

Conversion of agricultural building to distillery, including erection of two malt silos and external alterations. Conversion of stables building to bonded warehouse Ocathian Stables Hayhill Road Thorntonhall G74 5AN Ref. No: P/18/1666

Representation by Jackton & Thorntonhall Community Council

January 2019

Jackton & Thorntonhall Community Council has some reservations concerning this application and would welcome the opportunity of discussing these with Council officers and, if appropriate, the applicants.

Areas of Concern

1. Transport – it is noted that the transport assessment provided by the applicant states that vehicle movements would be lower than at present if this application succeeds. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the type of transport associated with a mixed farming operation and a distillery. The latter is likely to generate more large vehicle movements along what is a very narrow road. We note that the transport assessment refers to vehicle movements on Jackton Road and are unclear as to why this application would require the use of Jackton Road. We also are surprised that the distillery would be economically viable with only one delivery of grain per week.
2. Security – it is noted that the proposal includes a bonded warehouse. Such warehouses act as a magnet for criminal activity and so would need 24 hour security patrols as well as robust electronic security systems. The former requirement would generate more traffic than is assumed in the transport assessment. We would like to be assured that the Scottish Police Service has been made aware of these plans and been given the opportunity to comment.
3. Environmental – distilleries require large quantities of water, not only to prepare mash but also to clean out fermentation equipment and storage vessels on a regular basis. We would like to be assured, firstly, that Scottish Water can undertake to supply the necessary quantities of water without detriment to the supply to neighbouring homes and businesses and, secondly, that SEPA has considered and approved detailed plans for the disposal of waste water, waste materials and accompanying materials such as cleaning stuffs and chemicals. We would also like to be assured that accidental spillages of spirits or intermediate materials can be contained within the perimeter of the site and cannot escape into the water table.
4. Health – as noted by Mr Alan Dickson of the Environmental Health Department, distilleries can be the cause of noise nuisance to neighbouring properties within quite a wide radius and have also been associated with infestations of black mould. We are also concerned that delivery and other operations may cause a dust nuisance of particular detriment to those suffering from respiratory diseases. We would like to be assured that all these issues have been carefully considered and appropriate mitigation measures have been required of the applicants.

5. Fire Hazard – distilled spirits are highly flammable and represent a significant fire hazard. We would like to be assured that a robust system of fire detection is installed and that an appropriate fire suppression system has been put in place and approved by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service before operations are allowed to start.
6. If whisky is the spirit to be distilled, the maturing process takes a minimum of three years. It appears that there would be insufficient capacity within the planned warehouse area to store the whole of the initial three-year output. Arrangements would need to be made to move excess stock from the bonded warehouse on site to a third-party bonded warehouse. This would entail more vehicle movements than suggested.

We note that the applicant company only adopted the business of Scotch Whisky Distilling in July 2018 and it is believed that neither of the two current directors has experience of operating a distillery. Whilst we accept that this is not, in itself, a bar to granting approval, we do urge South Lanarkshire Council to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that all relevant planning and building regulations are enforced.

As noted above, we would be pleased to discuss any of these concerns in more detail. Until such time as further information and the assurances sought above are available to us the Community Council is unable to support this application.