemed prohibitive.

### **Landscape Character Conclusions**

- 7.6 The landscape character description makes no specific mention of Fairlie and the description is of the Landscape Type is broad. Of potential relevance is the claim that the area has the best agricultural land in Ayrshire. This point was addressed in the previous landscape assessment in 2010 which concluded that only the section of the site north of the watercourse is identified by the Macauley Institute (now part of James Hutton Institute) as being potential farmland, so no permanent loss of agricultural land would result.

### **Landscape Impact Conclusions**

- 7.7 Development of the site will take place on the field parcel south of the watercourse, with some additional works required to form the access. This will fall in the same location as the current car park entrance however, so impact would be minimal. The course of the Coastal Route would be slightly realigned, but this would have no material impact upon the accessibility or function of the path. This would mean the loss of the Poplar tree, but the three sycamores would be retained. Other scrubby gorse vegetation across the site would be lost, but this should not be considered a significant impact. In fact, some of this vegetation has already been recently removed by Amey as part of other works. Lost vegetation could also be mitigated by replacement buffer and planting which would improve biodiversity and amenity.

### **Visual Impact Conclusions**

- 7.8 The site is well screened to the south by the Bowling Clubhouse and embankment leading over the Railway. Visibility to the west is also restricted by the presence of the railway and the limited access to the shore. This shoreline is narrow and the Island of Great Cumbrae is sufficiently distant that no significant impacts would be experienced from its eastern shore road. To the east views will be possible from the A78 adjacent to the site and from sections of Bailey Road and Kelburn Avenue close to the site. These will be partial views and softened by tree cover.
- 7.9 In the landscape to the north views will be possible from the Ayrshire Coastal Path to a distance of approximately 250m before it turns west and then passes to the other side of the railway line. The A78 will have a brief and not significant view from the edge of Largs as the road descends onto the raised beach shelf and then views will be obscured by tree cover across the flat terrain until approximately 250m from the site. Here broken views of the building will start to be possible against the backdrop of the bowling clubhouse and Hangar buildings at the Marina. Screen planting to the north boundary of the site and watercourse would help to mitigate any impacts. There will be no significant impacts from Kelburn estate due to the estate wall and mature tree cover, beyond a brief view from the southern entry gate.

### **Overall Conclusions and recommendations for mitigation**

- 7.10 There will be little constraints upon the proposed development from the context in which it sits. In fact, the extension of the settlement of Fairlie further north on the A78s eastern side suggests that an appropriate settlement boundary should encompass the site to the watercourse on the northern boundary. The LDP states that development in Countryside areas could be considered if located in infill sites where a logical defensible settlement boundary can be established. This would be the case with the proposed site with the watercourse forming a natural boundary which is mirrored on the eastern side of the A78 along with the woodland belt. The development lies on the southern side of this natural boundary, and the line of the building itself extends to a point similar to that on the eastern side too.
- 7.11 No significant impact would be experienced upon productive agricultural land as defined by the Macauley Institute.
- 7.12 Boundary planting would provide a soft buffer zone on the northern extent of the site which would help to mitigate visual impacts from the north. Visibility is limited in extent in this direction by tree cover along the road and in the landscape in conjunction with the flat topography and views from the west, south and east are all limited in the distance they extent by the existing built environment.
- 7.13 A similar proposal was previously permitted in 2010 but never realised. The situation would not appear to have changed significantly in that time and the proposed low density and low elevation development would seem to fit within a logical settlement boundary extension of Fairlie with little significant impact on the wider landscape.



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