

Walter Crawford Property

Representation Statement to West Lothian Council Proposed Local Development Plan

Promotion of site at Victoria Park, Fauldhouse for housing development.



Report for :

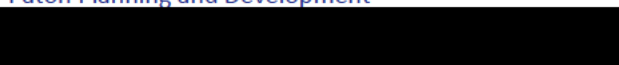
Walter Crawford Property

Date :

20th November 2015



Paton Planning and Development



Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Inconsistency between PLDP Fauldhouse diagram and Appendix 2	1
3.	Summary of case presented by Walter Crawford Property	3
4.	Conclusion	4

Productions

(submitted as separate documents by e-mail)

1. Comparison diagram showing the Masterplan, the PLDP allocation plan, and the extended area promoted by this representation
2. Walter Crawford Property Victoria Park Fauldhouse Representation statement
3. Walter Crawford Property Victoria Park Fauldhouse Concept masterplan
4. Commentary on housing market conditions at Fauldhouse
5. Geo-Environmental Report by Mason Evans
6. Proposal for Joint Venture between GeoCapital and Walter Crawford Property for the provision of social housing on the site.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This representation concerns the failure of West Lothian Council to allocate the full area identified for development within land owned by Walter Crawford Property at Victoria Park, Fauldhouse as a housing development allocation in the Proposed Local Development Plan (PLDP). The PLDP allocates a small area of the Company's land, identified as site H-FA-11.
- 1.2 Previous representations at community consultation, "Expression of Interest" (EOI) and Main Issues Report (MIR) stages have promoted a masterplan-based approach to the release of land at this location for housing development, set within a framework of landscape, public open space, tree planting and allotments. It is particularly disappointing to Walter Crawford Property that this masterplan-based comprehensive approach has been rejected by the Council, which instead has allocated a minimal amount of "in-fill" land between existing allocations. We advocate that the Council should support a comprehensive town expansion concept with appropriate landscaping and public facilities, rather than the reactionary site-by-site approach which the PLDP represents.
- 1.3 The representation advocates that the full area of land indicated on the Masterplan submitted at EOI and MIR stages of plan preparation be included in the housing allocation at this site. Previously submitted documents provide evidence that the site is capable of contributing to the effective housing land supply of West Lothian.
- 1.4 Production 1 is a comparison diagram showing the Masterplan, the PLDP allocation plan, and the extended area promoted by this representation lodged on behalf of Walter Crawford Property.
- 1.5 It is not necessary to revise the documents previously submitted, so the following documents form part of this representation:
 - Production 2: Walter Crawford Property Victoria Park MIR Fauldhouse Representation statement
 - Production 3: Walter Crawford Property Victoria Park Fauldhouse Concept masterplan
 - Production 4: Commentary on housing market conditions at Fauldhouse
 - Production 5: Geo-Environmental Report by Mason Evans
 - Production 6: Proposal for Joint Venture between GeoCapital and Walter Crawford Property for Joint Venture for the provision of social housing on the site.

2 Inconsistency between PLDP Fauldhouse diagram and appendix 2

- 2.1 The proportion of Walter Crawford Property land which has been allocated is designated H-FA-11 on the Fauldhouse section of map 5. However the text describing site H-FA-11 in appendix 2 (p188) appears to relate to a different site. It names the site as Croftfoot Farm (a name we have never used), it's status is "Carried forward from WLLP" – but it is a new allocation, it refers to access being required to Sheephousehill Road (which is far south of the site), and that there is a watercourse along the eastern boundary (which there is not).

2.2 This matter has been brought to the attention of the PLDP team, but no reply received.

3 Summary of case presented by Walter Crawford Property

3.1 The case for allocating the larger site has already been made in the documents submitted to the Council at the EOI and MIR stages, and this is a summary of that case.

Effective housing development land

3.2 The case has been made that the entire site offers a development opportunity that will be “effective” during the periods of the plan. WCP has already completed geo-environmental work which reveals that the site will be no more difficult to develop than other sites on the West Lothian coalfield (see Production 5). The Company is also in discussion with GeoCapital to fund social housing on part of the site (Production 6). If the full allocation is made, WCP intends to submit an application for planning permission in principle covering the entire landowning to formally propose the development, open space / landscaping / pedestrian routes, and allotment areas.

Irrelevant boundary of the allocation

3.3 The settlement boundary shown on the Fauldhouse PLDP map formed by the eastern edges of the proposed allocations does not follow any physical feature on the ground. The land beyond the boundary is the same former colliery land that falls within the allocation areas. It therefore is an inadequate and irrelevant boundary. We draw attention to diagram 7 of Production 2 which is an aerial photograph onto which we have indicated the various boundaries. The extended boundary proposed in this representation follows the land ownership boundary, which is the extremity of the former colliery land. Nevertheless, the Masterplan makes allowance for a green edge containing the public footpath along the boundary. The boundary issue was explained in Production 2, and Production 1 illustrates the additional land to which this representation refers.

3.4 The Fauldhouse settlement diagram within Map 5 exaggerates the size of allocated site H-FA 1 (which is outwith the ownership of WCP), by including an area that was developed some years ago and contains about 37 houses. We have hatched this area in red on the centre diagram of Production 1.

Brownfield land

3.5 The preference for development of brownfield land is a well-established principle of planning policy at National, Strategic and Local levels. The brownfield status of the representation site has already been referred to in production 2. We contend that as the remainder of the site is brownfield land, its inclusion in the development allocation is compliant with planning policy and an opportunity to focus new development in Fauldhouse on brownfield, rather than greenfield sites.

Impact

- 3.6 Production 2 presents the case that the expanded allocation advocated in the representation would have no appreciable impact on the setting or character of the town. It is not visible from public roads, and lies within identifiable boundaries which would be reasonable and natural future boundaries of this part of the town.
- 3.7 WCP's Masterplan method of progressing the development of its land allows a comprehensive approach to development - including open space and amenity areas, footway routes, tree belts, and creating a new eastern edge for Fauldhouse.
- 3.8 Viewed in the context of the overall shape of Fauldhouse as easily seen in the settlement diagram in PLDP map 5, the extended allocation would "round-off" the shape of the eastern edge of the settlement within clearly definable boundaries, and would not result in unconstrained expansion beyond its existing extremities.

Accessibility

- 3.9 Production 2 demonstrates that the advocated extended housing allocation would be within walking and cycling distance of the town centre and community facilities, and would be of similar distance from these than other sites which are allocated in the PLDP.
- 3.10 Production 2 also describes the range of public transport services operating along Lanrigg Road which is within easy walking distance of the site.

Social housing

- 3.11 Walter Crawford Property has been actively seeking a development partner who would provide a social housing component in the development area.
- 3.12 The Company has therefore agreed a Joint Venture proposal with GeoCapita to seek to develop a social housing development at the site with an integrated approach to renewable energy provision. GeoCapita would provide the following principal support to this project:
- Development funding provision and associated financial support to developer (council or social housing association, including pre-funding provision if required)
 - Analysis and provision of suitable renewable energy infrastructure sufficient to provide the new community with low cost heat and power via a mini-grid/community heating system and enabled by way of a bespoke and accredited ESCO.
 - Provision or support to the developer in provisioning low carbon efficient housing designs suitable for integrated RE provision.
 - Management and provision of all approvals, warranties and accreditations associated.
 - Support to/with architects in relation to master-plan and unit orientations.
- 3.13 Geo-Capita have already met Council officers to explain the proposals. Production 6 of this representation is an e-mail confirming the JV proposal and summarising the discussion. Both companies would welcome opportunities to discuss this aspect of the proposal in greater detail.

The Masterplan

- 3.14 The Walter Crawford Property development at Victoria Park has always been on a basis of a comprehensive masterplan for the Company's entire landowning. This started in 2008 with a Masterplan involving other participants and sites, and a recreation proposal; public consultation, and an eventually-abortive application for planning permission in principle.
- 3.15 The masterplan-approach to development has been promoted through the EOI and MIR stages of the emerging LDP, and illustrates a development integrated into its landscape setting, into adjoining already-allocated sites, and making provision for recreation and greenspace, a footpath network, and allotment gardens (which were identified at the community consultation as being needed in Fauldhouse).
- 3.16 The larger site that this representation advocates being allocated would provide the critical development mass to justify an innovative renewable energy solution, and there is sufficient land to accommodate the necessary plant.
- 3.17 The minor allocation made in the PLDP does not contain sufficient development potential to fund this range of enhancements, on top of other contributions required by the Council and listed at the start of PLDP Appendix Two.
- 3.18 In addition, the present road access to allocations H-FA 7 and 11 lies on Walter Crawford Property Land and would require upgrading and widening to a full development access road. A further inhibiting factor is a tree belt lying within allocation H-FA 11 which Walter Crawford Property envisage retaining and enhancing as part of the Masterplan landscape structure. Retention of the natural treebelt would enhance any development on the masterplan site submitted by Walter Crawford Property but would substantially reduce the actual development area available within H-FA 7 rendering the allocated area as financially impractical for development purposes.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This representation contends:
1. that Fauldhouse housing site H-FA 11 should be extended to cover the adjoining area owned by Walter Crawford Property as shown by the red area on Production 1,
 2. that the settlement boundary line shown on the Fauldhouse settlement diagram (PLDP map 5) should be revised eastwards as shown by the dashed line on Production 1,
 3. and that the entry for site H-FA 11 in PLDP Appendix Two be corrected to refer to the correct site, and that the development area be extended from 3.57ha to 7.4ha.
- 4.2 Walter Crawford Property re-iterates its willingness to discuss the proposed development concept and this representation with the Council.

Walter Crawford

15th October 2014

Dear Mr Crawford

Potential Residential Site at Fauldhouse

I refer to our recent discussions regarding the above.

As you are aware Turpie & Co are an experienced firm of estate agents and valuers specialising in the West Lothian area where we feel that we have developed and established considerable local expertise going back over ten years.

We work extensively in the area with national and local builders providing them with advice and services concerning trends in the local property market. As well as providing traditional estate agency services, which includes a full marketing service in relation to any new build developments, we also collate data and prepare reports showing the extent and nature of all developments in the area which then allows our developer clients to assess the type, style and price range of the properties they wish to build and bring to market.

We can confirm that over the last 18 months or so we have seen significant increases in demand in and around the West Lothian area in general, with specific developments selling extremely well and beyond expectations.

The Heartlands development is now showing significant progress and other smaller developments have seen many houses reserved and purchased under missives during the course of construction. This trend reflects an upturn in the housing market generally throughout Scotland, however the West Lothian region in particular is proving extremely popular with there being consistent and significant demand across all ranges of accommodation.

While there is a strong demand for executive style accommodation in terms of 4-5 bed detached homes, there is also an increasing demand for 2-3 bedroom semi detached and terraced homes within the area and there is a considerable shortage of new flatted accommodation.

Overall demand is fuelled by the proximity of the area in general to the hubs of Edinburgh, Livingston, Glasgow and to an extent Falkirk and Stirling. Improving transport links, and the general trend towards a commuter environment, have served to push demand for housing in the area to new levels, especially as it is perceived that greater value is to be had in the area in comparison to some other areas closer to Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Fauldhouse in particular offers great scope for further development across all ranges of accommodation and your site, being on the border of the existing village, would lend itself to a very

attractive development of new housing whether that be social amenity housing, private housing or a mixture of the two.

The area is one which is well known to us and in our opinion is one which will undoubtedly improve and increase in popularity with house purchasers and tenants over the next 5 years.

We have no doubt that any development on this site which offers a mix of house types and ranges will prove extremely popular and be capable of full occupation within a very short time of completion, with the very real possibility of many private units being pre sold during the course of construction.

Obviously how successful and how quickly any sales campaign could be concluded will depend on the final style and quality of the units which would be erected on the site, however assuming that the houses are built and completed to modern residential standards, we do not see why the developed site should not be extremely successful and represent a substantial asset to Fauldhouse in particular and West Lothian in general.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Faithfully



Stephen Mckean
Turpie & Co