

PRESS RELEASE

22 JUNE 2011

TAYMOUTH CASTLE ESTATE GETS THE GREEN LIGHT

Perth & Kinross Council has today (22 June 2011) given the go ahead for the transformation of the historic Taymouth Castle Estate into an exclusive, world class hotel and golf resort which will restore one of Scotland's most historically important castles and bring it back into use, create new jobs, deliver significant economic benefits for the local community and place Perthshire at the heart of international tourism for many years to come including maximising the opportunity presented by the Ryder Cup in 2014.

Taymouth Castle Estate owner Meteor has already invested millions of pounds on restoration work in the historic Principal Rooms in the Castle, bringing them back to their former glory, and the public areas on the ground floor as well as estate management and renovation, all in line with a previous planning consent.

Following today's decision, work can now start on the next - and more significant - phase of works which will include construction of the first phase of Estate Properties for sale, the conversion of the East Wing of the castle into hotel accommodation and a pamper spa, completion of the estate footpath network and the construction of new holes to extend the historic James Braid designed golf course to championship standards. Contractors are ready to start works now approval has been granted.

Commenting on the decision, Martin Mortimer, Development Manager at Taymouth Castle Estate owner Meteor said:

"We are obviously delighted to have secured planning consent for the scheme. This allows us to move ahead with this exciting and important project. We are already in advanced negotiations with leading hotel operators and the world's top spa company, which we will be able to finalise now that we have consent. We also already have significant interest in the estate properties from potential buyers from around the world."

“The restoration and conversion of the Castle is a key priority for us and we anticipate that it will be ready to open as a luxury boutique hotel by late 2012. The new consent allows us to start work on construction of the Estate Properties, which will in turn release the funds to deliver the redeveloped Castle and restore the Estate while ensuring the necessary income to maintain it for years to come. “

A total of 160 Estate Properties will now ultimately be built on the 450-acre estate. The luxury private residences have been designed by Aberfeldy-based architects McKenzie Strickland Associates to be sympathetic to the majestic Scottish landscape using a range of natural, vernacular materials.

The renovation of the golf course will see the restoration of many of the original design features for which the pre-eminent Victorian golf course architect James Braid was renowned and bring the course up to modern championship standards ready to maximise the opportunity presented by the 2014 Ryder Cup. Scotland’s number one golfer Stephen Gallacher is working in association with Weller Design team to create a new routing that extends the course to make it more challenging and interesting, as well as picturesque.

An extensive landscape management plan and a habitat management plan will now be implemented, which have been designed to protect the Estate’s flora and fauna during the build period and into the future. Public access to and through the estate will be maintained and significantly enhanced.

The planning consent is subject to a number of conditions covering a wide range of issues. There are, for example, three conditions to ensure that renovation of the historic Castle is progressed early in the development schedule, while allowing development of the wider Estate to commence.

A number of conditions seek to ensure that the way in which letting, maintenance and alterations of the homes are implemented is contained within the title deeds for the properties, together with a management agreement that will be agreed with the council before residents move in.

Martin Mortimer continued:

“We have worked closely with the planners as well as with bodies such as Historic Scotland in the preparation of the planning application and subsequently on the development of the conditions, which will allow us to progress the project while ensuring that this historic Estate is protected.

“Perth & Kinross Council’s planners have worked diligently to progress the planning application. The team has been highly professional and efficient. They have been as keen as we are to see this important property restored and brought back in to use to the benefit of the community. They have understood the complex issues involved in delivering such a scheme while remaining fully aware of their responsibility to ensure that it is undertaken properly and that appropriate measures are provided for.”

ENDS | 22 JUNE 2011

For further information, contact:
William Haigh/Linda Welch
Halogen
T: 020 7087 3260
E: william.haigh@halogenuk.com
E: linda.welch@halogenuk.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

THE TAYMOUTH CASTLE ESTATE

The development will comprise:

- An 81-key, 5 star hotel in the restored & extended A Listed Taymouth Castle;
- A luxury health & beauty spa in the East Wing;
- A family-friendly leisure/spa facility adjacent to the East Wing;
- 160 new luxury residences including the conversion of several historic properties such as the sawmill, sawmill cottages (2), Newhall cottages (2), Dairy (A Listed) and Dairy Byre (B Listed);
- A Scandinavian spa;
- A new smokehouse restaurant at Newhall Kennels;
- A state-of-the-art equestrian centre;
- Extensive landscape management and an improved footpath network;
- Renovation of the Chinese Bridge and various historic monuments within the Estate;
- A championship golf course.

THE GOLF COURSE

The key elements of the golf course include:

- The construction of 18 new tee and 9 new green complexes plus a practice putting green. The new green complexes will restore the greens to their former glory, with raised structures surrounded by pot bunkering – as evident at most James Braid classic designs;
- A revised layout of two loops of nine holes returning to the clubhouse after the first nine, allowing play to start from either the 1st or the 10th hole increasing the number of daily rounds that can be supported as well as making it better suited to tournaments and the general management of tee times;
- Increasing length from the back tees, taking the total course length to around 7,000 yards to give it additional status and making it more attractive to top golfers;
- Creating two completely new holes to the north west of the existing course where the gently rolling site lends itself beautifully to golf and offers the opportunity to locate a green and tee close to the River Tay with visually stunning backdrops while introducing more strategy into the new golf holes.
- Redesigned greenside and fairway bunkering will make them more visually appealing and more relevant to modern equipment where increased length has made many of the present bunkers redundant for the lower handicap golfer.
- The introduction of more dog leg holes – another James Braid signature feature - allowing for much greater variety of shot making and course strategy.
- Creation of a large practice ground, featuring target greens for more focused practice and realistic bunkering to provide more challenge and interest.
- Installation of a new herringbone irrigation system covering the greens and tees that will discharge to a soakaway generally 20 - 30m away from the green and not into ditches or the river.

THE TEAM

The project team includes:

- Owner/Investor - Meteor Property Fund
- Architects & Lead Consultants - Mckenzie Strickland Associates, Aberfeldy
- Planning Consultant - Turley Associates, Edinburgh & Glasgow
- Development Consultants - Clynt Wellington & John French
- Project Manager - Jon Moore
- Quantity Surveyor - Baqus
- Structural, Civil & Infrastructure Engineers - Calcinotto & Associates, Crieff
- Golf Course Consultant - Golf Management International
- Golf Course Designer - Weller Design with Stephen Gallacher
- Ecology Consultant - Nigel Rudd Ecology
- Landscape Designer - Bradford Smith Limited
- Transport Consultants - Colin Buchanan, Edinburgh & Glasgow
- Castle Décor Restoration - Mackay Decorators, Perth