



Environment  
East Lothian Council  
by email

31 August 2016

Dear Sir

PLANNING APPLICATION 16/00521/PM

ERECTION OF 32 HOUSES, 4 FLATS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT CASTLEMAINS FARM, OFF STATION ROAD, DIRLETON, EAST LoTHIAN

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) objects to the above application for the following reasons:

Design

Dirleton is an important Conservation Area, described by VisitScotland as a "genteel hamlet". The design of the houses proposed, which appear to be more suited to suburban or urban locations, is inappropriate for a conservation village. The adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008 states (p74): "Housing must acknowledge its context and reflect both local identity at settlement level and the wider East Lothian context in a sustainable efficient manner. It must be physically integrated into the surrounding existing urban or rural fabric and provide and demonstrate linkages to that fabric." We believe that the modern suburban design proposed by this development will not add to a 'sense of place' in the village; on the contrary it will dilute the historic nature of Dirleton's architecture by increasing the number of modern houses that do not reflect the character of this historic village and therefore does not accord with the Local Plan.

Scale

We are also concerned about the number of houses proposed for this site. The layout and landscaping required for 32 houses and 4 flats would irreparably damage the setting of this village, destroying the important edges that define Dirleton and separate it from the surrounding countryside.

Setting

The historic setting of medieval Dirleton Castle will be compromised, as the housing development will be visible from the Village Green. The landscaping proposed will, to some extent, mitigate this effect, but only in the summer when the houses are hidden by leaves on the trees. The conclusion of Cala's own Landscape and Visual Appraisal

describes the visual effects of this development as 'major-moderate'. This is an unacceptable impact to allow in such a sensitive location.

'Dirleton Expects'

We have read the 'Dirleton Expects' document produced by the Dirleton Village Association (DVA). We consider this to be an excellent document and a model of its kind which we wholeheartedly commend to East Lothian Council (ELC). It takes a clear, well-informed and constructive approach to the issue concerned, based on a well-reasoned analysis of the evolution of Dirleton, yet makes an impassioned plea for the distinctive character of this special place to be properly looked after for future generations by all responsible parties, particularly ELC. We agree with the DVA that their village needs a careful assessment of its housing and development needs in order to ensure that the integrity of this unique conservation village is not compromised while at the same time supporting ELC in its requirement to provide more housing for the future. We therefore hope that the findings of 'Dirleton Expects' will be taken fully into consideration when assessing the merits of this planning application.

Please contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours faithfully

John Mayhew MA MSc DipTP MRTPI

**Director**