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Response to the Pre-application Consultation for land to the west of Glasfryn Rd, St Davids

1. The Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is an independent voluntary charity committed to helping protect, conserve and enhance the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for all to enjoy. The Friends aim to represent the views of all who live, work or visit the Park and our members generally have an interest in the natural environment, heritage and conservation, and helping to promote a vibrant, sustainable and healthy National Park.
2. The proposed application would represent a major change to St Davids and the North West of the Park and will require the highest level of consideration throughout the planning process. For the purposes of this pre-application response we would like to highlight the areas that we feel will require particular scrutiny when the planning application is made. The housing elements seem to be broadly welcomed and the Premier Inn proposal raises the main issues.
3. As this area of land is allocated for housing in the Local Development Plan the inclusion of the Premier Inn marks a significant change of use. The justification for such a change and the planning process required for implementing any change within the LDP would need to be up front and transparent.
4. Perhaps the largest issue is the undoubted impact on the economic and cultural nature of the St Davids peninsula. The proposal comes with an economic impact statement and this should be subject to independent expert analysis alongside a social and cultural impact statement. As these concerns seem to be at the fore of local opposition, it's vital that there is an objective basis for any decision making.
5. The quality of design of the hotel is a major concern. As a gateway statement building it should be of the very highest quality. The proposed design is not of the standard demanded of other landmark buildings across the Park. The overall design, the landscaping and the materials are all underwhelming. Oriel y Parc sets a very high standard at the southern entrance to St Davids but the Premier Inn design fails to respond to any of the surrounding landscape or townscape. There's a sense of a generic style tweaked to fit the site rather than designed to sit in the wider context. Given the historic significance of St Davids and the wealth of great buildings, it's not unreasonable to expect the very best design in such a significant proposal.

Gus Stott
Local Policy Officer

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