



the National Trust
for Scotland
a place for everyone

Mr Derek Gordon
Go to St Kilda
Uig Pier
Uig
Isle of Skye IV51 9XX

Friday, 28 October 2016

Dear Mr Gordon,

St Kilda World Heritage Site: Redevelopment of Ministry of Defence Facilities, Village Bay

I am writing to let you know that a consortium led by the Ministry of Defence is today submitting a planning application to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to undertake a thorough redevelopment of the facilities located on St Kilda.

As you know, the MoD has had a presence in Village bay since the 1950s and the current facilities visible to all arriving visitors date back to the early 1960s. The MoD, working with defence contractors QinetiQ and Skye-based architects Wittets, have come up with proposals that will lead to the consolidation of the existing site and its reconstruction using designs and finishes that are much more sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.

The plans have been developed with the full co-operation of the National Trust for Scotland as St Kilda's owners, as well as the Scottish Government's agencies Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland.

If the planning application is approved it will result in a facility with a smaller 'footprint' both in physical and environmental terms. The new buildings will be constructed on stilted foundations to minimise ground impact and their lower segments will be curtained with stone walls designed to blend into the St Kildan landscape, offering an architectural echo of the nearby abandoned cottages and cleits of Village Bay. Wood panelling over the exterior walls will quickly weather to blend in with the surrounding scenery and roofs will be planted with native St Kildan grasses.

Specialist contractors Galliford Try International and Hugh Broughton Architects will develop the design and undertake construction using expertise gained through building similar facilities in environments with challenging climates, including work for the British Antarctic Survey.

The National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's leading conservation charity. The Trust protects Scotland's most important historic buildings, collections, gardens and wild habitats. In carrying out its work the Trust is dependent upon the support of its members, volunteers and the general public.

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.

Patron - HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM, President - Earl of Lindsay, DL,
Chairman - Sir Moir Lockhead OBE, Chief Executive - Simon Skinner MBA

Registered Office - Hermiston Quay, 5 Cultins Road, Edinburgh, EH11 4DF. Tel: 0131 458 0200 Fax +44(0)131 243 9301

Construction would be begin next year and, given the limited season when regular access by sea can be guaranteed, will not be complete until 2018.

We wanted to let you know of the application as early as possible given that the works may affect, visually at least, the visitor experience of customers undertaking cruises and tours to St Kilda. You may therefore wish to manage your customers' expectations.

Every attempt will be made to mitigate any potential disruption for visitors:

- The consortium will arrange for a member of staff to be on hand to meet visitors and explain what is being done , offering interpretative materials that explain both the project objectives and the means by which environmental impacts are being minimised;
- Works will be confined to the existing MoD facility, which is off-limits to visitors in any case – heritage sites and other publicly accessible areas will be unaffected.

Ultimately, the redevelopment will be of great benefit to all:

- The visual impact of the MoD facility will be greatly reduced and the setting of Village Bay enhanced as a result;
- The MoD's continued commitment to St Kilda offers economic benefit to all who make a living from the archipelago as well as the wider communities of the Western Isles;
- The National Trust for Scotland can continue to count on the help and support it receives from the MoD in ensuring the conservation of the UK's only dual World Heritage Site, thereby ensuring enduring public interest in this very special place.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As the plans progress, we will be in regular contact to keep you up to speed.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick Duffy
Chief Operating Officer
The National Trust for Scotland