

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 4 April 2018

Report By: Head of Regeneration and Planning

**Report No: 18/0018/IC
Plan 04/18**

**Local Application
Development**

Contact Officer: Guy Phillips

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**Subject: Proposed extension to rear of house at
60 Esplanade, Greenock**



SUMMARY

- The proposal accords with the Inverclyde Development Plan.
- Ten written representations have been received raising concerns on impact upon adjoining property, impact upon the Greenock West End Conservation Area, drawing errors, loss of view and disturbance from construction.
- The recommendation is to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION.

SITE DESCRIPTION

60 Esplanade is the first floor flat in a two storey Victorian villa within the Greenock West End Conservation Area. Access is via an external stair at the rear of the building which leads to an elevated porch, which is supported by two approximately 4 metres high columns, one of which is located within the rear garden of the ground floor flat. The porch, which is approximately 3 metres wide by 2 metres deep, is centred on the villa's rear elevation. Immediately below the elevated porch is a bedroom window of the ground floor flat.

The villa's approximately 50 metres long rear garden is split longitudinally providing each of the two flats with a private garden. The mutual garden boundary comprises an approximately 1.8 metres high ranch style timber fence, running north-east to south-west between the centre of the sub-divided villa's rear elevation and the rear garden boundary wall at Eldon Street.

Within its garden, the ground floor flat has a pitch roof single storey extension, projecting approximately 7 metres from the rear elevation. It is approximately 3.5 metres wide and is positioned approximately 3 metres from the garden boundary shared with the upper flat. Rear garden access for the ground floor flat is via French doors which are set between the kitchen extension and the first floor flat's elevated rear porch.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to construct a two storey stair enclosure with an attached single storey extension, both with hip ended pitch roofs.

The stair, which is positioned immediately adjacent and parallel to the rear elevation, runs approximately 5 metres between the existing elevated porch and the side gable wall. Matching the elevated porch, to which it is to be attached, the proposed stair enclosure projects approximately 2 metres from the rear elevation. Daylighting is provided by two twin-light first floor windows on the rear elevation and an approximately 2.5 metres vertical window, split into three equal panes set above an entrance door and facing the side boundary with no. 59 Esplanade. The vertical window is to be fitted with opaque glass.

The approximately 5 by 5 metres single storey extension contains a family room and is equipped with multi-folding glazed doors on its rear and east side elevations. A hallway links it to the stair enclosure.

Also proposed is a new first floor window opening on the side elevation of the upper floor flat. It matches the scale and proportion of the existing Victorian window openings and is to be fitted with a sash and case window. Similar to the tall vertical window above the entrance door, it is equipped with sandblasted glass (bottom sash only) to obviate intervisibility with a side window in the neighbouring property at No 59.

The external finishes proposed are a silicone render wall finish coloured to match the existing sandstone, brown uPVC window frames to match the colour of those existing within the first floor flat, and natural slate roofs.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Policy RES1 - Safeguarding the Character and Amenity of Residential Areas

The character and amenity of residential areas, identified on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded and where practicable, enhanced. Proposals for new residential development will be assessed against and have to satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) compatibility with the character and amenity of the area;

- (b) details of proposals for landscaping;
- (c) proposals for the retention of existing landscape or townscape features of value on the site;
- (d) accordance with the Council's adopted roads guidance and Designing Streets, the Scottish Government's policy statement;
- (e) provision of adequate services; and
- (f) having regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes.

Planning Application Advice Note 4 "Extensions" applies.

Policy RES5 - Proposals for Changes to Properties for Residential Use

Proposals for the change of use, sub-division or conversion to properties to create new additional dwelling units, and for the alteration or extension to residential properties, will be assessed against and have to satisfy where appropriate, the following criteria:

- (a) the character and amenity of neighbouring properties;
- (b) impact on the streetscape;
- (c) impact on the character of the existing property;
- (d) accordance with the Council's adopted roads guidance; and
- (e) having regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes.

Policy HER1 - Development which Affects the Character of Conservation Areas

Development proposals which affect conservation areas will be acceptable where they are sympathetic to the character, pattern of development and appearance of the area. Such proposals will be assessed having regard to Historic Environment Scotland's SHEP (superseded by the "Policy Statement") and "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note series.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Environmental and Commercial Services - the increase in the number of bedrooms in the flat from two to three does not demand any additional off-street car parking provision.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised as a development affecting a conservation area.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted as a development affecting a conservation area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Following a negotiated change to the proposed design which reduced a full two storey extension to the part two storey/part single storey configuration under consideration, all of the affected parties were re-neighbour notified. A total of ten written representations have been received from six objectors.

The objections relating to the proposals subject of this report are:

Impact on neighbouring property:

- Loss of light.
- Loss of privacy from overlooking and window intervisibility.
- Loss of garden amenity.
- Impact on a tree in the neighbouring garden.
- Eaves and guttering shall overhang.

- Disturbance from site works.
- Proximity to the mutual garden boundary with the ground floor flat.

Design:

- Inappropriate height, materials and contemporary design.
- Various concerns over impact on the structure of the building.
- Detrimental impact on the character of the building and Conservation Area. Views of the Esplanade from properties on Eldon Street shall be reduced.
- The development shall be visible from North Street and Eldon Street.

Plan errors:

- There are errors in relation to existing windows and 59a Esplanade is named 59 on the location plan.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of this application are the Inverclyde Local Development Plan, Planning Application Advice Note (PAAN) 4 on "House Extensions", Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement and the Managing Change in the Historic Environment design guidance note "Extensions", the impact on the existing building and on the wider streetscape, the impact on residential amenity, the observations of the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services and the representations received.

Policy RES1 seeks to protect residential amenity and Policy RES5 advises on alterations to existing residential properties. PAAN4, which applies to house extensions, provides guidance in achieving a balance between those wishing to extend their property whilst protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Policy RES1 seeks to safeguard residential amenity and character. As an extension to an existing flatted property, determination as to whether or not it meets this aim is best assessed against the relevant criteria within Policy RES5. The relevant criteria in this instance are: (a) the character and amenity of neighbouring properties, (b) impact on the streetscape, (c) impact on the character of the existing property and (d) having regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes.

Potential impact upon the character and amenity of immediately adjoining properties arises from daylighting, shadow, window intervisibility, overlooking and the scale and design of the proposal. Examining firstly the two storey stair enclosure, I note that the 2 metres projection from the rear elevation villa matches that of the existing elevated porch which intervenes between it and the rear extension to the ground floor flat. The first floor flat's driveway is between the proposed extension and the mutual boundary with the neighbouring house at No 59. The two storey element of the extension will not be visible from within the ground floor flat. Consequently I do not consider that there will be an unacceptable impact on light to neighbouring property. In noting the sun path relative to the two storey element, any impact is limited to the later part of the day, if at all.

Currently a rear bedroom window faces down the garden. The proposal replaces this with 3 windows, two of which serve only to provide light to the stair, with the third at the stair landing looking down the garden. The side window to the stair also primarily serves to provide light, being glazed in obscure glass, as is the lower pane of a new window to be located on the gable of the existing building. I do not consider that privacy is unacceptably impacted.

In examining the impact of the single storey extension, it is noted that it will both cross a 45 degree line from the mid-point of the nearest ground floor window and will exceed 4.5 metres in length as recommended in PAAN4. This Guidance seeks to offer protection from overshadowing and loss of light, although it further advises that applicants may extend to a garden depth similar to neighbours. This bedroom window is set below the elevated porch with a 1.8 metres high mutual boundary

fence immediately adjacent. The window faces a mature tree approximately 7 metres into the garden and the pitch roof single storey extension to the ground floor flat is approximately 2.4 metres away. All of these existing factors combine to have a shading effect upon the bedroom window, however I require to consider the additional impact of the proposed 7 metres projecting single storey extension. Calculations based on the BRE guide to good practice on daylight and sunlight informs that ordinarily this window would suffer unacceptable loss of light as a consequence of the erection of the extension. The calculation, however, does not include reference to the existing elevated porch directly above the window and it is evident that regardless of other obstructions, this is the most significant factor in reducing light to the bedroom. On balance, and recognising the use of the room as a bedroom, I do not consider that taking the circumstances into account, the additional impact of the extension will result in significant additional loss of light as to justify refusal of planning permission.



No. 59 has side and rear extensions which adjoin the mutual boundary with the application site and there are 3 side windows which face the side gable of no.60. They comprise two at ground floor level in its side extension and one at first floor level in the south-west gable of the building. As the proposed extension is, predominantly, single storey I am satisfied that no significant impact upon daylighting will occur at no.59. I am also satisfied that the prevailing boundary between nos. 59 and 60 will address any concerns over privacy.

While at 7 metres this is a long extension, I note that the ground floor flat benefits from a similar length extension, and the size of the garden ensures that there is more than adequate undeveloped garden retained.

Examining impact on the character of the property, the generalities of both the design and the proposed finishing materials are modern, however I am content that the overall scale and appearance is commensurate with the character of the rear elevation of this villa. Overall, I consider that the proposal satisfies criteria (a) and (c) of Policy RES5.

Addressing the impact on the streetscape and impact on the character of the existing property, Policy HER1 requires proposals to be sympathetic to the character, pattern of development and appearance of the Conservation Area, with proposals required to be assessed having regard to Historic Environment Scotland's SHEP (superseded by the "Policy Statement") and "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note "Extensions". The "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note "Extensions" advises that most historic buildings can be

extended sensitively. Extensions must protect the character and appearance of the building, be subordinate in scale and form, be located on a secondary elevation and be designed in a high-quality manner using appropriate materials. In this instance, the proposal is at the rear of the building (a secondary elevation) which has been the subject of previous alterations. I am content that within the context of these previous alterations the proposal is not harmful to the character and appearance of the building and has been designed in a high quality manner using materials that are sympathetic to the sub-divided villa. The separation of the rear of the building from the public domain and the presence of high boundary walling reducing views towards it combine to significantly reduce the impact of the proposal upon the Conservation Area. I am content that the proposal meets the design guidance within Historic Environment Scotland's "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note "Extensions" and is acceptable with reference to criterion (b) of Policy RES5.



The final policy consideration is having regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes. The proposal accords with the design guidance within the Council's Planning Application Advice Note 4 "House Extensions" with reference to the area of developed garden ground (less than 25%), separation from the rear garden boundary (more than 5.5 metres), fitting of obscure glass to prevent intervisibility with neighbouring properties and the choice of finishing materials. The guidance on limitations to the size of extensions is aimed at preventing unacceptable loss of light and the retention of appropriate garden ground as previously examined, the proposal is acceptable with reference to these considerations and satisfies the intent of criterion (d) of Policy RES5.

As I am satisfied that the proposal complies with the Local Development Plan, it remains to consider if there any material considerations that determine planning permission should be considered contrary to the Development Plan. In this regard it is appropriate to address the consultation response from the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services and representations not considered in the assessment of planning policy.

The non-objection to the proposal by the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services determines that the proposal satisfies the Council's adopted roads guidance in terms of off-street parking provision.

Considering the objectors' concerns not addressed by my assessment against the Local Development Plan: structural considerations will most appropriately be considered by an application for a building warrant; any issue of overhanging eaves and rainwater goods is a civil matter to be resolved between the affected parties; and potential disturbance from site works and loss of view from within private property are not material planning considerations. The neighbouring tree is of no wider merit to the Conservation Area, and as a consequence it would be inappropriate to refuse permission based on any potential impact and I also note that extensions are frequently erected close to garden boundaries. Finally, I note that the submitted plans have been updated to accurately reflect the existing fenestration and I am satisfied that the location and site plans combine to make the relationship of the proposed development to neighbouring buildings clear.

As a result of all of the above circumstances, I am content to conclude that the proposal safeguards residential amenity and character, is sympathetic to the character, pattern of development and appearance of the Conservation Area and is an intelligent and understanding management of the historic environment and thus accords with Policies RES1, HER1 of the Local Development Plan and Historic Environment Scotland's "Policy Statement".

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. That opaque glass shall be maintained within the windows so detailed on docquetted drawing 17_091_PL_003 in perpetuity.
2. No development shall commence until samples of all external materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority; development thereafter shall proceed utilising the approved materials, unless the Planning Authority gives its prior written approval to any alternatives.

Reasons

1. To ensure that the privacy of the neighbouring properties is safeguarded in perpetuity.
2. To ensure a choice of external finishes appropriate to this part of the Greenock West End Conservation Area.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – Background Papers. For further information please contact Guy Phillips on 01475 712422.