

**Report Title:** Auchincruive Estate Masterplan, Ayr  
**Issue Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008  
**Client/Developer:** AWG Properties Ltd / SAC  
**Lead Designer:** Farningham McCreddie Partnership / White Young Green  
**Local Authority:** South Ayrshire Council  
**Location:** Auchincruive Estate, Ayr  
**Planning Ref:** 07/01741/OUT  
**Details:** A proposed masterplan in support of an outline planning application for the Auchincruive Estate / Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) property situated to the northeast of Ayr. The project proposes a limited presence for the SAC and new mixed-use development, including a hotel and conference centre, an 18-hole golf course, an equestrian centre, approximately 179 residential units and business and research space



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## INTRODUCTION

This report relates to a proposed masterplan in support of an outline planning application for the Auchincruive Estate / Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) property situated to the northeast of Ayr. The project proposes a limited presence for the SAC and new mixed-use development, including a hotel and conference centre, an 18-hole golf course, an equestrian centre, approximately 179 residential units and 275,000 square feet of business and research space. The design was considered at a Design Review meeting held in Edinburgh on 11 March 2008.

The project was presented by representatives of Farningham McCreddie Partnership / White Young Green and AWG Properties Ltd.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of South Ayrshire Council and Historic Scotland.

## A+DS VIEWS

### 1. General comments

1.1 We thank the presenters for the opportunity to comment on the design at an early stage.

1.2 We welcome a proposal that consolidates the future of the Estate to bring listed buildings back into beneficial use, and recognise that a level of enabling development may be required. Whilst the overall intention is commendable we have concerns about what is proposed.

### 2. Landscape analysis

2.1 The quality of the setting is a striking feature of this stunning site. The concept masterplan in support of the outline planning application presents a detailed layout; however, we remain to be convinced that the design has been informed by a strong analysis. The landscape exists in many layers – historic, physical, cultural, hydrology, microclimate, routes, flora and fauna, etc - and there is no evidence of any narrative that brings this all together as an intelligent structure to inform the development.

2.2 Without such an understanding there is little capability to comment on the spatial composition, or how the type and layout of the settlement has been influenced by the landscape. Although the information is preliminary in support of an outline application, the masterplan does not provide a convincing explanation of the disposition, or relationship, of buildings to space.

### **3. Design vision**

3.1 Due to the exceptional circumstances of this project we would expect it to be an exemplar for this type of enabling development. However, there is no clear expression of a vision of how new and old come together, how built form integrates with the landscape setting, or a concept for the physicality of this as a special place.

3.2 We recognise that parts of the site could be considered to be 'brownfield'. Nevertheless, we seek clarification as to how such a remote and standalone settlement can be considered to be sustainable as a form of development. There is as yet no clear explanation of the economic viability for the enabling works, no evident housing capacity study, and little description of how the development is intended to support, and be serviced by, public transport or other facilities.

3.3 We have concerns about the type of place that is being proposed. There is a zoned and segregated approach evident in the division between residential and commercial activities, and between the village and campus park.

3.4 There may yet be exciting and challenging possibilities for contemporary housing design and layout, which refute a suburban approach to housing. Any high quality development in this landscape will require the corporate support of the council, including an enlightened attitude to roads layout in such a setting.

### **CONCLUSION**

We thank those attending for their presentation and recognise that this is an outline planning application; however, this is a special place, and we would expect a more convincing explanation and description of how a vision for the place has been informed by a detailed analysis of the landscape setting.

We welcome a proposal that recognises the historic buildings as assets; however, we question and seek clarification about the broad sustainability of the development.

We trust our comments are helpful at this stage, and look forward to seeing how the designs progress.

**Report issued:** 11 April 2008