

Summary of Planning Application APP/2022/1676
Erection of Visitor Centre (Class 10) including Class 1 (retail), Class 3
(Café/Restaurant, Class 3 (Kiosk) and 10 dwelling houses (enabling development
and associated infrastructure land at Dunnottar Castle

Prepared by SDCC Planning Secretary
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The application is a Major Development of 8.8 hectares (88000 Sq Mts) some 4 David Street Coops (to give an expression of its extent) which involves a visitor centre and 10 enabling houses. However, not all of the area designated in this application is being utilised in above ground built-up features. The Stonehaven & District Community Council (SDCC) has been formally notified by Aberdeenshire Council Planning Service, as it is required to do, under Planning Statutes and the SDCC Representation will therefore be given considerable weight by the Planning Officer in their deliberation as will Elected Members when the application is determined at the Area Planning Committee.

However, even though it is termed a Statutory Consultee the SDCC cannot refer the application to Scottish Government should it object and the application is approved as other Statutory Consultees can. This is something the SDCC and other Community Councils may wish to debate and action at a separate time and at a later date.

The SDCC Planning Secretary has spoken with the Planning Officer appointed (David Niven); a member of the applicant's team, business-people in the Town and other interested individuals. Additionally, the Planning Secretary made a site visit of the proposed application (which is a recommendation for future major applications that site visits be arranged for Community Councillors to attend).

The application itself contains two parts but in reality is one indivisible application. The one a visitor centre and the other an enabling development on the Mains of Dunnottar Farm land. The enabling development of 10 double garaged, 4 bedroom individual houses and community square is not within the Coastal Zone restrictions ... the road running between the Castle Lodge and the Mains of Dunnottar Farm is the boundary. The Mains of Dunnottar Farm and majority of its buildings appear to be derelict and unoccupied although on the site visit some limited use was observed of storage and occupation. The land beyond the farm steadings (which currently is full of barley) is proposed for the enabling development on the South slope running down and alongside the A92 stopping at the turn off from the A92 junction which runs down to the existing Castle Lodge and proposed visitor centre.

At the date of this summary the application is made up of 77 documents ...the majority of which has been produced by the Applicant or commissioned by the Applicant. 10/11 Representations have been made by Consultees. Not all are Statutory some internal to Aberdeenshire Council. ..SEPA and Roads are still outstanding.

4 Representations have been made by individuals all of which object to the application in whole or part subject to variation. Of the Consultees the Representations are a matrix of responses which is

hard to navigate through. 5 either object or post a holding objection. Equally, 5 either approve or approve subject to conditions and three appear neutral.

While the Planning Officers and indeed the various Consultees are bound to make their decision according to Planning Statutes, other Statutes, codes and policies from Aberdeenshire Council the Community Council is not. The Community Council can take a view that the Planning Officers and other Consultees cannot do. That does not mean that the Community Council and individual Community Councillors will not take account of them, nor use their minds to think through the various issues/impacts pros and cons on the Community as a whole nor just vote with their "feet" but it is not bound in the same sense.

While pre-application notifications and consultations have been made by the applicant over the last 10yrs and formed a part of this current application with the applicant making presentations to this Community Council and businesses in the town etc....this is the first time that a full planning application has been submitted.

Community Councillors need to recognise that the proposed development is not included in the current LDP, or the future LDP up to 2027; which will be shortly adopted formally by Aberdeenshire Council. Nor is the enabling housing element in Aberdeenshire Housing allocation plan/policy. Moreover, the Affordable Housing Consultee has objected including to the proposition that the enabling development does not need to include 25% affordable units i.e (2.5 units or 2 units +cash commute) because Dunnottar Castle is a listed structure "at risk" and HE3 of Aberdeenshire Council Housing Policy allows such enabling developments to forgo the 25% affordable rule. The Applicant has not set up a s75 agreement with Aberdeenshire Council to commute monies or in-kind commitments for this and indeed other "Developer's Obligations" (formerly Planning Gain).

Additionally there appears little evidence of Scottish Government's new build recommendations for reducing emissions and Net Carbon Zero within the proposed development. Solar panels are not evident. EV points for double garages are not evident etc

In terms of "Developers Obligations" the applicant has intimated to this Community Council and businesses in the Town that it wished to do all it can to off-set any actual or perceived detrimental effect of its proposed development. The following is illustrative not exhaustive. Literature of visitor attractions and other businesses in the Town will be made available in the exhibition area of the visitor centre.

The applicant has expressed a wish to play a significant role in creating a historical coast trail from Dunnottar Castle to the Harbour-Tollbooth; along the beach promenade to the medieval fishing hamlet of Foot-of-Cowie, on to the remnants of Cowie Castle and finally the Royal Chapel of St Nachlan/St Mary of the Storms abutting Stonehaven Golf course.

The applicant may also allot some of the car parking to long stay and marshal this so that those visitors who wish to can enjoy either whole or part of the historical trail. Other "obligations" involve help to restore the Land Train (currently derailed in Arbroath because of safe and secure

storage when not in use) as a means to link Castle and Town also additionally the possibility of a curtsey mini-bus from the Castle to Harbour/Town Square.

Community Councillors may wish to consider the following. The environmental impact on habitat: animal, flora, fauna; archaeology & history. All of these are important aspects; perhaps more so if they disturb and forever change the “wildness” and ancient-medieval atmosphere of the Castle and its surrounds.

The economics and impact on the local & wider economy is both favourable and not so depending on whom you approach. Job opportunities are largely seasonal. Large local businesses offering hospitality appear to have no problem; smaller cafes and gift shops less so but all plea for the reopening of the Bervie Braes...which is unlikely. Moreover, coach tours in particular have limited time and their occupants will have their appetites satisfied with the proposed café, restaurant, “grab & go” kiosk and retail opportunities contained in the application both on and off season. Indeed local residents may well take the opportunity to enjoy them particularly the restaurant in the evening which is likely to apply/have an alcohol licence. Also, parking at the Harbour and around the Town is already inadequate and the manoeuvring of coaches quite impossible unless an offsite location from the Town centre/Harbour is found.

In terms of financing while the applicant is personally willing to fund partly the cost of the visitor centre (which has varied from approximately £3M-£5M) and for Dunecht Estate to take on a substantial loan the whole is depended on sale of the land to a local builder and the development of the enabling houses that form an indivisible financial rationale although there appears to be no detailed Return on Investment (ROI) based just on the visitor centre.

The proposed development will impact on various aspects of the local infrastructure e.g., the hydrology of foul water into the sewage system and surface water-run off. The applicant has addressed both with a pre-application to Scottish Water and proposes diverting the foul water to the East and surface water to be contained within an artificial Sustainable Underwater Drainage (SUDs) system located at the South end of the proposed housing development at the apex of the field that abuts the road that runs down to the Castle /visitor centre off the A92 junction. A survey of the soil, bedrock depth and water-table was carried out by applicant in 2018 but only one of the proposed 6 “sink holes” was progressed. Regular inspection and maintenance of the proposed SUDs and associated drains etc are critical and essential to avoid either localised “pooling” or more serious flooding. The site visit did notice a BT telecoms team working in a trench a couple of meters in depth on the road outside of the Castle Lodge which had water at the bottom running North towards the Bervie Braes. Aberdeenshire Council’s Internal Flood Prevention Consultee expressed no objection. SEPA the external Statutory Consultee, while notified, has yet to respond. The enabling houses will potentially impact on School rolls most likely to the new Dunnottar Primary School although Aberdeenshire Learning Estates has expressed no concern. Pressure will also be put on the local medical centre and for medical services generally.

The application also anticipates some 300 vehicles per day visiting the Castle, at the height of the season, and provision is made for some 160 parking spaces including an exclusive 16 space-coach park. Staff parking of some 16 spaces is proved to the North side of the Lodge House. Parking,

entering/exiting along the Castle road and in particular where vehicles of the residents from the enabling housing will exit/enter and at the junction with the A92 will have transport-roads issues. There appears to be no EV points included in the visitor parking design. The proposed bike racks have been suggested as poorly designed and inadequate in number. Aberdeenshire Roads Consultee has not yet responded requesting an extension.

These are the major aspects that the Community Council has to debate and decide on but as intimated earlier in this summary it is not necessary bound as Planning Officers and other Statutory Consultees by their strictures and can take a different view.

While I have consciously made every effort to make this summary factual any errors of omission or commission are entirely my own.

Phil Mills-Bishop SDCC Planning Secretary
05/09/2022

FOR DISCUSSION



D1: - Looking South across the field where the enabling houses are proposed to go



D2: - Typical surface water run-off drain on the road running down to the Castle Lodge & proposed visitor centre



D3: - Typical sewer drain on the side of the road running down to the Castle Lodge & proposed visitor centre



D4: - Existing culvert pipe for surface water run off from the field where the extended Car parking is planned



D5: - Looking North, at junction of A92 turn to the Castle, across the field where SUDs are planned for the enabling houses



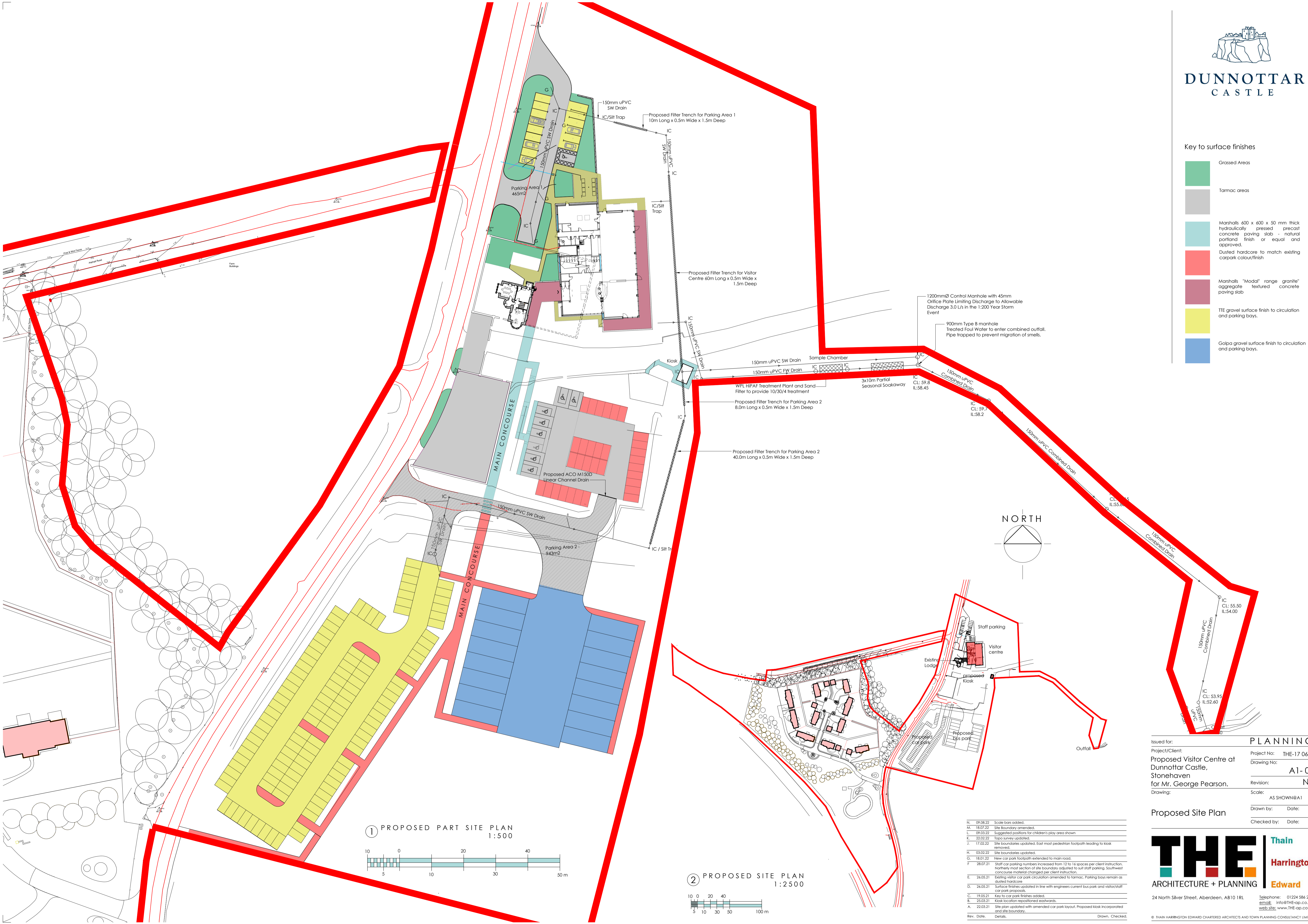
D6: - Telecoms trench on road outside of the Castle Lodge with water run-off at the bottom flowing North



DUNNOTTAR CASTLE

Key to surface finishes

- Grassed Areas
- Tarmac areas
- Marshalls 600 x 600 x 50 mm thick hydraulically pressed precast concrete paving slab - natural Portland finish or equal and approved.
- Dusted hardcore to match existing carpark colour/finish
- Marshalls "Modal" range granite aggregate textured concrete paving slab
- T1E gravel surface finish to circulation and parking bays.
- Golpa gravel surface finish to circulation and parking bays.



① PROPOSED PART SITE PLAN
1:500

0 10 20 30 40 50 m

② PROPOSED SITE PLAN
1:2500

0 20 40 50 100 m

N.	09.08.22	Scale bars added.		
M.	18.07.22	Site Boundary amended.		
L.	09.03.22	Suggested positions for children's play area shown		
E.	22.02.22	Topo survey updated.		
J.	17.02.22	Site boundaries updated. East most pedestrian footpath leading to kiosk removed.		
H.	03.02.22	Site boundaries updated.		
G.	18.01.22	New car park footpath extended to main road.		
F.	28.07.21	Staff car parking numbers increased from 12 to 14 spaces per client instruction. Northernly most section of site boundary adjusted to suit staff parking. Southwest concourse material changed per client instruction.		
E.	24.05.21	Existing visitor car park circulation amended to tarmac. Parking bays remain as dusted hardcore		
D.	24.05.21	Surface finishes updated in line with engineers current bus park and visitor/staff car park proposals.		
C.	19.05.21	Key to car park finishes added.		
B.	22.03.21	Kiosk location repositioned eastwards.		
A.	22.03.21	Site plan updated with amended car park layout. Proposed kiosk incorporated and site boundary.		
Rev.	Date.	Details.	Drawn.	Checked.

Issued for: **PLANNING**
 Project/Client: Proposed Visitor Centre at Dunnottar Castle, Stonehaven for Mr. George Pearson.
 Project No: THE-17 066
 Drawing No: A1-05
 Revision: N.
 Drawing: AS SHOWN@A1
 Scale: AS SHOWN@A1
 Drawn by: Date:
 Checked by: Date:



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