



CODE CHANGE DAY

CAMARGUE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr J MacKay
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AB9 9LT

— MARKETING AND PUBLIC —
RELATIONS CONSULTANTS

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The Media Village, Grampian Television Studios, Queens Cross,
Aberdeen. AB9 2XJ. Telephone: 0224 625864 Fax: 0224 635127

Camargue Communications Ltd. Registered in England No. 2010196.
Directors: Ted Stevens, Andrew Litchfield, Susan Rocklin.
Consultant: Clem Shepherd

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PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS

IMPORTANT - EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.00 HOURS TUESDAY, MAY 22

ESTATE OWNERS UNVEIL PLAN FOR MAJOR LEISURE SCHEME

Plans to redevelop one of North East Scotland's oldest country estates are being announced today revealing an investment of more than £6 million in top quality leisure facilities.

Planning permission is being sought by Pittodrie Estate for a major redevelopment of the traditional agricultural estate which is located 24 miles from Aberdeen at the foot of the 1700 foot mountain of Bennachie.

The scheme has been initiated by Mr Theo Smith, whose family have owned the 1250 acre estate and historic Pittodrie House itself since 1896.

The outline plans include:

- * an 18 hole championship standard golf course;
- * a golf clubhouse and sporting centre;
- * an equestrian centre with substantial indoor and outdoor facilities;
- * a market garden facility;
- * a visitor centre for Bennachie incorporating educational natural history audio visual displays, a shop and tearoom.

Other projects include re-instatement of existing forestry resources and game facilities, a clay pigeon shoot and converting former farm buildings to holiday cottages.

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Planning is also being sought for a number of luxury level private homes which will have full access to all the estate facilities.

Mr Smith commented: "We decided it was time to make full use of the facilities which the estate has to offer and to develop the natural resources of game and forestry.

"Of course I am more than aware of the strong environmental interest in Bennachie, particularly from groups like the Bailies of Bennachie who are committed to conserving the natural beauty of this area.

"Our plans do not involve anything on Bennachie itself other than natural forestry operations and the establishment of a visitor centre."

The architect, Mr Mike Rasmussen, of Lister, Drew, Haines and Barrow, Aberdeen, said that a meeting had already been held with local councillors and representatives of the Bailies of Bennachie.

"Initial reaction was favourable," said Mr Rasmussen. "We are taking great care to plan this development in line with the existing character of the estate. We are confident that the end result will be beneficial to the complete community in the area."

A minimum 60 construction jobs would be created when the scheme gets the go-ahead with up to 40 plus permanent jobs to follow.

Full planning permission is being sought by mid-1991 and it is expected the full development will take up to five years to complete.

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Mr James Mackay, one of two Bailies of Bennachie invited to view over plans for development of Pittodrie House Estate, said: "I was pleased that there doesn't seem to be any intention to plant blanket forestry in areas presently unplanted and assurances were given that the general public will continue to have access along the paths. These were the things that concerned us most."

Mr MacKay said plans for a visitor centre at Bennachie came as a pleasant surprise. He added that the Bailies of Bennachie had been considering a similar scheme in conjunction with the district council and the Forestry Commission.

"This puts a completely new complexion on the whole thing. It would seem that it would now be sensible for us to have a chat with Mr Smith to see if there is any possibility of us coming together on this."

For further information contact:

Steve Sinclair,
Camargue Communications,
The Media Village,
Grampian Television Studios,
Aberdeen.
AB9 2XJ.

Tel: 0224 - 625864

Fax: 0224 - 635127

MAY 22, 1990

BACKGROUND NOTES - The Bailies of Bennachie organisation was set up in 1973 as a conservation group with a particular interest in Bennachie.

The group of local conservationists were concerned that the population of the area was mushrooming at that time and there was a growing need to conserve natural facilities like Bennachie.

Members take an active interest in anything to do with the peak itself and keep in touch through an annual newsletter, the annual general meeting and an annual rally at Bennachie which is being held on August 12 this year. Between 500 and 700 people attend the rally which takes the form of a massive open-air picnic.

There are four main landowners connected with Bennachie. They are Mr Theo Smith of Pittodrie House Estate, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, Forbes Estates and the Forestry Commission.

From its original membership of 40 the organisation now has more than 3000 members, mostly local but members are also dotted all round the world.