

Project Appraisal

*New Craigend Course
Royal Troon Golf Club
Scotland*

Preparation Stage
Milestone Document

Produced by: GEO Foundation

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FOREWORD

Done properly golf developments provide multiple positive benefits to local environments and wider communities. Those benefits are complex and often interconnected but provide the opportunity to enhance quality of life and enrich landscapes and ecosystems. All over the world, ethical and environmental issues are directly influencing consumer choices. Resources costs are rising and governments are gaining votes with policies that protect our environment. Golf development businesses that proactively engage with these issues are better placed for success and to embrace the challenge.

Sustainability was part of golf in the beginning and it must be part of golf in the future, creating golf courses that respect their surroundings and honor the natural environment.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Recommendation of GEO Foundation (GEO) further to the Project Appraisal process outlined by this report is that New Craigend Course at Royal Troon Golf Club should be formally enrolled in the OnCourse® Developments Programme.

The primary reasons for this recommendation are:

- Resourceful repurposing of existing golf land to become more productive, robust and future proofed for future events and activities.
- Platform and facility to promote and deliver enhanced golf opportunities for all levels of golfer and increase community outreach opportunities.
- Increase in overall area of gorse scrub and more valuable grassland types than the existing amenity grassland, which currently predominates large parts of the proposed land.

Taking into account the opportunity to reconfigure and repurpose the existing land into a more productive property with wider benefits for the members and community of Troon. GEO is confident that given the high standard of sustainable development that commitment to the OnCourse® Developments Programme demands, the New Craigend Course at Royal Troon Golf Club undoubtedly has the potential to deliver multiplier benefits in strengthening the environment, society, and economy of the Troon and the wider Ayrshire region.

GEO Foundation
July 2019

2. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Project Appraisal Report is to provide a recommendation regarding formal enrolment in the OnCourse® Developments programme.

The recommendation is informed by a review of the fundamental sustainability opportunities and challenges the project is likely to generate, to ensure that it has the potential to deliver the very highest standards in sustainable development.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

It is regarded as fundamental to the aims of the OnCourse® Developments programme that the project has the potential to deliver a fully integrated sustainability concept, in which golf is embodied. In this instance it is proposed that the OnCourse® Developments programme should include development of the golf course facilities at New Craighend Course at Royal Troon Golf Club including:

- A 9-hole par 3 golf course which will also function as a tournament practice ground
- Short game area
- A separate members practice ground
- Amendments to 4 holes of an existing course
- A newly constructed structure for the covered bays at the members practice ground.

Moreover, the OnCourse® Developments programme philosophy requires that the sustainability potential of the project extends beyond the property boundary, to interface with, and embrace, the wider social, economic and environmental context of the Ayrshire.

METHODOLOGY

Project Appraisal constitutes an initial review of the core aspects of the development project. Should the project be formally enrolled in the OnCourse® Developments programme, this process will be extended incrementally to explore the relevant sustainability issues at progressively more detailed levels, corresponding to the following stages of development:

- Design
- Construction
- Certification

The Project Appraisal therefore focuses on investigating the broad compatibility of the project with GEO values and aims, rather than detailed specifics. It includes the following key tasks:

- Review of the main components of the project as currently defined.
- Appraisal of key sustainability issues generated by the project, in order to identify and understand the main opportunities and challenges in relation to the 2nd Edition of the Sustainable Golf Developments Guidelines¹ and Voluntary Sustainability Standard².
- Advice and guidance on fulfilling the project's sustainability potential through the subsequent stages of the process.

These tasks have been informed by:

- Review of documents provided by the project team directly.
- A detailed review of general literature sources, team presentations, site photographs and websites.
- Discussions/telephone conferences with the project team representatives.

¹ http://www.golfenvironment.org/get_involved/developments/sustainable_golf_development_guidelines

² <http://www.golfenvironment.org/vision/action/standards/developments>

3. PROJECT

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a brief overview of the context of the project with respect to the main factors potentially influencing sustainability. The site information is drawn primarily from the baseline work undertaken for the project to date.

PROJECT LOCATION



Figure 1: Aerial Photo of Context (Source: Google Earth)

Situated in the South West of Scotland in the county of Ayrshire, the site is located approximately 40km South West of Glasgow. There are two nearby international airports, Glasgow (less than 40km) and Prestwick (5km) and several other highly regarded golf courses within a 10km radius of the site.

There are around 15,000 people that live in the town of Troon and around 110,000 that live in the South Ayrshire council area. The area is dominated by agricultural land uses as the soils are particularly fertile in the region of Scotland. The area is within commutable distance from the City of Glasgow with good road and travel infrastructure available. It also is a popular tourist and golf visitor destination with 3 golf courses that have hosted The Open Championship in close proximity including Royal Troon Golf Club.

PROJECT SITE

The site is located on the existing property of Royal Troon Golf Club. The land is currently used for golfing purposes and is entirely within the club's property. The proposals affect the land in that is currently occupied by the Portland practice ground and the 9th hole from the Portland course.



Figure 2: Aerial Photo of Site (Source: Google Earth)

The area of proposed work for the New Craigend Course takes in approximately 10 hectares of existing golf course land. There are other improvement works planned for the property during the construction of the new course that are not included in the scope of this certification process. These improvements not included are:

- Upgrades to irrigation and drainage on The Old Course and the other 14 holes of The Portland Course
- Coastal Management works

The site area is predominately mown managed amenity grassland with some patches of gorse and other grassland/heathland scrub vegetation currently in 'out of play' areas. The areas of amenity grassland offer low ecological value, but the patches of scrub vegetation are more valuable, especially the larger contiguous patches.

The views on the site are very open and typical of a links golf setting. The open and flat nature of the site presents some challenges in terms of ground shaping and good visual integration with the wider landscape. The soils are well suited for the cultivation of sports turfgrass with good drainage properties and are thought to need little amelioration for use as rootzone material.

The climate and availability of water is not a cause of concern currently. The client plans to make general improvements to their existing irrigation system and has access to water from a nearby waterway. The client currently abstract less than half of their license quota of water from the waterway per annum.



Figure 3: Aerial Photos of Site (Source: Mackenzie and Ebert)

SUMMARY

The proposed development comprises a 9-hole par 3 golf course which will also function as a tournament practice ground, a separate members practice ground and amendments to 4 holes of an existing course. Other core golf components include the newly constructed structure for the covered bays at the members practice ground.

The project team includes:

- Project Owner: Royal Troon Golf Club
- Golf Course Architect: Mackenzie & Ebert
- Agronomy: Richard Windows, The R&A
- Drainage: STRI
- Irrigation Contractor: OCMIS
- Driving Range Structure team: To be confirmed

The Project is set to begin construction in Winter 2019 and projected opening is Spring 2022.

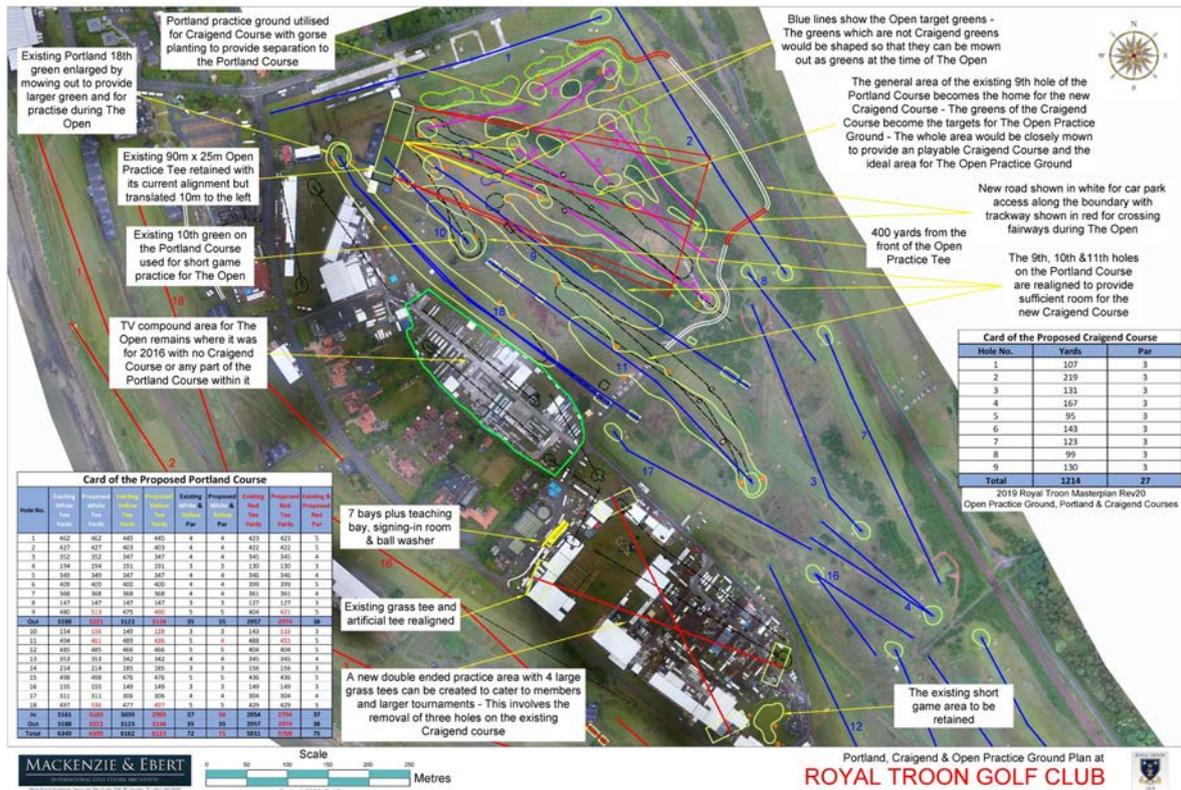


Figure 4: Overall project plan with changes to The Portland Course illustrated (Source: Mackenzie and Ebert)



Figure 5: New Craigend Golf Course (Source: Mackenzie and Ebert)

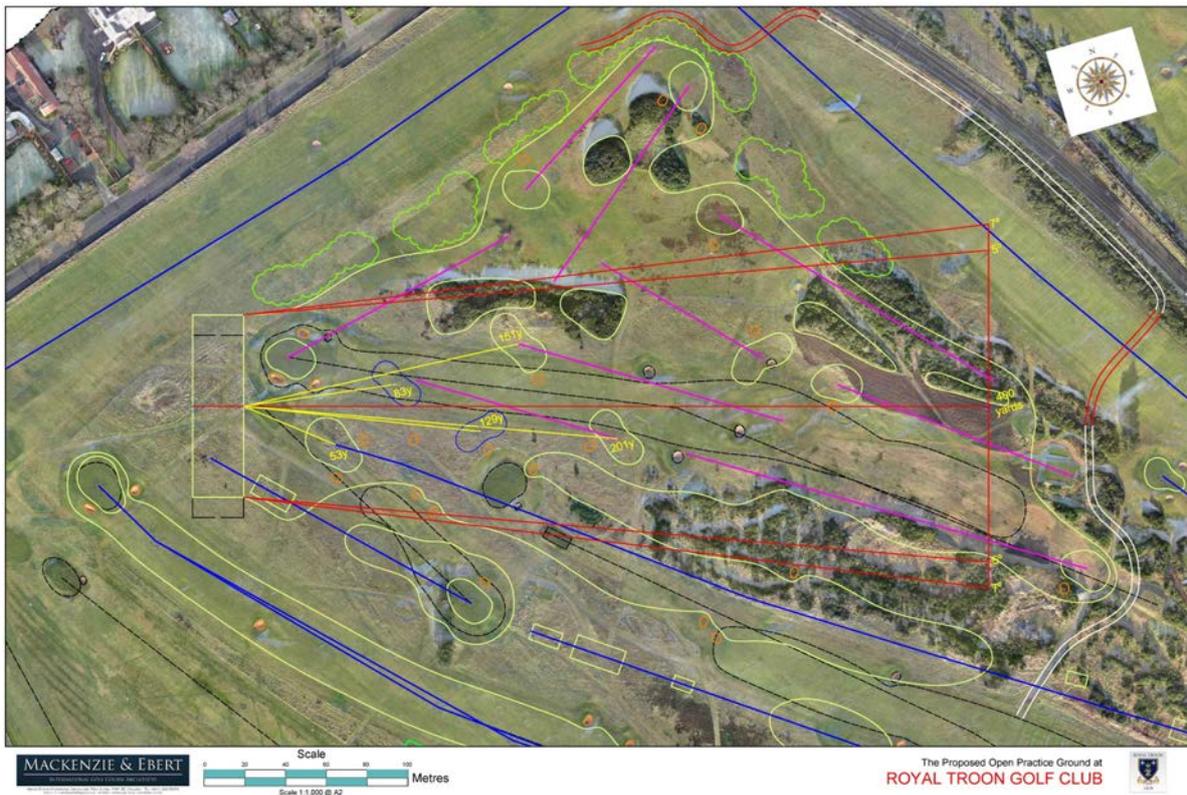


Figure 6: A tournament practice ground (Source: Mackenzie and Ebert)

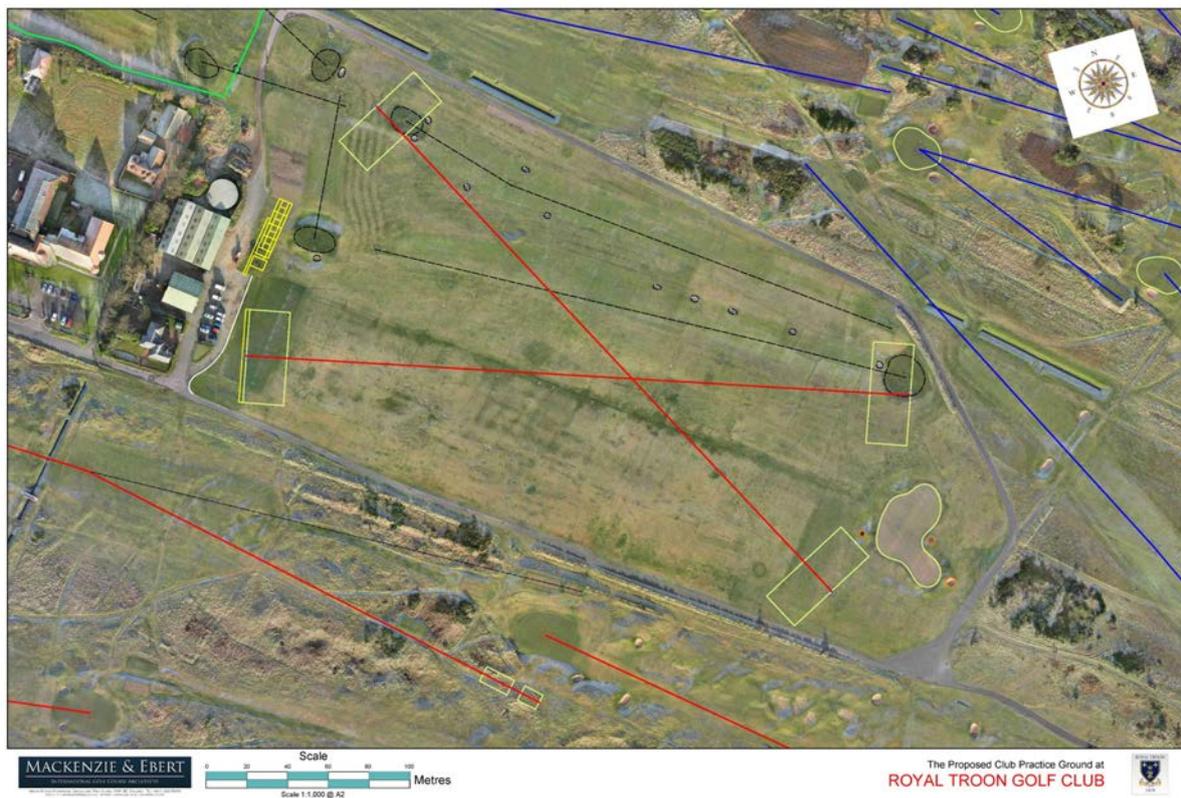


Figure 7: A member's practice ground (Source: Mackenzie and Ebert)

4. APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

AREA	OPPORTUNITY	CHALLENGE
SITE SELECTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-purposing of existing golfing ground means very low risk of adverse environmental and social impact. 2. Site conditions are very well adapted for golf construction – soils, turf, climatic factors, terrain 3. Existing adjacent course are currently GEO Certified® facilities with established sustainable management practices. 4. Good leadership and understanding from the project team of sustainable development principles and a strong desire to create a golf development that is exemplifies sustainable golf. 5. Owned by a private membership since 1878 with established processes in place for the scrutiny of new project costs and budgeting accordingly. 6. The club has remained on the same grounds since its establishment. 7. The grounds are very valuable to golf and The Open Championship, which offers the opportunity to demonstrate innovative land use planning, multi-functionality and high productivity form a limited parcel of golf land. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The consideration and timings of construction work and their impact on the existing membership's access to facilities. 2. The successful execution of overlapping multiple golf uses on one piece of land.
NATURE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current parcel of land proposed for change currently contains quiet large areas of amenity grassland with low ecological value. 2. Overall proposals suggest a net increase in gorse and other dune scrub habitats. Detailed landscape plans still to be determined. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SSSI area is nearby (on the coastline) 2. Areas of gorse and dunes scrub habitat look set to be removed in the realignment of some holes, meaning overall net loss/gains need to be considered and retention of larger scrub patches should be examined where feasible. 3. Having dual uses for the same golf land means the natural integration of all the golf features that are 'facing' different playing direction needs careful consideration.
RESOURCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to have multiple golf and The Open's activities happening when needed on the land has the potential to demonstrate very resourceful and innovative use of land. 2. During propose construction of the new 9-holes, other planned improvements look set to be delivered to reduce overall resource use of the building process. 3. Promotion of the use of local materials and trades to deliver project, already started with the members driving range structure. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existing turf on the greens and fairways of the Old and Portland courses takes up a relatively small area. 2. Planning and effective planning of logistics and work phases to maximize resource and time savings. 3. Repurposing existing golf land offers the challenge of retaining any existing features that can be resourcefully reused such as fairway contours or bunkering.
COMMUNITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New and improved 9-hole facility could offer a great platform to promote junior golf and accessible golf for all. 2. The Royal Troon Summer Golf Festival and School of Golf initiatives have provided over 400 hours of time to local youth golfer, which is again a great platform to grow at the new proposed facility. 3. Chance to showcase local trades and skills in construction process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing development process with continual membership and users' scrutiny and approval.

LIMITATIONS

The content of the Project Appraisal is drawn from information contained within existing project documentation and surveys carried out by consultants hired by Royal Troon Golf Club. It reflects information correct at the time of writing, it is possible that new information will become available after the completion of this report. This new information would be incorporated into future revisions of this report or in the subsequent stages of the certification reporting process.

APPENDICIES

A: CRITERIA CHECKLIST³

³ To be read in conjunction with the “Sustainable Golf Development – Voluntary Sustainability Standard. First Edition”

A. CRITERIA CHECKLIST

PREPARATION STAGE:

Baseline 3 of 3

Improvement 1 of 1

Criterion	Objective	Detailed Performance Requirements	Notes - OK / Pending / No
P1B	Appropriate site selection	Ensure all efforts are made to: minimise development of prime agricultural land; protect land supporting local livelihoods; protect floodplain capacity and conserve threatened and/or endangered habitats and species.	OK Land is existing golfing ground
P2B	Establishment of legal context	Demonstrate that alternative sites have been considered and that Free and Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) or equivalent has been agreed. Ensure clarity around land ownership, transport access and legal permits.	OK Land owned by the client and no change in use is proposed.
P3B	Economic due diligence	Ensure an economic feasibility study has been carried out to determine the economic sustainability of the project.	OK The client has an established process of successful project scrutiny.
P4B	Promotion of development team leadership	Ensure that development team is committed to sustainable development, aware of its role and has expertise to deliver. Preferred nomination of a “Sustainability Leader” on the project team.	OK Strong existing knowledge of sustainable practices and a GEO Certified® existing facility.
P5I	Economic, environmental and social due diligence	Ensure that, in the feasibility study, all material issues have been considered and addressed in their environmental and social contexts.	OK Client has an set of successful established initiatives to support local community and charity activities.



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