

Applecross Sustainable Living

Information document to inform proposals for the Hydro site



ANN NISBET STUDIO

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN RESEARCH



1.0 Introduction

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The overall vision for the Sustainable Living in Applecross Project and development of the “Hydro Field” site is to create **“homes, green spaces, and amenities that are beneficial to and support the sustainability of the Applecross Community”**.

ACC has so far defined the following principles to guide the delivery of the project:

- Be designed to fit within the local landscape and natural environment, especially Craite Barn and the Steading areas.
- Include green and blue areas, community spaces, on-site parking for residents and visitors, EV charging points and connectivity to the wider areas such as the Appleseed Community Garden, Allotment site, and the existing network of footpaths.
- Include a variety of house sizes, types and tenures that meet Applecross community’s current and future housing demand; e.g. rents, self-build plots, built houses and shared equity builds.
- Develop associated infrastructure that caters to the needs of residents and local businesses.
- Include workshops and business units to meet local business and employment needs without duplicating existing businesses.

- Apply sustainability principles, such as high energy efficiency standards and future proofing for climate change, ideally utilising the energy produced by our community hydro-scheme.
- Ensure housing options such as rents, self-build plots, built houses and shared equity builds are aligned with government affordability standards.
- Be lived-in homes – residency requirements will apply to all housing types, including rentals, sales and self-build plots.



Aerial Photo Showing Site

1.0 Introduction

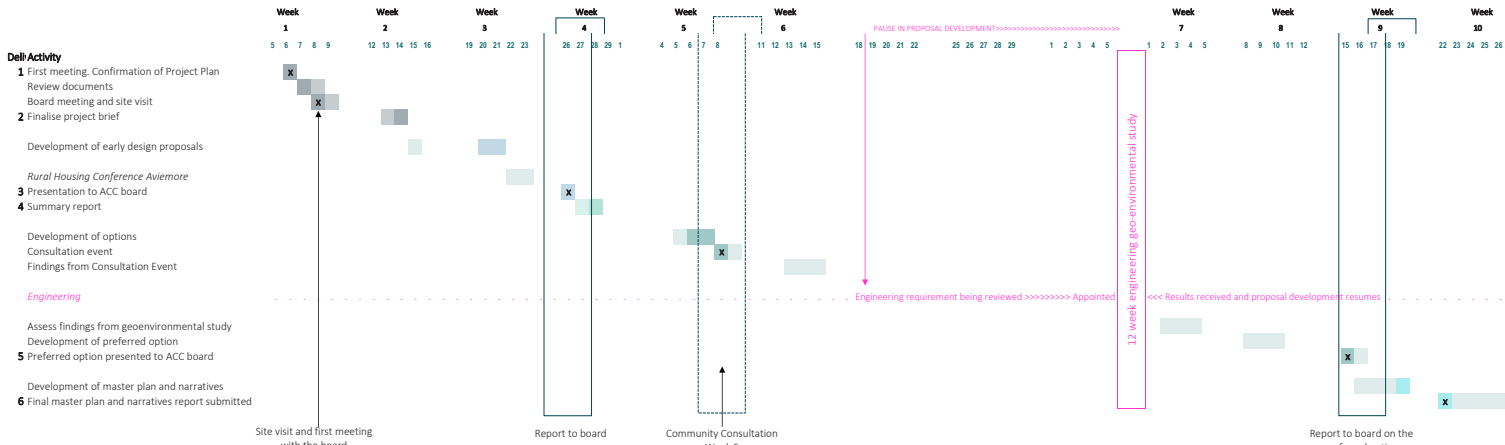
In January 2024, Ann Nisbet Studio was appointed by the Applecross Community Company (ACC) to develop a ‘Place Plan’ for the ‘Hydro’ site in Applecross, outlining proposals for new homes and business units.

This followed a 2023 Housing Needs Audit that identified a clear need for new homes on the peninsula.

In recognition of the importance of the natural environment and the desire to develop an integrated green/blue solution, Landscape Architect’s Raeburn Farquhar Bowen were engaged to work alongside Ann Nisbet Studio.

Ann Nisbet Studio recommended that ACC should obtain engineering input to investigate concerns with the Hydrofield ground conditions. SF Structures were appointed by ACC and the main project was paused for 12 weeks during these investigations. SF Structures defined the scope of the ground radar survey carried out by Caintech and MM-EC Geoenvironmental were commission to carry out a desktop study. The reports are available separately on the project Dropbox.

The timeline on the right outlines the key activities that were undertaken, highlighting the engineering pause in pink.



Drone photo of site by Gordon Cameron

2.0 Site Photographs



Community Garden and Fields to the West



East of Site - along track to the South



East of Site - Smiddy Cottages and Carpark



Northern Part of Site



North East of Site - Main Access Road



North West of Site - Steadings

2.0 Site Photographs



Views within Site Boundary



Views within Site Boundary II



Site Feature - Mill Pond and Water Course



Site Feature - Boundary Stone Walls



Aerial Photo of Site



Aerial Photo of Site II

2.0 Site Photographs



View from Site



View from Site

3.0 Initial Design Workshop

We met with a landscape architect to undertake our first design workshop. They had reviewed the policy documents on the right and consulted with the local woodlands officer.

A few key points were noted throughout the discussions:

- The mature trees to the perimeter will require survey. Whilst retaining them is preferred, if their remaining lifespan is under 10 years, removal may be the better option.
- A clear sunken area near the site entrance shows signs of being waterlogged, indicated by the presence of long grasses. It is noted that this has not always been the case and that this condition may have resulted from disturbed land drains during the hydro construction.
- The boundary stone walls are a valuable feature. The presence of lime, a distinctive coastal element in Applecross, should also be noted. Any rocky outcrops encountered during construction could be incorporated into the landscape design.



Relevant Policy Documents Reviewed



Initial Design Workshop

4.0 Community Consultation

A community consultation took place on March 8th and 9th 2024 at Camusterrach Church and Applecross Community Hub. The event was well attended, with board members and volunteers assisting. Comments were recorded on feedback forms and post-it notes were added to the models.

CONSULTATION MATERIAL

To engage the local community in the design of new homes and business units at the master plan site, a range of materials was presented:

- Models of the site featuring contours and key features.
- Large aerial banner on the floor displaying coloured blocks.
- Models of precedents.
- Independent research.
- Information from the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken in 2023.



Images from Community Consultation



CONSULTATION RESULTS

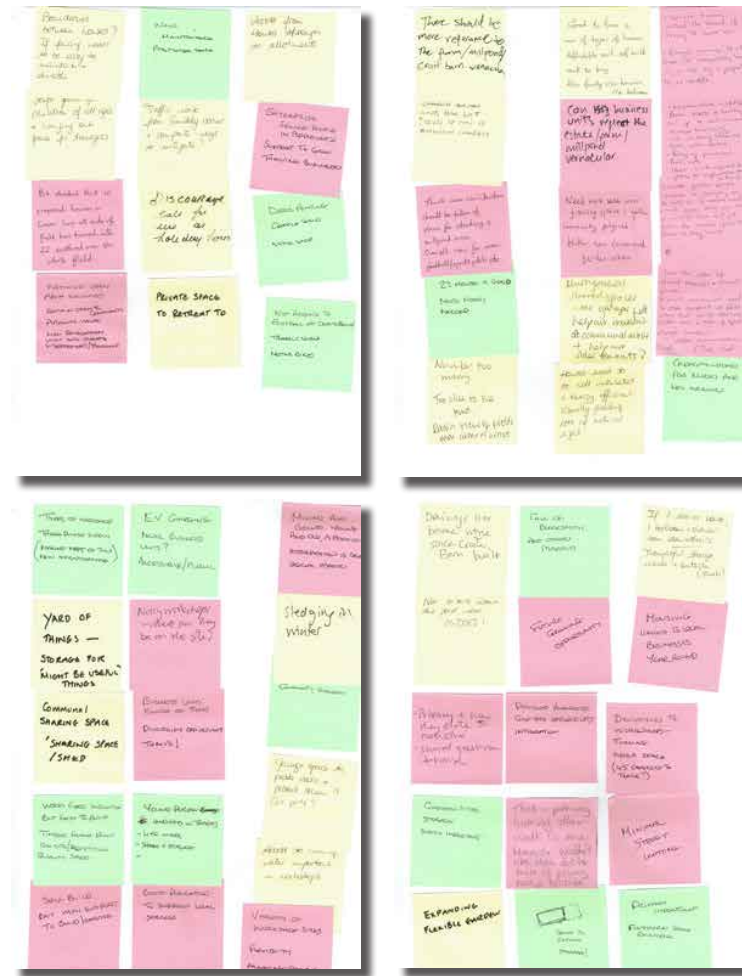
Attendees at the consultation event were invited to engage and record comments with feedback forms and post-it notes.

- A total of 58 post-it notes were added to the proposed plans and models.
- 19 feedback forms were completed both during the event and in the week following. Around 100 comments were collated on a variety of topics in the review of the feedback forms.

To identify common themes and goals for the project moving forward, we categorised the feedback into the following headings to be explored:

- Open Space Opportunities:** Ecological and social benefits.
- Open Space Constraints:** Issues relating to traffic and other factors.
- Housing Mix and Configuration:** Comments on range of variety and arrangement.
- Housing Design and Layouts:** Feedback on design aspects.

- Communal Facilities:** Ideas for common areas.
- Business Units:** Suggestions and considerations for workplaces.
- Strategic Considerations:** Management and maintenance strategies.
- Heritage.**
- Technical considerations.**



Collection of Initial Comments following Community Consultation

The diagram to the right seeks to capture the wider constraints and opportunities of the site, as identified during consultation, site visits and reviews.

Considerations along the northern edge:

- Access by foot and by car.
- Visibility and way-finding at the bend of the road.
- Unclear road delineation.
- Very busy during the tourist season. Traffic and noise prevalent. Parking.
- Nearby residents. Considerations of privacy, open aspects, and the effects of street lighting.
- Opportunity for blue / green infrastructure.

Considerations to the east:

- Topography, elevated position and key views of Skye.
- Buildings sensitively integrated, in keeping with local character.
- Sledging opportunities in winter with links to local walking routes

Considerations to the west:

- Allotments, community gardens, poly-crub and sheds present.
- Connection to hydro plant. Providing energy and other renewables.

General considerations:

- Protecting and encouraging wildlife. Ecological considerations.
- Homes positioned to consider natural light and views.
- Exposed site, responsive to weather conditions.
- Boundary wall.
- Deer fencing.
- Buried hydro pipe, clearances.
- Geo-technical considerations.

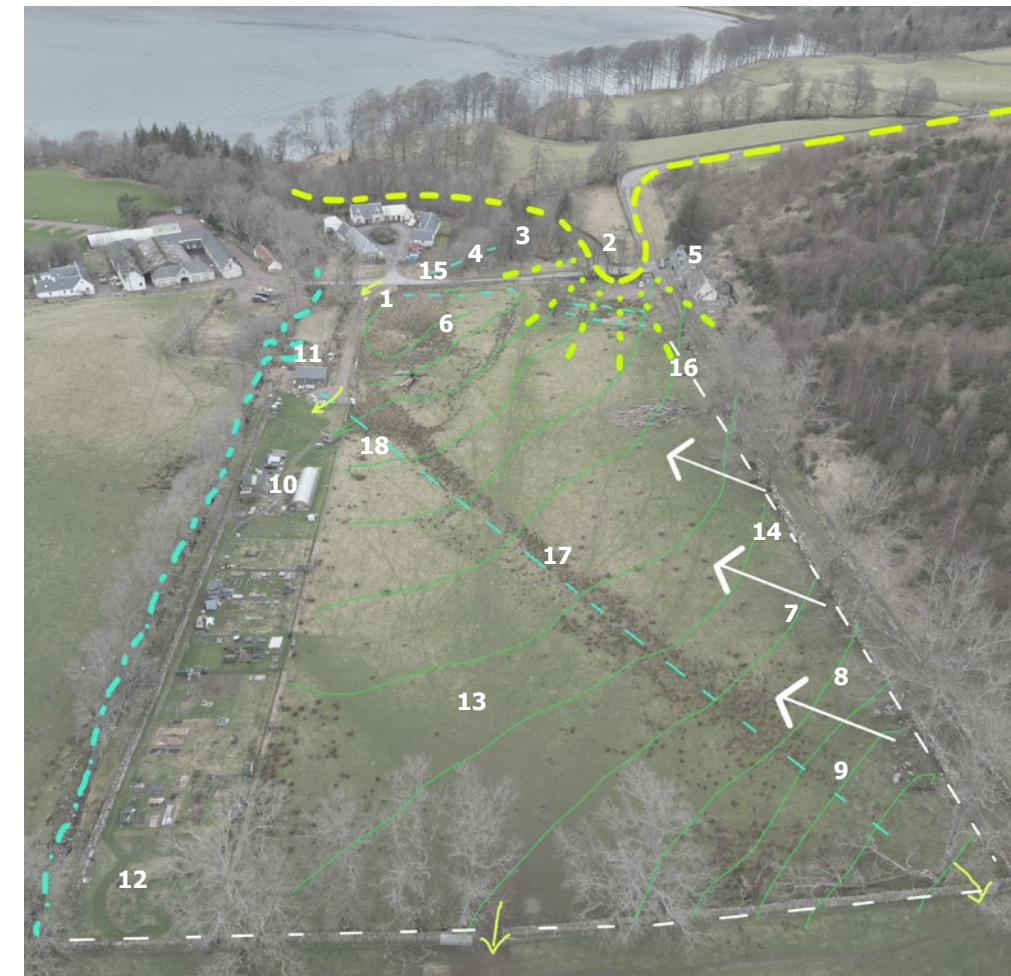
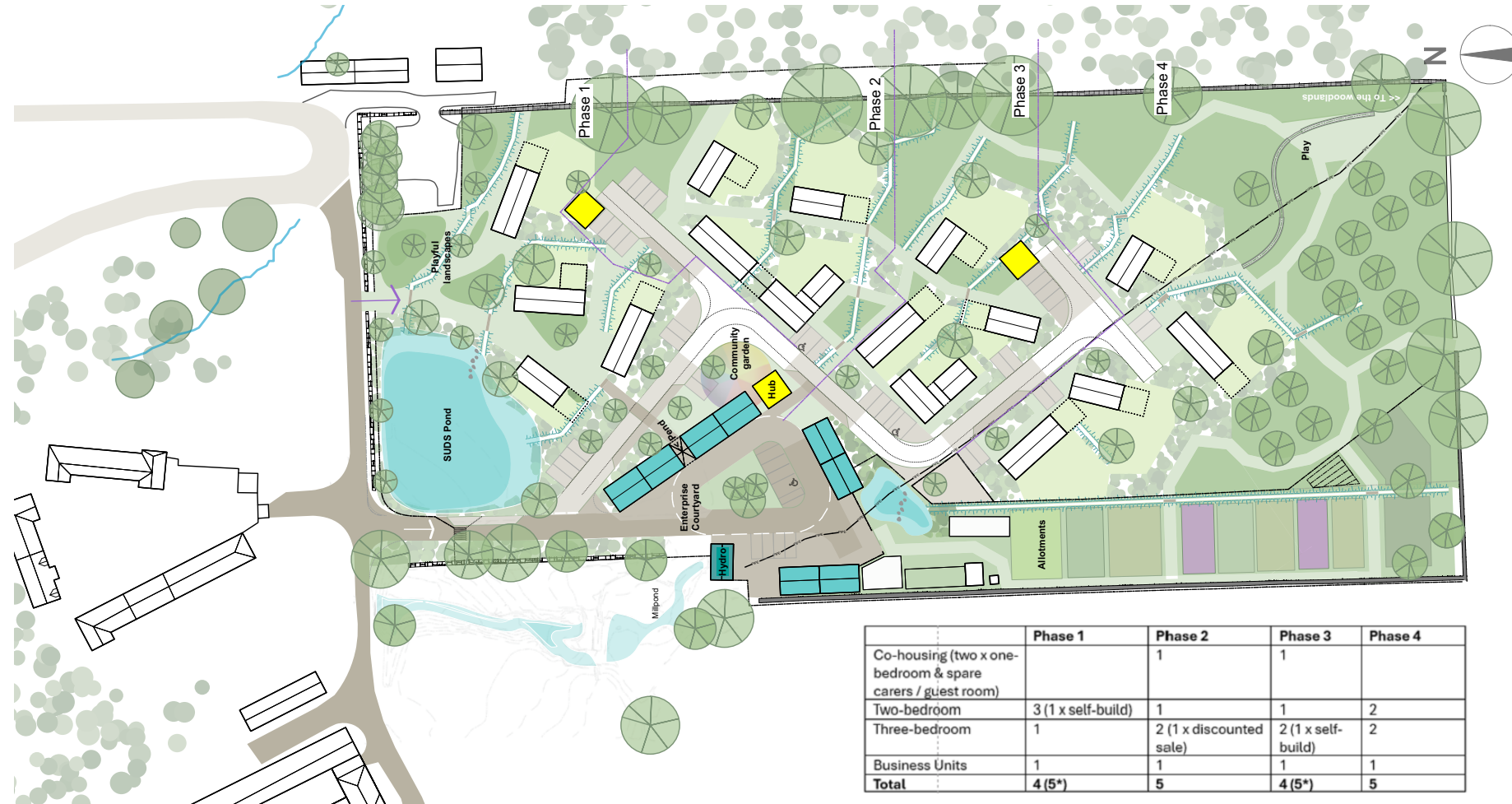
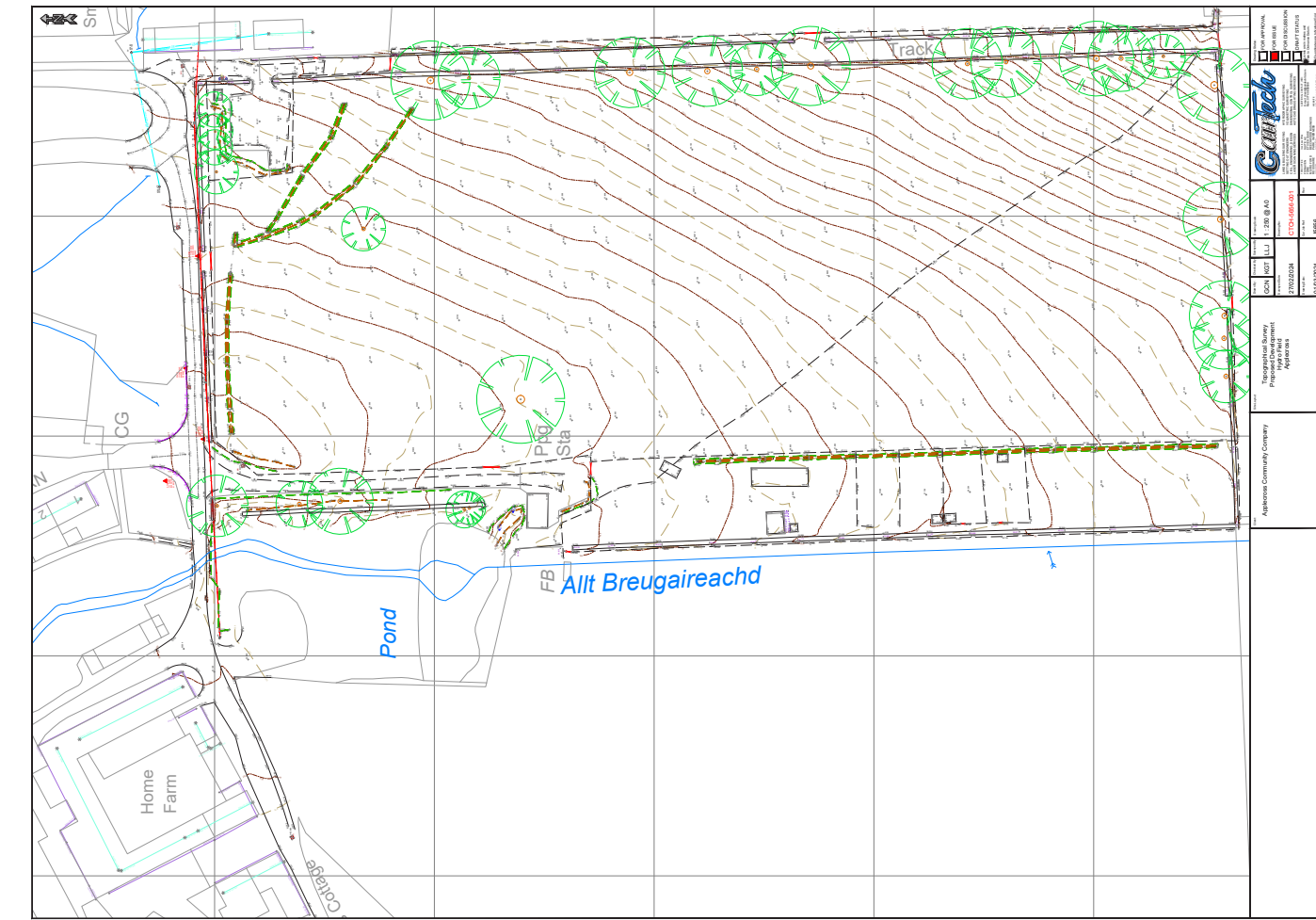


Diagram to show Constraints and Opportunities of Site



Proposed Masterplan of Applecross by Ann Nisbet Studio



Initial Topographical Survey by Caintech Ltd.



