

Developer's change of tack to win permission

by Eric Nicolson

A HIGHLAND Perthshire developer is hoping to win over councillors with a revised planning application—months after his plea to help him in his hour of need fell on deaf ears.

Robin Menzies, of Mains of Taymouth, Kenmore, last year failed in a bid to get a condition lifted on permission for 58 residential units that they be used “solely for holiday accommodation.”

Although still to be used as holiday homes, dispensing with the condition would have allowed prospective buyers easier access to mortgages, Mr Menzies said.

Members of the council's development control committee were however reluctant to drop the permission in case it set a precedent, even though they expressed sympathy with Mr Menzies and the difficulties caused by the recession.

Since that rejection, Mr Menzies has been working in conjunction with council planners and has come up with a “hybrid application” which was lodged in March and will go before development control on June 2.

He said, “This hybrid application looks for a modest increase to the number of unrestricted properties allowed under the original 2006 consent, while maintaining the unanimously approved 2007 master plan.

“This effectively means that half of the 2007 scheme that falls within the unrestricted area of 2006 consent continues

unrestricted, whilst we accept that the remainder maintains a restriction.

“We acted upon a clear direction given to us by council officers and their legal department before working up and submitting the hybrid scheme in March 2010.

“Upon the basis of the 2006 consent we framed our financial model and based our business plan.

“It was also upon this framework, provided by the original 2006 consent which made no reference to occupancy restrictions, that we invested in our business and formed relationships with both customers and the bank.”

Mr Menzies added, “The late inclusion of an occupancy restriction with the 2007 approval has consequently had a severely adverse impact upon our business, leaving Mains of Taymouth with unsold stock and significant debt.

“Confirmation that the revised application will be considered by Perth and Kinross Council's development control committee on June 2 is welcome news as the ongoing uncertainty has had a damaging effect on our business.

“Having invested time and effort in our dialogue with Perth and Kinross Council, we are very hopeful that the revised application will be acceptable to the council and look forward to seeing the report next week which will make its recommendations ahead of the committee meeting.

“Significant investment has been made at Mains of Taymouth in terms of infrastructure, facilities and staff with benefits to Kenmore and the surrounding area.”