

Shore Facilities update and site appraisal June 14.

As updated at the USCA AGM, feasibility work has continued to try and establish the best location for the shore facilities development that would work for all.

Further potential sites have appraised, after it has been concluded that the Seaforth building is not suitable due to a variety of reasons primarily:-

- congestion at this busy corner of the road
- displacement of fishermen meaning replacement buildings required, which extra funding would have to be sought
- expensive ground excavation works and rock removal and enabling works
- potentially complicated long lease arrangement which is not favoured by SLF.

After a meeting with members of the Ulva buyout committee, it was decided to review other sites, including assessing the site of the Ulva garages.

Will spoke to the local planner Andrew , who reiterated that **he would like to see something of high quality at Ulva Ferry.** Will described the scheme as it existed in the latest iteration (Seaforth building) and Andrew Barrie was not keen on this. He reiterated the council's policy that if one is proposing a building in the Countryside Zone and the National Scenic Area it should have a strong economic case and it should be a special building (his words) **'a high quality contemporary design would be what we are looking for.'**

SITE APPRAISAL

1. Land to South of Ulva Buildings (Leitches land)

Pros:-

- **Land would be purchased by MICT** from Leitches on behalf of the community subject to a successful SLF application.
- **larger area** – conducive to a one story building
- **Close to parking opportunities**
- **opportunities for iconic building with panoramic views** to Ben More And Ulva particularly
- **ground investigation already done**
- **scope for future development** – such as possible accommodation unit in future

Cons:-

- **there may be pressure from the planners to keep it close to the Seaforth building** as the planners will be keen for the building to remain within the cluster of Ulva Ferry buildings. The closer the site is to Seaforth, the more steeply the ground slopes, the harder access issues are to resolve without ending up with an ugly building.
- **groundworks are still fairly significant** to provide level site, as the land is undulating.
- **not such great views to the north and west**
- **very prominent to Ulva**, particularly with “long side” of building face on. This was commented on by several people as an objection.
- **pedestrian access will be required through potentially steep and sloping ground**, otherwise the building will be disconnected from the pontoons. This access would likely be past fisherman's area, with possible H&S concerns; may be slightly tricky up steep access; or alternative route would be much longer.
- **an access road will need to be formed all the way down** to the shelf of land the building sits on for level disabled access from parking and for the fire brigade to be able to get close enough. This will be expensive and the result of the expenditure will just be a few hundred meters of gravel road across otherwise undeveloped ground, whereas on the other sites where there are expensive issues to solve in the ground, the money spent on groundworks will also be going towards making a more interesting building.
- **carparking sites would be prominent as mostly on plateau** – visible from main road and view points
- **Leitches wish to maintain access through current gateway to north east** – another access road would be required to south of gulley, with less optimal sightlines, and potentially more expensive.

2. Ulva Garages Site

Pros:-

- **site near pontoon with good view of the pontoon** and the west to islands, skerries and Burg
- **visible from the approach along the road**, providing a good gateway point
- **could allow for good view of Ben More in an upper floor** and possibly some of sound of Ulva
- **location is within settlement cluster that planners favour.**

Cons:-

- **raised site level - 2 storeys and a very prominent site** – the front façade would be very high if having 2 storeys – and the planners may not like this – no precedent in area.
- **would have to displace fishermen and Roc** - and would have to build another building due to displacement, accommodate tenants and potentially other users of garages (having to find additional funding for)
- **disabled access will require careful consideration**, current floor level of garages relative to road is too steep for access from any existing parking location. Options are (1) to excavate this site down to road level. (2) somehow provide some flat disabled parking with level access to current first floor, but the main entrance(s) to the building will be dominated by parking access ramps and arrangements, will look bad.
- **this option would require securing a long lease in excess of 25 years from Ulva** to secure funding from SLF to develop the site. This could be complex between landowners/building owner and tenants. SLF are not keen on leasing arrangements.
- **carparking would extend onto plateau area which has greater visibility from various viewpoints.**
- **leased land would be used for the building**, and purchased land for parking and other amenities, may not be so favourable to SLF)
- **Difficult to source capital development funding on a site that is leased** and not owned by applicant

3. Head of pontoon site (to north of access road)

Pros:-

- **Best location relative to pontoon**
- **Land would be purchased by MICT** from Leitches on behalf of the community subject to a successful SLF application.
- **Is near/adjacent to cluster of buildings – that planners prefer**
- **Visible from the approach along the road, potentially “an iconic gateway”** to Ulva and the islands.

- **Excellent view of pontoon and north to Burg point and the islands** - and nearby skerries; also view of the approach up the Sound of Ulva, if we use the current toilet block as an extension and viewing deck
- **The shore facilities building would not be so prominent from Ulva** – who would view “short side” of building - long side would face more NW and not directly W to Boathouse
- **No fishermen or others to displace** – such as Roc Sanford - therefore no necessity to find extra funding to build replacement accommodation for any tenants; no complications with long term burdens/liabilities/leases
- **Relatively level site – cheaper to excavate and undertake ground works.** Note that this was originally considered the harder site to work with, but given that the feasibility study has confirmed that the whole Ulva Ferry area is uneven and with rock about 30cm from the surface, a structure based on point foundations with columns primary beams and floor joists as secondary beams could well be cheaper than excavations through rock on other sites.
- **Some community members voiced support of this site previously** - such as Nick Mawhinney who proposed it in a consultation meeting. In the phase 1 community consultation, the pontoon carpark site (slightly further back) was favoured by some members in the community –with Bari Reid drawings used in phase 1 community consultation. This general area to the north of the road was considered a possibility (although there was mixed views on the draft designs presented at that time); the pontoon is not visible from the carpark itself, so the building would need to be closer to the pontoon.
- **current pontoon carpark could continue to be used for parking,** and flat area further north could provide further parking for the facilities – circa additional 6 or so spaces. This would comprise smaller areas for carparking development which may be more in keeping with the area - rather than a large expansive carpark on the plateau.
- **Good separation of tourists and fishermen** – tourists and pontoon users would directly access pontoon from facilities. Fishing sheds/garages and commercial activity on other side of road and down by pier, potentially reducing possible H&S issues. Viewing areas could allow good view of fishing, boating and general activities from a safe vantage point, without much interference.
- **Separation from land owned by Ulva,** keeping things simpler, not requiring potentially complex leases and major displacement; and potentially enabling Ulva to concentrate on development south of the road and MICT on future pontoon related development on north side of road
- **Opportunity to situate 4 or 5 relatively discrete camper van hook ups as income generator** tucked in beneath and to north west of Stephen Patterson’s and David Munro’s storage areas near Turus Mara carpark – less visibility from most directions (an area favoured by previous planner Lesley Cuthbertson for development, but too far for the shore facilities building itself)

- **Current or future development opportunities** could include possible area to north of Turus Mara carpark for longer stay vehicles – eg. Kayakers – subject to discussion. Area has rock infill from previous slipway excavation. Also possible future development scope near Stephen/David storage units.

Cons:-

Displacement of 3 informal parking spaces:- 2 fishermen and 1 Ulva resident. However, alternative formal spaces available approx. 20m in the current pontoon carpark and could be designated for fishermen and Ulva residents (which is not the case at the moment). The charging point would also have to be relocated to the carpark.

- **Structure is more complicated than a conventional build on a flat site.** The site is long and narrow and would require piles and stilts
- **Subsea cable runs to the west of the site** – under all the running lines to the fishermen’s tenders.
- **The pontoon fuel tank would require to be moved** further NE, incurring costs.
- **Some ground and survey works would require to be undertaken** (although some survey data available from phase 1 development and another saving may cover site valuation costs)

General remarks:-

- No works less than MHWS otherwise have to deal with Crown Estate and Marine Scotland – but this is unlikely to be a problem.

Proposal

As a result of this latest site appraisal and weighing up the above pros and cons, we are proposing the development of the shore facilities and ancillary amenities are developed on site 3 – the pontoon head and land north of the access road. This is supported by the USCA committee.