
APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE
Form Access Road and 10 House Plots
Site PDA 9/4, Inveraray South
PLANNING, ACCESS & DESIGN STATEMENT



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for Argyll Estates

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement accompanies the Planning Application for an access road and 10 house plots at site PDA 9/4, at the south of Inveraray. It has been prepared by Urban Animation on behalf of the Applicant, Argyll Estates.

The Statement briefly summarises planning policy relating to the site. It explains how the physical characteristics of the site and surroundings provide a context for the layout and design of the proposals. It also explains how convenient access can be provided to the site for all users.

A number of layout options are assessed and the most appropriate approach is taken forward as the basis of the Application proposals. The aim of this process is to ensure that the development proposals achieve a high standard of design and contribute positively to the townscape at this important 'gateway' site.

The Statement has been prepared using the guidance set out by the Scottish Government in Planning Advice Note 68, 'Design Statements'. It also takes full account of Argyll & Bute Council's award winning Sustainable Design Guidance.



view east across the site from The Avenue and Inveraray Golf Course



view north east across the site

2.0 Site Details

The site is located at the south of Inveraray. It is bounded to the south and east by the A83, to the west by the Inveraray golf course, to the north west by a tree belt at The Avenue and to the north east by the existing domestic property at Whitecraigs.

The site has an attractive landscape setting and benefits from wooded surroundings with open views out to the west and south west, as well as more restricted views towards the town at the north east. The site is at the edge of Inveraray and the development will need to respond sensitively to it's setting, as a new 'gateway' to the town.

The total site area amounts to approximately 1.17 hectares / 2.92 acres. To the north of the site, a strip of land is reserved for protection of the existing town sewer, amounting to approximately 0.13 hectares / 0.32 acres. This area can serve a useful function as public open space.

There is no established vehicular access to the site, other than an agricultural track at the north which is unsuitable for upgrading to an adoptable road standard. Access is therefore proposed from the A83. There are no direct pedestrian connections at present but these can be formed at the north and north east of the site, linking with the established town footpath network at The Avenue and the A83.

The site has not been developed and is currently in use as grazing. It is relatively flat over the central area, with slightly higher ground at the north and slightly lower ground to the east and south. There are no significant level changes across the site.

There are no known flooding issues at the site.

Scottish Water has confirmed there is sufficient existing capacity in the local services network to accommodate the water supply and foul drainage requirements arising from the development. Surface water drainage arrangements are subject to further agreement and can be accommodated within the site as required.

SSE has confirmed that power supplies for the development can be extended from existing apparatus to the west of the site.



view through trees to the site from the A83 at the south

3.0 Planning Policy

Site PDA 9/4 (Potential Development Area), is identified in the current Argyll & Bute Local Plan. It is also included in the Inveraray settlement boundary area.

The identified use for the site is low density housing with a provision of 25% affordable housing. Whilst the need for affordable housing is accepted, this site is not considered to be an appropriate location, since it is not ideal for pedestrian access to the town centre facilities. Discussions with local Housing Associations suggest a more central location would be preferred. It is therefore proposed that affordable housing should not be located on the site but that other off site approaches should be agreed with the Council to meet the policy requirement attached to the site.

The Local Plan contains an Action Plan which sets out basic information on development requirements for the site. A master planned approach is requested, to ensure that development of the whole site is coordinated and achieves an appropriate quality of design and layout. This Design Statement meets this requirement.

The Action Plan notes an access constraint at the site, reflecting the fact that there is no established vehicular access. It is not possible to achieve vehicular access to an adoptable standard from The Avenue at the north. It will therefore be necessary to provide a new access direct from the A83. It is understood that a similar arrangement is planned for an almost identical site at Lochgair, further south on the A83.

The site is located within Inveraray Castle's Garden and Designed Landscape policy area, set out in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan. However, no impact on remaining features is envisaged.

The site also lies within an Area of Panoramic Landscape Quality policy area. However, the woodland cover around the site and rising ground to the north, west and south west will provide a natural backdrop to the development.

4.0 Site and Design Analysis

The Application site lies at the edge of Inveraray and will form a new 'gateway' development. The layout and design of the development should take full account of its prominent position.

Inveraray is located on the western shore of Loch Fyne on the A83 Tarbet - Campbeltown road. It lies adjacent to Inveraray Castle, the ancestral seat of the Duke of Argyll. The town is a popular visitor destination and the quality of its townscape and setting are important factors in attracting tourists.

The town was originally designed and constructed in the mid to late 18th Century as a planned settlement. Much of the historic urban form remains intact. It is known widely as 'the jewel in the crown of Scottish planned towns'. However, the design and layout of modern development has not always been of a sufficiently high standard, or appropriate to its context.

The recent development of house plots by Argyll Estates at The Avenue is a first step towards achieving a higher standard of layout and design, meeting the aspirations of the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance.

Elsewhere, Argyll Estates is promoting a strategic, long term approach to development in Inveraray. Urban Animation has prepared a Preliminary Master Plan for a significant mixed use development on land in the central part of the town. The proposal has been submitted to Argyll & Bute Council for consideration in its current Development Plan review.

The original town is unashamedly urban. Later developments are suburban and do not relate well to the planned part of Inveraray. In fact, they undermine the quality of the original town.

Houses to the north of the site are very low density and set in large plots. The Avenue plots introduced a somewhat higher density of development with plots typically 0.35 acres, achieving a degree of formality by arranging houses with a clear building line. This is considered to be a positive step by Argyll Estates in promoting development which is compatible with the urban character of the original town. On this site, a further reduction in plot size to an average of approximately 0.25 acres would be another step towards a more urban form.

The approach to Inveraray from the north provides stunning views of the town, set dramatically on the shores of Loch Fyne and Loch Shira. It will not be possible to achieve memorable design on this scale and the context is entirely different. However, there is no good reason to hide this development at the south of the town from view. Instead, the layout and buildings should be arranged to relate directly to the A83 and provide attractive frontages to approaching traffic.

However, it will also be necessary to ensure that new buildings do not overwhelm the setting of the golf course and surrounding landscape. A solid edge of development would not be appropriate.

The relationship of the buildings to the A83 and the golf course is considered to be the most important design factor shaping the layout.

This factor is directly related to the availability of views into the site from various local vantage points. The surrounding woodland and topography provide a backdrop to the site and will ensure the buildings do not breach the skyline. However, there are also opportunities to exploit the attractive distant views out from the site, north east towards Inveraray, west towards higher ground and south to Loch Fyne.

The north eastern and north western edges of the development will be well contained by existing woodland and trees. There is an opportunity to make positive use of the existing sewer reservation by forming public open space with footpath routes. Houses could front this space if other layout design factors allow.

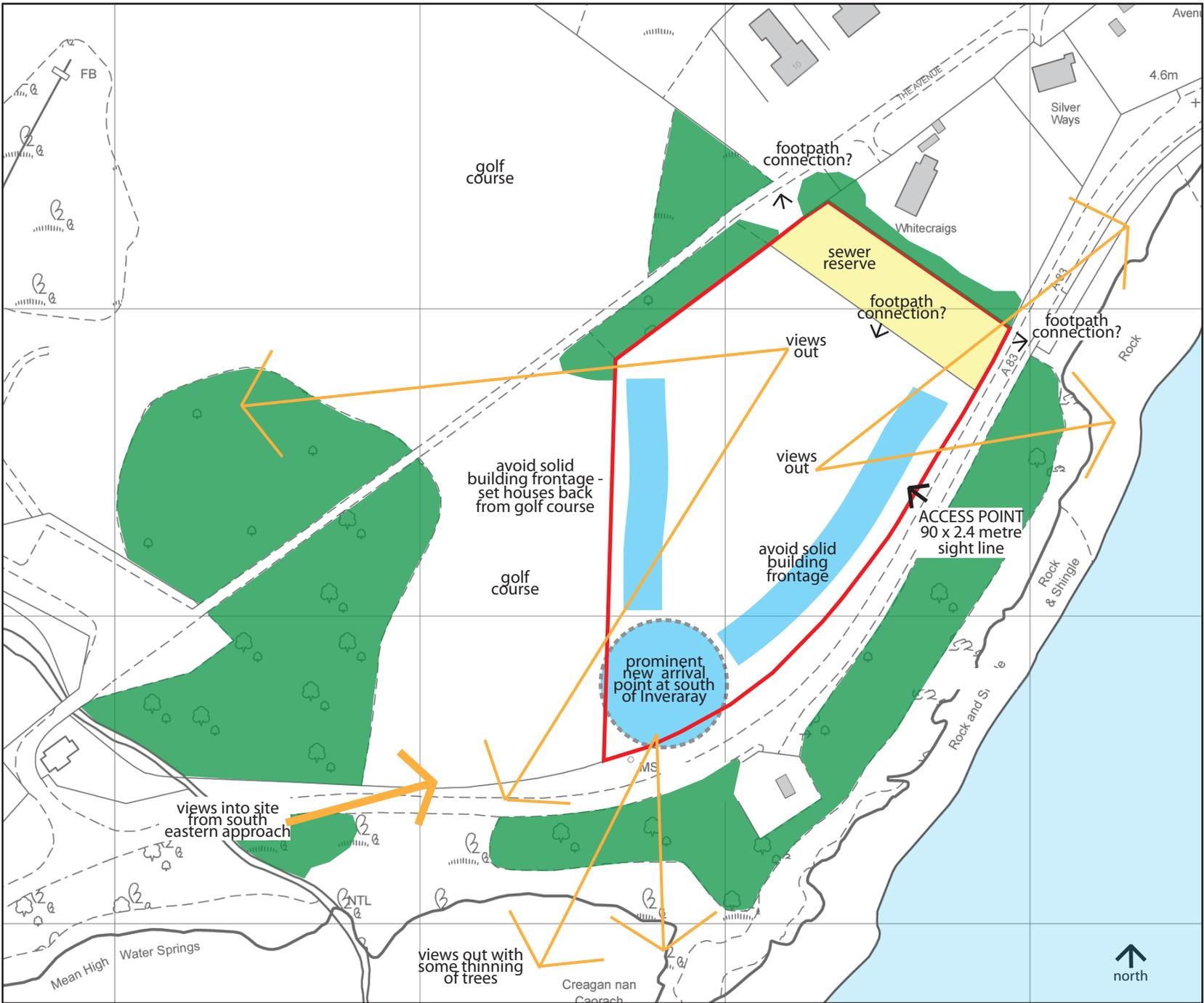
The relationship of buildings to roads, paths and countryside beyond the site is important. However, the relationships between buildings and circulation spaces within the site also requires careful consideration, to create a sense of place and avoid an excessively informal suburban style.

A layout led by high specification road geometry would tend towards a typical suburban form. This is not considered to be appropriate for this site and the use of shared private driveways is preferred. This is consistent with the recent Government policy statement, 'Residential Streets'.

Road sight line requirements will impose a restriction on the positioning of the access to the site from the A83. There is a high point in the road surface a short distance north of the centre at the boundary with the A83. The access position needs to be close to this point.

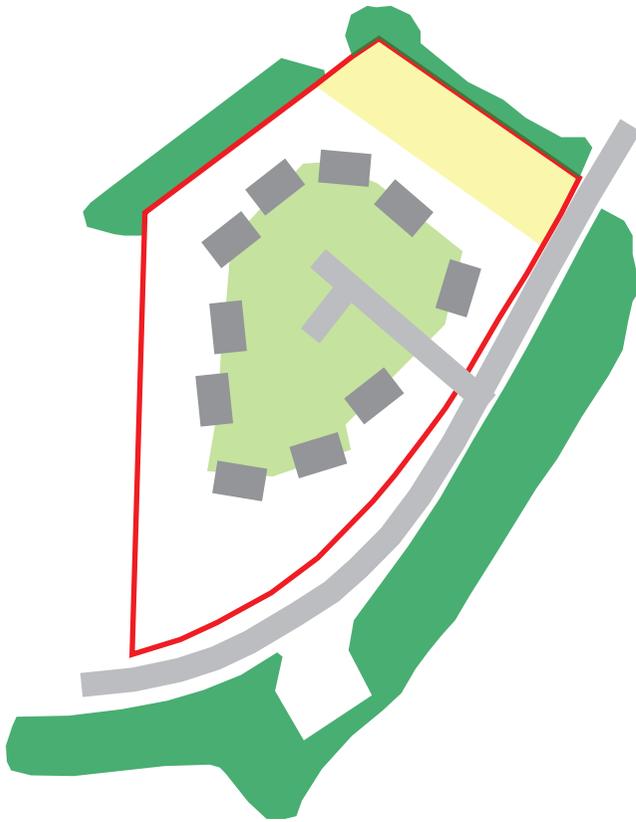
Finally, sustainable layout of buildings is best achieved by orientating the longer elevation of the building, typically the front or back of the house, towards the south to maximise solar gain. The layout should accommodate building with southerly aspects where possible.

SITE AND DESIGN ANALYSIS PLAN



100 metres

5. Layout Options



Option 1 : Introverted, Informal, Suburban

The houses turn their backs to the A83 and Golf Course, facing inwards around a typical suburban cul-de-sac.

Poor relationship to surroundings, inappropriate character, limited contribution to townscape and 'gateway', limited solar orientation, some access to distant views.



Option 2 : Outward Facing

The houses face the A83, Golf Course and open space, with a central parking and access court.

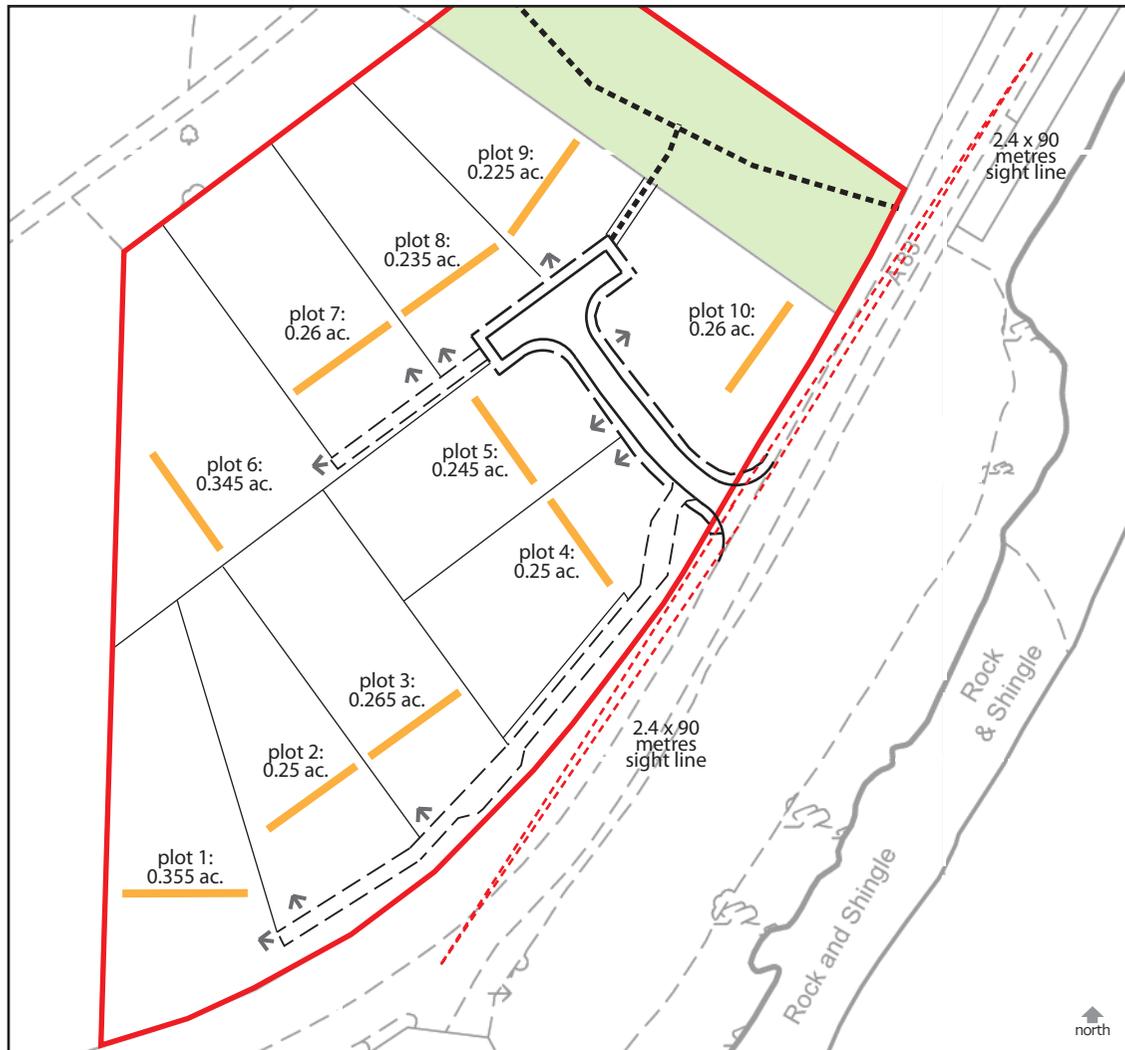
Poor internal relationship, excessive frontage to Golf Course. Improved contribution to 'gateway', better relationship with A83 and improved use of views.



Option 3 : PREFERRED OPTION Contextual, Design Responsive Approach

The houses form a 'gateway' and relate well to the A83. Internally, the layout is more formal, with one house set apart to achieve a finer grain and create an informal edge to Golf Course.

Improved solar orientation, distant views exploited, informal edge to Golf Course.



PROPOSED ROAD AND PLOT LAYOUT

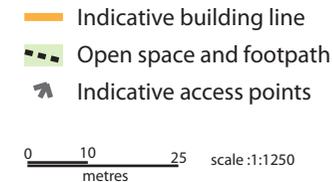
6.0 Development Proposals

The Site and Design Analysis and the Layout Options have been used to shape the development proposals, which can be summarised as follows :

- 10 house plots, averaging approximately 0.26 acres in size;
- Houses orientated to achieve clearly identified design objectives;
- Layout designed to contribute positively to local townscape;
- Length of access road at adoptable standard is kept to a minimum;
- Shared private driveways to avoid engineering led design solution;
- Service reservation used as public open space with footpaths.

In responding to the site characteristics and its setting, the layout forms a distinctive new gateway at the south of the town, relates directly to the A83 and limits the impact of new buildings fronting the golf course. It maximises distant views out from the site but ensures that buildings are adequately screened and set amongst trees and woodland. Most of the buildings are well positioned to benefit from passive solar gain and rear gardens will also achieve good sun cover.

Detailed design guidance for the buildings and layout is set out on the following page.



Building Design

The design of the buildings should be compatible with the character of those in the original planned town at Inveraray. The guidance below sets out criteria which should result in simple traditional form, materials and detailing which are appropriate to the local context.

However, buildings should not be designed as a historical pastiche. Just as the original buildings in Inveraray are representative of their era, so the design of the houses on this site should be contemporary and sustainable. Argyll & Bute Council's Sustainable Design Guidance states that the most important issue is that buildings must be appropriately designed for their setting. The Sustainable Design Guidance provides detailed information which the Council will use to assess individual house designs.

Size and Positioning of Houses

The site layout indicates building frontage lines. The front elevations of the houses should be positioned at these building lines. The houses at plots 1, 6 and 10 are free standing and the frontage line may be adjusted a little where the quality of design and massing on these prominent plots justifies this. However, the relationship to adjacent houses will also need to be considered carefully, to ensure the overall quality of the layout is maintained.

On the remaining plots, house frontages should be directly aligned with one another, so flexibility in the positioning of the houses is more limited. Stepped frontages would result in a less formal, suburban form which would be ineffective in consolidating the urban character at Inveraray. However, the positioning of any porches, bay windows and garages may allow for minor building line adjustments without compromising the quality of building groups.

Houses should generally be two storeys high, although one and a half storeys may also be acceptable where the massing and design quality contribute effectively to the urban character of the development and its relationship to its surroundings. The design of the houses at plots 1, 4, 6 and 10 is particularly important in this respect.

Limited single storey construction may be acceptable at the rear or side of houses, if it can be shown to enhance the quality of the design and massing of the house. Any single storey building elements should be secondary to the main two or one and a half storey house form.

Houses should be set back a minimum of one metre from side boundaries, although it may be appropriate to locate garages so that their walls form part of the boundary enclosure. Each house should have a minimum of two car parking spaces, in addition to any garage, and a turning space within the plot.

Form and Materials

External walls should be finished in wet dash render or harl, painted white. Many original buildings in Inveraray have window surrounds or banding, typically painted black. Where window banding is used, it should be finished in natural stone or painted in black or a contrasting colour.

Roofs should be double pitched at between 37 and 45 degrees, with gabled ends. Roofs should be finished with natural West Highland slate or a suitable replica. Chimney heads should be located at gables. Dormers should be in traditional form, with materials as above. Eaves and gables should have no overhang.

Windows should be traditional timber sash and case with a dominant vertical proportion, painted white. Doors should be finished in vertical boarded timber. Any storm porches should match the design and materials set out above. Any conservatories should be constructed in timber and located behind the main building line and front elevation. Custom designed glazing may be utilised as a means of maximising passive solar gain. However, care must be taken to ensure appropriate design, taking account of the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance and this Design Statement.

Integrated garages forming part of the main house elevation would not be appropriate. However, they may form a subsidiary part of the elevation, or be linked to the house. Rear garages will be appropriate at plots 6 and 10. The remaining plots could have garages to the rear or in front of the house, if they can be arranged in conjunction with the house to form a logical and attractive building group, relating well to its neighbours.

Free standing garages should be single storey with double pitched roofs. Design and materials should match the houses.

All trees around the site must be protected at all times during construction. Detailed landscaping proposals should accompany planning applications for individual houses. Indigenous species should be used for planting.

Rear garden areas, behind the building frontage lines, should be fenced with vertical timber boarding, stone walls, or masonry walls finished in wetdash render, painted white.

Notwithstanding the above, there may be other materials and building form which could be acceptable. In all cases, the design of individual houses must meet the requirements of the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance and the design objectives set out in this Design Statement.

Top and centre right :

Two examples of recently constructed houses at The Avenue. The design requirements for this development were similar to those set out in this Design Statement. Both are designed in traditional form, with white walls and slate roofs. The top house is more contemporary than the lower one but both are compatible with the original building form at Inveraray shown below.



Lower right :

Original buildings at Main Street, Inveraray. Simple, well proportioned architecture, with slate roofs, white walls, black painted window and door surrounds. The original town is unashamedly urban and formal.



Open Space

The service reservation at the north of the site can be used as an area of informal open space. The character of this area should be similar to The Avenue at the north west of the site, although service access and protection requirements may limit the amount of planting that can be introduced.

Ideally, paths through this strip should be informal, although the Council's Transportation Department may wish to see routes constructed to an adoptable standard.

Roads, Footpaths and Access

To achieve a suitable standard of safety at the road access to the site, the speed restricted area will need to be extended to the south. At present, the 30 mph limit begins immediately to the north of the site. The sight line indicated on the layout drawing is 2.4 x 90 metres, which meets the standard for a 30 mph road. The access position has been located close to the high point of the A83 road surface as it passes the site, to ensure optimum visibility.

Within the site, a short length of adoptable standard road is proposed. However, six of the ten plots have vehicular access from shared private driveways.

Footpaths through the area of public open space would connect the development with the existing path at The Avenue. The Council Planning Department has indicated that a footpath connection may also be required to the existing public footpath at the A83, a short distance to the north east of the site. These additional routes will ensure good access to the local footpath network.

Footpath routes to the town centre, via The Avenue and the A83 are accessible to wheelchair users. However, an alteration may be required to the gate at the end of the surfaced road at The Avenue, a short distance to the north of the site.

The closest bus stop is approximately 600 metres to the north east at the junction of Barn Brae and the A83. While this is a little beyond a standard walking time of approximately 5 minutes, it is not considered excessive for a rural town, where public transport services are often less accessible.