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Nicola Gandy
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Llanion Park
Pembroke Dock
Pembrokeshire
SA72 6DY

Dear Nicola Gandy

Application Ref NP/18/0051/OUT Glasfryn Rd, St Davids

I write on behalf of the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in connection with the above application.

This proposal represents a major change to St Davids and has clearly divided opinion both locally and more widely. The overall size and nature of the scheme must rank it as one of the biggest changes to St Davids in recent times. Any decision will therefore need to demonstrate a robust and full appraisal which adheres to the two purposes of the National Park as well as the duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.

The justification for a hotel is the most contentious element. Assessing the extent of the economic and cultural impact of a Premier Inn is not an area we feel suitably qualified to comment on fully, but we do recognise the very strong feelings in the St Davids community and urge you to apply a truly thorough approach to assessing this. Whether it would boost or damage the local tourist economy is central to the debate and a clear assessment of this should be central to any recommendation.

There is a clear risk that the addition of 63 new rooms could severely damage the patchwork of small, independent businesses which provide much of the existing accommodation. These businesses underpin much of the local economy and the social structures which are central to the well-being of the community. Much Welsh Government policy is now focused towards sustainability, well-being and a wider approach to decision making. If the approval for a large national hotel chain, with its powerful marketing and pricing powers was to undermine and damage the existing employment and social structures, this would be potentially disastrous.

The housing element of the scheme seems to have wide support, particularly as it would deliver a higher percentage of affordable and social housing than is required from the site under the LDP. Given the pressure to provide affordable housing within the National Park, this is an opportunity to make a significant impact in this highly priced area and we would certainly support the delivery of this element of the scheme. However the design of the 'for sale' houses is underwhelming. The Design and Access statement states the aim of producing homes that are "contemporary yet founded in an appropriate historical context". These designs fail to achieve either aim. The drawings provided show little detail, few materials and an 'off the shelf'

response to the site. The various styles illustrated are not of the standard that could be reasonably expected by the local community and the NPA.

The hotel identifies itself as a gateway statement building and claims to be of the very highest quality in terms of design and materials. However we feel it does not match the quality expected of other landmark buildings across the Park. Oriol y Parc sets a high standard but this proposed design fails to respond successfully to the surrounding landscape or townscape. The overall design of this building, along with the materials and the landscaping is poor. Despite the justification in the Planning Statement it does still look like a generic low cost building tweaked to fit the site.

Despite attempting to break up the bulk of the building into distinct blocks, the three storey corner element in particular is both imposing and bland. The Design Commission for Wales pointed out the weakness of this largely blank façade which seems to serve primarily as a place for the signage.

The materials lack any local reference whatsoever.. The use of artificial roofing slate and stone rainscreen is low cost and intended to mimic real materials. Slate and stone are the true materials of St Davids and combine very well with modern elements. The Victoria Inn Brewhouse in Roach is a prime example of a successful mix of vernacular materials with a contemporary design

The landscape scheme is very slim and doesn't feel a fully integrated part of the scheme. Again Oriol y Parc sets the standard which, along with the adjoining car park, gives the landscaping equal status to the built elements and results in the buildings sitting fully in the landscape.

The wide verge on the Glasfryn Road beside the proposed hotel would provide a good opportunity to help address the abrupt and bland juncture between the buildings and the open country. Whether this seperately managed area could be integrated with the hotel landscape would be worth considering. The landscaping of the Haverfordwest Premier Inn would not be an example to emulate. In any case a full and detailed scheme should be submitted. The one page Landscape Strategy is not sufficient for a gateway into St Davids.

The signage and the lighting scheme would also benefit from close attention. Low impact lighting and low level signage all help to reduce the environmental impact in line with planning guidance and in keeping with sustainable design practice.

We trust that the points raised above will be taken into consideration when considering the application.

Yours sincerely

Gus Stott