

Flamingo Land – a massive attack on the landscape

Description

MASSING STUDY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FROM VIEWPOINT (90° FIELD OF VIEW)



Grid Ref: 56.012630, -4.588765; AOD: 13m; General Direction of View: South-south-west 195°; Approx Distance to Hotel: 610m; Date & Time of Photograph - 30/11/17 @ 10:20; Weather/Visibility - Sunny/Good; Camera - Canon EOS 6D, Canon EF 50mm

Photomontage of the new hotel complex from Balloch Country Park. All images from: Environmental Statement: Volume 2 –Technical Appendices West Riverside and Woodbank House Appendix 12.5 Viewpoint Massing Studies

Proposals for a huge development around the shores of Loch Lomond at Balloch are being considered by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, which is the planning authority within the park boundaries.

There are arguments to be had about whether tourist developments bring economic benefit on one hand but the loss of public space in favour of those who can pay to enter. There are real questions about loss of wildlife and disturbance for residents – spare a thought for people on Skye who have been in the news for all the wrong reasons about being a popular tourist destination.

Standing back for one moment should we be asking a simpler question – what will the proposed development do to the protected landscape of one of our most famous lochs ?

This is important because the protected landscape is exactly what we value about Loch Lomond. Even Flamingo Land acknowledges this.

“The Scotland Visitor Survey carried out by Jump Research in 2015 and 2016 revealed that the main motivation to visit Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National park was the scenery and the landscape.” (Flamingo Land application : ES Vol 1 – 4.4.5)

The original survey ([see here](#)) details even more clearly our motivations for visiting Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. A full 78% said the scenery and landscape was their deciding factor and for 48% was wanting “to get away from it all”. Only 14% came to visit a particular attraction.

So what could this development by Flamingo Land look like ? As part of the requirement for applying for Planning Permission in Principle, Flamingo Land have had to commission a “massing study” which uses photomontage to give an idea of the size, shape and location of their proposed developments. It

makes for eye-opening viewing ([see here](#)).

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Image 1 – VP03: from the Maid of the Loch slipway

In this image the huge Drumkinnon Tower is completely blocked out by the new hotel, water attraction and resort building. The scale is shocking. The impact of this part of the development alone will be visible across miles of protected landscape and will be an unwelcome blight on the very thing that we value so much – the beauty and natural wonder of an ancient but living landscape.

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Image 2 – VP01 : Ben Lomond Way

This example (above) from near Lomond Shores shows again the massive scale of this building. From this viewpoint it rises above Creachan Hill and will mean the loss of all the trees within it's huge footprint.

It's not just the loch side that will be impacted by the proposed developments. The centre of Balloch, within the attractive riverside area, will be the site of another very large building complex.

MASSING STUDY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FROM VIEWPOINT (90° FIELD OF VIEW)



Grid Ref: 56.003502, -4.581720; AOD: 26m; General Direction of View: North-west 320°; Approx Distance to Hotel: 660m; Date & Time of Photograph - 30/11/17 @ 11:00; Weather/Visibility - Sunny/Excellent; Camera - Canon EOS 6D, Canon EF 50mm f/1.8

Image – VP10 : Balloch Road (Bridge Over River) – showing Station Square and camping chalets to the south of the river. Note how the proposed station square buildings are lower than the trees and if well designed could fit into the landscape unlike the hotel/resort complex though the chalets will have a large impact on people walking along the shore of the River Leven

In their assessment documents drawn up by consultants ([see here](#)), Flamingo Land claim that none of the proposals will have a high impact on the national park. In fact they claim the effect will be “negligible”.

“The introduction of the proposed development, within the urban settlement of Balloch would not effect the overall landscape or rural beauty of the Park.”

*“Risk of loss or damage to **Special Landscape Qualities** – Negligible”*

I think their own pictures tell a very different story.

Flamingo Land can do this with a bit of smoke and mirrors, by only considering the effect on the whole National Park. So by this logic if you are in Arrochar the development is not visible and so cannot blight your view.....but it will at Loch Lomond.

The full set of images can be viewed [here](#)

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. flamingo land
2. landscape
3. LLTNPA
4. planning

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