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## Delegated Planning Application Report

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**Reference No:** 20/02234/FGS  
**Applicant:** Scottish Forestry  
**Proposal:** Proposed woodland creation  
**Site Address:** Land At Stuckenduff Farm Shandon Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8NW

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### CONSULTATIONS:

Rhu and Shandon 19.01.2021  
Community Council

### PUBLICITY:

ADVERT TYPE: NONE REQUIRED.

EXPIRY DATE:

### REPRESENTATIONS:

Lindsay Doherty 4 Dalandhui Mews Dalandhui Lane Garelochhead Helensburgh Argyll And Bute

Alastair Moore Smugglers View Pier Road Rhu G84 8LH

John McGall Dunmore West Pier Road Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute

Ethel Knispel Box 201 Sutton West LOE IRO Ontario Canada

Adrian Young Highgare Shore Road Shandon Helensburgh Argyll And Bute

Peter Hillis Rowmore Quays Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8TA



Allison Hillis Rowmore Quays Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8TA

Rhu And Shandon Community Council Inverallt Shandon Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8NR

Patricia MacLaurin No Address Given

Audrey Baird Grass Point Aros Road Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute

Stuart Graham Laggary Cottage Station Road Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8LW

George Freeland 12 Torr Crescent Rhu Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8LZ

## **ASSESSMENT:**

The Primary objectives are: -

- o o The diversification of the land holding through the production of timber in the medium to long term
- o o To protect and enhance biodiversity values through native woodland creation

Secondary objectives are: -

- o o To enhance the landscape through the establishment of attractive, diverse woodlands.
- o o The protection and enhancement of biodiversity values, primarily through improving connectivity between existing woodland sites.
- o o Mitigation for climate change through carbon sequestration

### Land Use:

The land is primarily used for livestock, with areas of pastoral land and rough grazing. In recent years parts of the proposal area, particularly the northern half, have become infested with rushes (due to a lack of drain and pasture maintenance) and gorse.

Agriculture and forestry are the dominant land use in the surrounding locality with large commercial forests to the south-east and south-west across the Gareloch on the Roseneath Peninsulas. Field boundaries have scattered remnants of old dykes which have largely been replaced by modern fencing.

### Topography:

The proposal area at Stuckenduff lies on sloping ground, from the hills to the north-east falling to the edge of the railway to the south-east falling to the shores of the Gareloch just over 1km from the most southern point of the proposal boundary.

### Summary of Planting Options:

Conifer Option: 62.43 ha

Sitka Spruce: 45.29 ha (72%)

Norway Spruce: 5.63 ha (9%)

Scots Pine: 2.19 ha (3.5%)

- This mix will be planted at an average of 2m x 2m spacing, to achieve min. 2,500 stems per ha at year five.

Upland Native Birch: 6.61 ha

NMB: 5.77 ha (87%)



of which NVC is W4: 5.37 ha

Downy Birch: 2.89ha (50%), Grey Alder: 1.16ha (20%), Grey Willow: 1.16ha (20%), Rowan: 0.58ha (10%)

- W4 will be planted at an average 2.5m x 2.5m spacing to achieve min. 1,600 stems per ha at initial planting with a target density of 1,100/ha at year five.

Open Ground: 0.83 ha (13%)

Archaeological features were surveyed by Guard Archaeology through a desk based and walkover survey. The woodland design takes into consideration the archaeological features identified through avoidance of planting on these areas and incorporation of appropriate buffer zones. The walkover survey has found that three archaeological sites could potentially be directly affected by the proposed afforestation. These are: Old Shandon bloomery slag heap and a rectangular feature made of earthen banks. The survey also identified Laigh Balernock, a cup marked stone, within 100m outside the planting area.

None of these archaeological sites are no scheduled monuments but are of local archaeological interest and guidance has indicated that a minimum 5m buffer from these features should be maintained to ensure preservation.

Designations:

There are no other designations on the site itself, with the nearest designation being a geological Review Site (GRC) at Rhu Point, designated for evidence of historical succession, with no direct link with the site.

In terms of landscape, the main concern is the view from outwith the local area with particular comment regarding the view from Roseneath Peninsula. Plantings has been designed to complement the existing woodland and comprise both of commercial and native to maintain, and potentially enhance, the current diverse range of species and habitats across the farm.

Attention has been paid to ensuring the design moves away, as far as possible, from geometric blocks, especially on the upper ground, and there is the opportunity for a well-designed scheme to contribute to the landscape by tying into neighbouring Highlandman Wood, which currently sits quite isolated in the landscape. The combination of mixed conifer, native broadleaves and open ground have been designed to move away from 'hard edges' to give a more natural look to the forest.

In contrast, in terms of landscape, the immediate vicinity of the proposal will change very little. The nearest village is Rhu & Shandon, which is situated south of the proposal, which has a limited view of the site due to the topography, railway and current woodland.

The use of native broadleaves, in particular low growing species, and open ground will be used to maintain views adjacent to properties. However due to the limited number of dwellings, and existing woodland, there are very few that will be directly affected by the proposal.

In terms of birds, despite numerous site visits, a survey failed to record any direct and/or indirect evidence of breeding pairs on site however it is recommended (where possible) that all required works in support of the proposal are completed outside of the breeding raptor season as per the following:

- o hen harrier (late February to August/September); and
- o merlin (late March - August inclusive).

European Protected Species:

No badger setts have been located throughout the planting site but given the nature of the site, and the presence of gorse cover, it is possible that there may be setts on site. There is potential for badger activity in the existing woodland on neighbouring land.



The watercourses within the planting site appear to be too small to provide habitat for otter, while some of the mature trees may provide suitable roosting sites for bats. Red squirrels are known to be present in the surrounding area.

The proposal site has been grazed for many years and as a consequence has a reduced biodiversity value. There is very little difference in the vegetation across the site which comprises of patches of wet ground with rushes where drainage is impeded. Field margins contain the greatest diversity with trees, shrubs and associated vegetation providing refuge in an otherwise open landscape.

Rabbits, hares, and roe deer are present in the local area.

Haulage of timber in the future will be taken through the neighbouring plantation down through ATTG Consultation Route from the Highlandman's Wood, Rhu to the Dumbarton Arrochar (A814), Gareloch Road. The route utilises the unclassified public roads Station Road and Pier Road, Rhu to the junction of the A814 opposite Rhu Marina.

This is a Timber Transport Consultation Route and has been recently used for haulage from the neighbouring forest, with a management plan put in place to ensure not only continued public use and safety but also to protect the infrastructure.

Harvesting from the proposed site would be on an approximate rotation of between 30-40yrs, depending on growth with minimal transport movement in the intervening years.

Prior to commencement of works, an agreement would be sought with authorities to ensure safe passage. Any movement of machinery will follow the parameters of the agreed management plan to ensure ongoing safety.

Rhu and Shandon Community Council

Concerns about safety, particularly road safety and the limitations of the consultation process.

Third Party Comments

Supporters

Adrian Young, Highgare, Stuckenduff Road, Shandon  
Patricia MacLaurin

Representation

Peter and Allison Hillis, Rowmore Quays, Rhu

Bottom of Pier Road has no pavement. Otherwise support the proposal.

Objectors

Audrey Baird  
Stuart Graham, Laggary Cottage, Station Road, Rhu  
George Freeland, 12 Torr Crescent, Rhu  
Alastair Moore  
John McGall, Dunmore West, Pier Road, Rhu  
Lindsay Doherty, 2 dalandhui Mews, Dalandhui Lane, Garelochhead  
Ethel Knispel  
Michael D'Arcy

Object on grounds of road and pedestrian safety, loss of bio-diversity, inadequate consultation process.



## Assessment

In the LDP the site is within the Countryside Zone where up to small scale\* on appropriate infill, rounding off and redevelopment sites and changes of use of existing buildings. In exceptional cases development in the open countryside up to and including large scale\* may be supported on appropriate sites if this accords with an ACE\*\*.

There is a presumption against development that seeks to extend an existing settlement into the Countryside Zone.

In the Council's Woodland and Forestry Strategy the site is within an area of flexibility for woodland.

In terms of both documents forestry is an acceptable land use. There are no objections in principle subject to the caveats relating to the third party reps being taken into account.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that no objections be raised but the third party representations should be sent to the applicant for information and to deal with.

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**Signature Caseload Officer:**  
Howard Young

**Dated:** 18.02.2021

**Area Team Leader Signature:**

**Dated:** 18.02.2021

*Howard Young*

**CONDITIONS AND REASONS RELATIVE TO APPLICATION 20/02234/FGS**

**NOTE TO APPLICANT**

