

Planning Statement

Dunnottar Square, Stonehaven

THE-20-0017

Dale Williamson

July 22, 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Dale Williamson in support of an application for planning permission for a single residential house at Dunnottar Square, Stonehaven. This statement deals with the main matters related to the principle of development and a separate statement has been prepared to describe the design response of the proposed development.

2 DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The application site is located to the west of Dunnottar Square, which is a residential complex of 8 dwellings that were a conversion of the Coach House to Dunnottar House. Dunnottar House having been demolished in 1959 the coach house fell into disrepair and was converted in the late 1990s. This area has been in residential use since.

3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY CONSIDERATION

The site is in close proximity to Stonehaven and Dunnottar Woods is located to the west and north of the neighbouring housing. This area is identified as a protected area associated with Stonehaven and it is described by the Local Development Plan as 'amenity for the town'.

The settlement statements (Appendix 8E) for Stonehaven show four separate dashed black lines that separately cover different parts of Stonehaven. These are not identified within the Key to the Appendix. Protected areas such as P4 and P9 that clearly form part of Stonehaven are not covered by these lines, but in the case of P9 this is a proposal for development of a school.

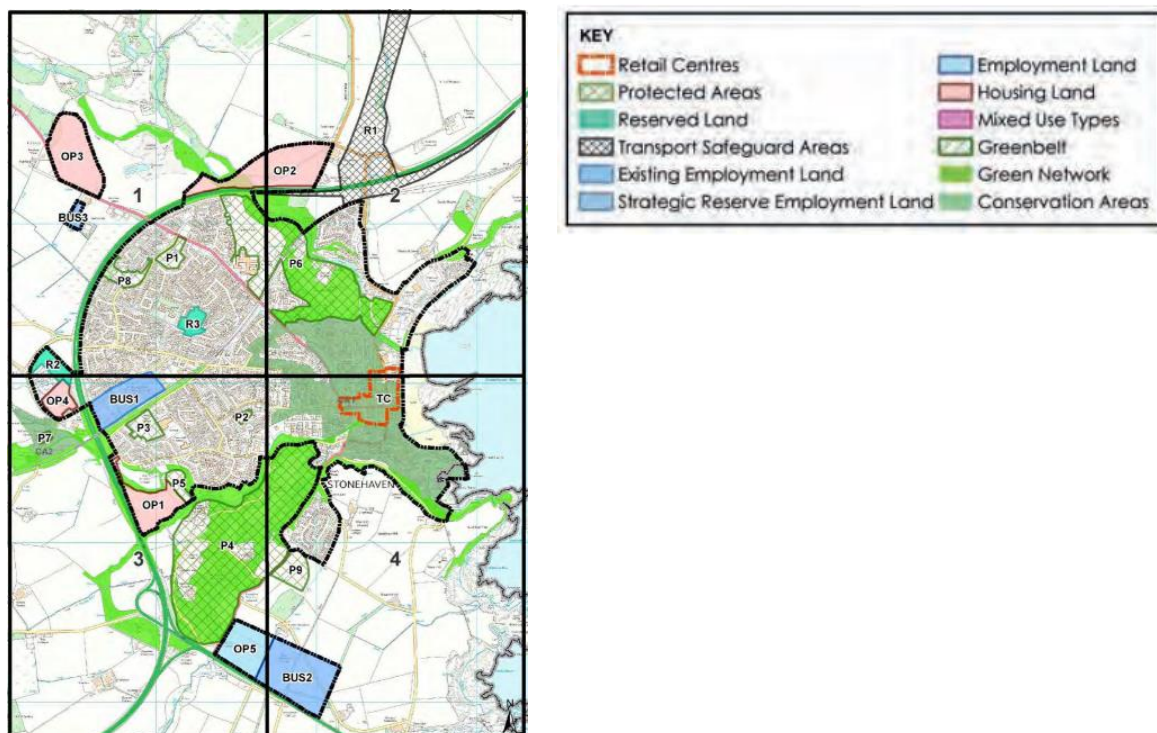


Figure 1: Local Development Plan Appendix 8E

Policy PR1 covers 'protected land' and the relevant section of the policy states that "Development will not normally be permitted on areas of open space, including outdoor sports

facilities, unless the new use is ancillary to the use as open space. Important areas of open space are identified as “protected land” within the settlement statements. Exceptionally, the development of essential community infrastructure may be allowed if it will not result in a deficit of open space of the type affected within the settlement, as evidenced by the Open Space Audit, or prejudice the continuity of a green network. Where loss of open space occurs as the result of a new development then replacement must be made of an appropriate type, quantity, accessibility and quality within the settlement.”

The site is between allocations for development in Stonehaven and has a zoning related to the settlement of Stonehaven and on this basis the site should not be considered as a ‘countryside’ location as per Policy R2. The most appropriate policy to determine an application in this location would be Policy PR1 Protected Land, which is considered in the following section.

3.1 Policy PR1

In considering a proposal for development under Policy PR1 the policy has a presumption against development on areas of open space or sports facilities.

The land in question occupies a plot of grassland on the western side of the Dunnottar Square steading. The Aberdeenshire Council Open Space Audit has covered this area and as indicated below the residential area of Dunnottar Square is not identified as open space. The surrounding woodland is classified as semi natural open space.

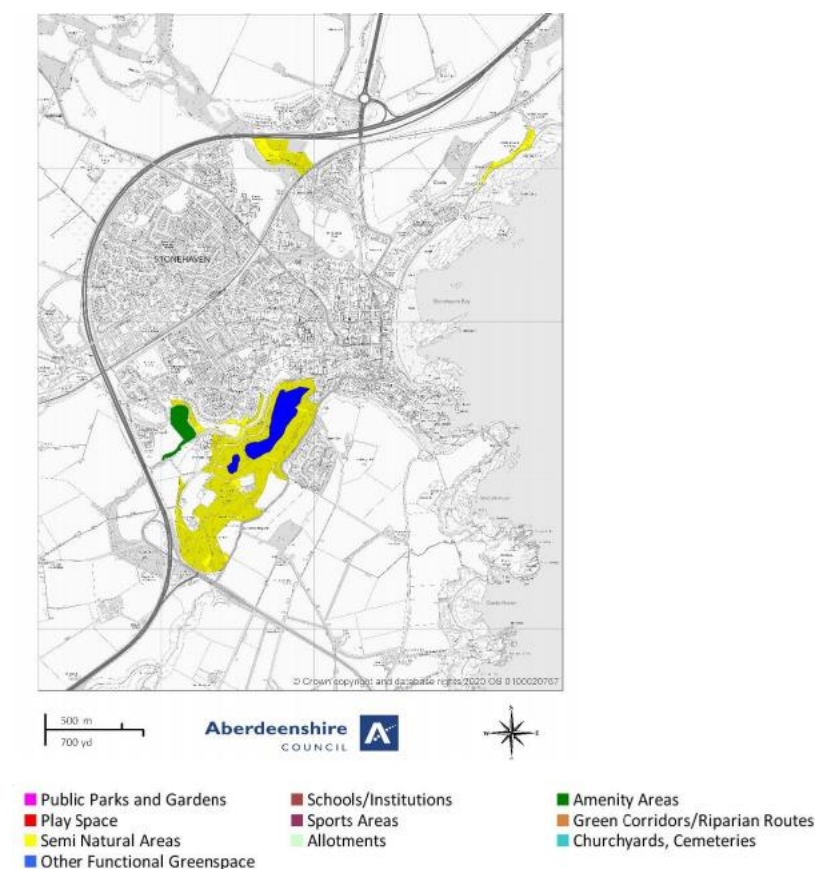


Figure 2:Aberdeenshire Open Space Audit

The site is therefore not considered by the Council to be open space for the purposes of policy PR1. It would follow that if not classified as open space, then the development would not conflict with Policy PR1 and the protected area status.

An ecological Impact assessment of the site has been undertaken and this has concluded that the site is species-poor grassland which appears to have been agriculturally improved in the past. It is not considered to have any significant ecological value, even at the scale of the site.

If this protected area forms part of Stonehaven, then in the event that the development does not conflict with Policy PR1 then the most appropriate policy to consider the development under would be Policy P3 infill and householder developments. Policy P3 identifies those sites within settlements can usefully contribute towards housing and employment requirements. Developments should respect the scale, density and character of the surroundings. The use in this area is residential and there is not considered to be any conflict created. The detached house is designed as an extension to the existing housing area and has been designed to be complementary to and in keeping with the design of the existing residential properties.

4 SELF-BUILD DEVELOPMENT

Self-build housing provides owners the opportunity to design and build a home that meets their long-term needs and ensures that total lifecycle costs are considered in the design and focussing on maximising the efficiency of the design. There are savings in self-build that can be secured including zero VAT and availability of loans from the Scottish Government Self Build Loan Fund available. The applicant is a private individual seeking to develop a home within Stonehaven for their family and this provides an opportunity to meet these needs in a sustainable location that they would not otherwise be able to afford.

Self-build housing is defined in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 Section 16E as “where an individual commissions or (whether acting alone or with other individuals) is personally involved in the design and construction of a dwelling that is intended to be the individual's main residence once it is built.” Once Section 16E is enacted, Local Authorities will require to keep registers of those parties with self-build interest in their area and make plans for meeting these demands. This highlights the importance of planning for and providing opportunities for self-build are in and around settlements where there is a demand.

The Position Statement published by the Scottish Government on the new National Planning Framework 4 makes it clear that promoting self and custom build / self-provided housing, co-housing and other innovative approaches to delivery will be important in the planning system.

Scottish Planning Policy (Paragraph 134) currently expects local authorities to consider sites for self-build plots that can contribute towards housing land supply. Currently in Aberdeenshire there are opportunities for self-building, but these are mostly within more rural areas further from larger settlements and services. Within towns the availability of land and suitability for individual houses is more challenging. Opportunities to promote self-build closer to the main service centres will allow for more sustainable patterns of development and should be encouraged.

There is no policy in the Local Development Plan related to this and this positive benefit would be a material consideration that would weigh in favor of the proposed development.

5 ACCESSIBILITY

The main attractiveness of this plot for the applicant is its proximity to Stonehaven and the connectivity of the site. This location is less than 2km from the town centre and is also well connected to the Carron Den development via a new footbridge which provides routes to Mill O'Forest Primary School and Spurryhilllock Industrial Estate.

The site already benefits from a direct connection onto Stonehaven's Core Path network as identified in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Extract of Stonehaven Core Paths Plan

6 CONCLUSION

This is an application for planning permission for a self-build house located in Stonehaven. The applicant seeks to build a home for their family with close connections to Stonehaven. The application site is located adjacent to a residential development and is on an area of species poor grassland that has no significant ecological value. This is also a site that has close connections to the settlement and has access to Stonehaven's core path network.

The site is zoned as a protected area and the development requires to be considered against Policy PR1. This policy places a presumption against the loss of open space or sports facilities, but on investigation of the Council's open space audit the area subject to this application does not form part of the existing open space and there is not a conflict with this policy.

Self-build opportunities are expected to be supported by SPP and in this area there are limited opportunities in sustainable locations made available. The granting of a permission for self-build will support these national objectives and contribute positively towards the supply and delivery of housing.

In conclusion it is considered that the site forms part of the wider settlement of Stonehaven. Development would not have any significantly negative impacts and material considerations also provide support to development. It is considered that this is a sustainable form of development and it is requested that the planning authority grants planning permission.