

18th August 2009



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Dear Gareth

**ABS 18: Aberdeenshire – Balmedie – Trump International Golf Course and Resort
Development at Menie House – Gareth Hoskins Architects – Pre Planning (Reserved Matters)**

Thank you, and your colleagues James Darwent, Neil Hobday of Trump International Golf Links Scotland and Frazer Bell of Dundas and Wilson, for updating us on the above proposals at a meeting on 30th July 2009 in Edinburgh. We welcome the opportunity for continued input on the project and offer the following comments for consideration at this stage.

Resort – hotel and holiday apartments

We note that there were inaccuracies with the amount of accommodation shown in the consented outline application by SMC Jenkins and Marr with regards to the size of the hotel and holiday apartments, and we recognise the considerable impact the actual accommodation would have on the site, particularly at its north end. We support the proposed relocation of 200 holiday units into the residential village in order to alleviate the pressures on this sensitive part of the site, and also to help create a greater mix of residential use between the resort and village.

We were presented with a number of options for distributing accommodation across the site. We found that those options which placed all accommodation in large blocks along the escarpment less successful than those that worked with the topography and contours and placed some of the apartments towards the rear of the site. Placing such a large volume of accommodation on the escarpment creates in effect a wall of buildings that would dominate the skyline and the surrounding landscape and isolate the large body of the site from what is its greatest asset – the sea view. We feel that such a linear approach is alien to the beautiful landscape, and are concerned that it would not be successful in place making terms and could potentially compromise the potential for a world-class site.

We understand the desire to create an iconic hotel building located prominently on the escarpment, both in order to create a landmark building for the resort and to maximise the sea views on offer. However, for such an approach to be successful the hotel building should not compete with other similarly sized blocks in close proximity. Though supporting the principle of locating the hotel on the escarpment, there may be potential to reconsider its form and layout, to maximise the number of rooms looking out to sea and to reflect the client's current wish to build two hotels, rather than one. The options that followed the site contours seemed to offer much more potential for creating spaces and places that worked with, rather than against, the typology of landscape, whilst maximising potential views from the front and rear of the site.

The impact of the infrastructure required to service the various parts of the resort should not be underestimated, as this will have a significant effect on the immediate and surrounding landscapes. This is especially pertinent in the options that locate a number of individual holiday villas at the rear of the site.

Village

We are generally supportive of the way in which the designs for the proposed village have evolved and are confident that issues raised in regard to detailed aspects of its layout will be resolved as the designs develop. We suggest that the varying house typologies and landscape concept could be more integrated and developed in tandem and understand that a landscape management plan is being developed that will help to facilitate this.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Aberdeenshire Council.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. J. Morris".

Head of Architecture

Encl.

Cc. Sonya Galloway, Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department
Neil Hobday, Trump International Golf Links Scotland