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To planning.handl@argyll-bute.gov.uk

RE PLANNING APPLICATION 23/00652 REDHOLM 4 WEST LENNOX DRIVE
HELENSBURGH

Further to the amended drawings Nos PL 005 to 008, PL 010, PL 0014 to 0017, PL 051 to 056 dated 18 Sept 23 Sept 2023 and Visual Impact Assessment (photos) 22 Sept 2023 lodged by the applicant we would wish to raise the following matters as objections.

ROOF - SUSTAINABLE USE/RECYCLING OF HERITAGE BUILDING MATERIALS

We note that the amended drawings show that the proposed reconfiguration of the main roof of the building into a flat roofed building with a modern roof membrane has now been withdrawn in favour of the retention of the layout of the original pitched roof design. We welcome this change however we note that the proposal includes removal of all of the original red ridge capping pieces from the numerous roof ridges and their replacement with modern zinc sheeting. The original red ridge tiles are a very distinctive and valuable feature of the red sandstone Villa and the ridge cappings we would argue should therefore be retained. We would wish to see that they are salvaged, cleaned and recycled as part of the refurbishment of the roof. We would point out that the original red ridge cappings of the garage roof were carefully removed, cleaned and successfully reinstated when the garage roof was refurbished some few years ago and have therefore complimented the ridge cappings of the main roof since that work was carried out. The recycling of heritage materials should be undertaken whenever it is practicable to do so and in this case it has already been demonstrated that this can be achieved. If the very original special features of the Villa are to be preserved and the original architecture of the Villa to be preserved intact then **the removal of heritage materials and their replacement with modern equivalent materials should not be allowed.**

We have attached 5 colour photographs to illustrate the special detailing the ridge cappings provide for both the main roof, the side extension and the garage building.

CHIMNEYS

We note the amended plans indicate that the front right chimney is now to be retained. Again we welcome this change but this does not change the fact that two more of the original four chimneys, namely the rear left and the rear right chimneys are still proposed to be demolished by the applicant. We strongly condemn the idea that all of the chimneys are not to be retained, especially when straightforward maintenance/repair work is all that is required to ensure all of the chimneys are preserved. It is most unsatisfactory to argue because two are to be saved that a further two can simply be sacrificed. Each chimney should be considered to be equally valuable and therefore there is a strong case for all four of the chimneys of this building being retained if the character of the main roof is to be preserved

The photographs lodged on pages 2, 3 and 4 of the Visual Impact Statement seem to be an attempt to belittle the change that will be made to the visual appearance of the main roof of Redholm if two of the four chimneys are lost. We would strongly refute that suggestion. All four of the chimneys should be retained and be repaired where necessary to both preserve and enhance the character of the main roof/building.

Firstly we would also wish to point out that the pictures on pages 2,3 and 4 which are lodged as 'views' in the visual impact assessment are not photographs taken by the applicant but have been identified as having been taken from several different versions of Google street view. The pictures shown on pages 2 and 3 are from street view October 2021 the picture shown on page 4 are believed to be from a historical record of Google street view and as far as can be ascertained bizarrely dates back to a date some approx. 10 to 13 years ago. The Council may wish to review the value of these pictures based upon their source, date and relevancy.

Secondly we would point out that the **pictures on page 3** which are annotated '*Proposed alterations , View from West Douglas Drive looking south. This photo shows the visual impact of removing two chimneys located on the southern half of the house Redholm*' **are not even of the applicants building but are rather of Culverden No 2 West Lennox Drive.** It seem totally irrelevant to attempt to display pictures portraying the removal of two chimneys from a neighbouring property claiming they are part of the new proposals. Instead we would point out the fact that all four chimneys of Redholm's immediate neighbour and sister building have been preserved and are a testament to the preservation of the character of The Hill House Conservation Area.

The annotations of all of pictures found over the pages 2, 3 and 4 are also incorrectly described. They describe the removal of chimneys from the "*southern half*" of the house whereas in fact the description should read from the northern part of the house if we are to try and understand the pictures that have been lodged.

Finally and conclusively the pictures fail to provide any real visual assistance to the applicant as we feel that they actually do just the opposite. Rather than lessening the impact of missing chimneys the pictures with the chimneys removed by manipulation of the pictures demonstrates the vacant spaces where the chimneys once stood and **strongly demonstrate the need for the building to retain all four of its chimneys which stand in symmetry and are a special feature of this sandstone Villa.**

The amended Block plan drawing PL010 **continues to show the same errors and inaccuracies as shown in the earlier Block Plans** which we have pointed out in our earlier submissions and which as a result fail to accurately depict the trees and shrubs in the grounds of both Redholm (and the neighbouring property Culverden). We would also take note of the communication from the Council to the applicant dated 15 June 23 now lodged on the portal as of 22 September 2023 which indicated that as long ago as June 2023 insufficient detail had been provide to the Council regarding hard and soft landscaping and that the Council required the applicant to provide further detailed information which should have included hard and soft landscaping *for the whole site*. We believe at this time the inaccuracies in the block plans fail to meet this standard demanded of the Council.

Repairs to external facade of main building

Amended plans PL 005,006, 007,and 008 have for the first time highlighted areas of the external facade of the main building where repair works and of what type are to be undertaken. Areas marked in a green dashed line indicate where Lithomex repairs are to be carried out.

We understand that Lithomex repairs are undertaken to areas of stonework where the face of the stone is perished and blistering owing to general deterioration of the stonework through age/water/frost damage etc and that these areas would require the face of the stone to be scabbled back or broken out to remove the damaged areas before new Lithomex material is applied to restore the stone facing and repair the stone so that it has the appearance of being like new stone.

After a visual examination of three of the four facades namely the north, east and west elevations we have discovered the areas designated for such treatment do not appear to have stonework which is perished and blistering that would warrant such Lithomex type repairs. The stonework appears unbroken with the face in sound condition.

In particular a large area of the northern elevation facade marked on the drawing shows no sign of blistering warranting Lithomex treatment. Other areas on both of the facades on the east and west elevations similarly do not support Lithomex treatment as indicated on the drawings based upon visual examination of the stonework.

Conversely there are areas on each of these facades which we have identified stonework where the surface has deteriorated and the surface is blistered and the stone facing has come away. Inexplicably these areas are not designated as needing Lithomex type treatment on the drawings.

Other important areas where defects have been identified in the stonework have also not been included in the list of repair works needed. Areas where cracks run through the stones and where pointing is missing around mullions, sills, or stonework once again these areas have not been highlighted for repairs on the drawings.

Some quite extensive areas have been marked in orange on the drawings referred to above as being areas where the facade is suffering from '*rubble masonry movement and loss of structural integrity due to organic growth and water ingress*'. There are two such areas on the northern elevation facade shown at first floor level in the upper left hand part of the facade, but on examination it can be seen that further much larger areas of the facade both in the lower half of the facade and right hand half of the building are in a similar condition to the areas marked. It does not seem plausible based on the overall condition of this facade that only the limited areas marked on the drawing are the only areas where consideration should be given to organic growth and water ingress. Close examination of the patch of this facade at the lower left hand side where cleaning has been carried out by power washing shows the stonework and pointing to be in good overall condition after the lichen/growth has been removed. This rather begs the question that the facade suffers from '*rubble masonry movement and loss of structural integrity*' but rather that cleaning of the exterior surface is all that may be needed.

We have lodged 26 colour photographs to illustrate our findings.

Please note that only three of the facades have been examined at this time but the matters this has raised can only lead us to conclude that a proper detailed survey and assessment of the external facades of the building should be carried out. The applicant continues to state that an engineer is involved and will assist the applicant with specific details and more information to support the repair works. We would ask that this information is provided for The Council to ensure that the extent of the repair works is clear and unambiguous and **most importantly that the impact this repair work may have upon the external appearance of the Villa.**