

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 1st August 2018

Report By: Head of Regeneration and Planning

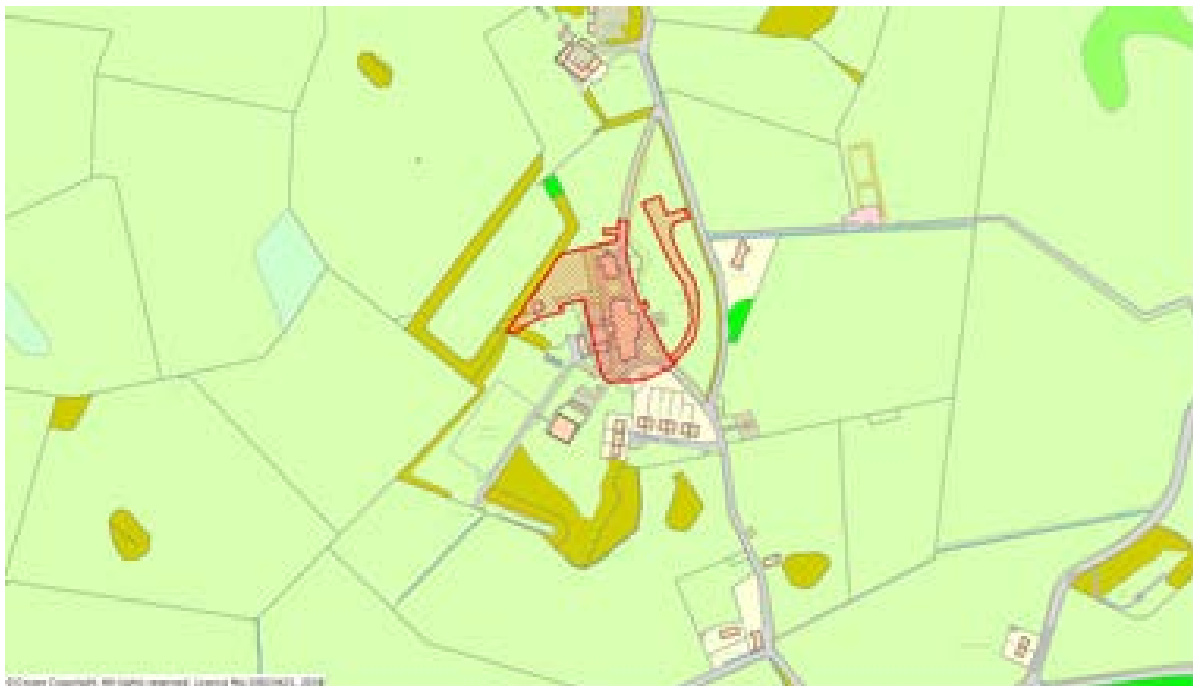
Report No: 17/0038/LB

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Subject:

Conversion of existing Main Building, Annexe Building and Water Tower into residential units. Main Building - façade retention to North, South and East elevations with full reconstruction of west elevation, internal floor plates and roof, new windows throughout. Annexe Building - internal alterations and repairs to suit new layout. Roof overhauled/reslated, new windows throughout. Water Tower Building - Existing ground floor walls retained with new upper floor construction to match existing at Balrossie House, Blacksholm Road, Kilmacolm



SUMMARY

- The proposal accords with the Inverclyde Development Plan.
- Two objections have been received raising concerns over the impact on road safety, infrastructure and visual impact.
- Consultation responses present no impediment to development.
- The recommendation is to GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT subject to conditions.

Drawings may be viewed at:

<https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OYNE3NIMMVM00>

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Balrossie childrens' home is set in the countryside and located on Blacksholm Road north of its junction with the B788 road, approximately 1 mile west of Kilmacolm.

The home and villa annexe are set at the front of the site, behind which was the staff annexe and a small single storey ornamental building. All are listed category B by Historic Environment Scotland.

The main building is 2-storey Scottish Renaissance featuring gothic details, a piended roof with a prominent centre gabled section and 2 single-storey service wings extending from the rear. The annexe is a 2-storey, 3-bay villa. The ornamental building is a small, square-plan, flat-roofed water tower building originally forming a focal point in the garden. The listing of buildings also extends controls to boundary features, including the entrance gates at the north and south ends of the original driveway into the site.

Adjacent to the site lie a group of houses at Balrossie Drive originally associated with the former childrens' home but now in private ownership.

The grounds around the listed buildings have not been maintained in recent years and some self-seeded trees have also become established over time.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in September 2007 and February 2015 for the conversion of the listed buildings and enabling new build housing but were not implemented. It is now proposed to revisit development of the site in a different form. This is being done through the submission of four applications; planning application 18/0076/IC proposes "27 new build houses with associated roads infrastructure and new package waste treatment plant", planning application 18/0077/IC proposes "22 new build houses with associated roads infrastructure and new package waste treatment plant", planning application 17/0315/IC seeks planning permission for the conversion and alteration of all three listed buildings to bring them into use as habitable dwellings, and this application seeks listed building consent for the same works as the planning application 17/0351/IC.

Although the existing roofs offer a degree of protection from the elements, the applicant advises that some coverings and structures will need to be replaced as the current materials are past their useful life and are in very poor condition. Lead and slates have been stripped in places and there has been some fire damage. There is also significant water penetration and, where they remain, marked deterioration of gutters and downpipes. The walls are in generally better condition, with only a few areas of decay limiting work to primarily cleaning and pointing, with small areas of damaged roughcast to be repaired. Most windows have been boarded, but those exposed and damaged will be replaced to make the buildings habitable. The interiors are generally in poor condition due to water ingress and vandalism; almost no original interior finishes survive.

The application plans show the alterations necessary to allow the conversion to residential accommodation.

In the main building it is proposed to retain the east (front), south and north facades. The west (rear) elevation will be reinstated using materials matching the other elevations. The reinstated rear elevation will incorporate additional fenestration and doors and non-original additions will be demolished. Alterations to the side elevations are limited but include the demolition of the non-original extension and the punching through of a new window and doors. Otherwise, the key alterations to the front elevation are limited to four new doors. New roof light windows will also be introduced to the roof space parallel with the side elevations. New double glazed timber sash and casement windows will generally be used throughout, together with new cast iron gutters and downpipes. The interior works, which will involve completely new floor plates, will be carried out to allow the creation of 12 x 2 and 3 bedroom flats.

The annexe building is in better overall condition, with roof alterations limited to repairs and making good with natural slate and terracotta decorative ridges to match the existing. As per the main building, new cast iron gutters and downpipes are to be used. Non-original extensions will also be removed and external finishes are to be made good with a new entrance created where a non-original stair is removed. The existing rear lean-to roof area will be infilled with materials matching the retained facades to provide additional ground floor accommodation. A small, new dormer will be introduced to the front elevation. This will assist with conversion of the building to 2 x 4 bedroom semi-detached villas.

The water tower building is a single storey structure although historical information suggests that it was taller, mimicking the main building's central tower. The applicant proposes to retain and refurbish the structure, re-creating the levels above to form a 3 bedroom dwelling in the style of the original tower.

All the applications are supported by a raft of documentation including a Design and Access Statement, a condition survey of the listed buildings, a tree survey and arboricultural report, an ecological survey and costings justifying the provision of new build in relation to phased works to secure the long term future of the listed buildings. The applicant has set out the intended programme in the supporting documentation, noting that redevelopment of the listed buildings alone is not financially viable. The proposed programme is to demolish and remove all outbuildings and extensions not required; make the listed buildings safe and secure and mitigate any further damage; build the site infrastructure and the first 22 houses; before carrying out the full refurbishment of the listed buildings. It is expected to take 12-24 months for the refurbishment and this is to be completed prior to completion of the final 6 new build houses (49 are proposed in total). Construction works are expected to take 3½ years with sales lagging 6 months behind construction, thus completing the whole development within 4 years. It is explained that the current proposals are as a result of local demand and re-profiling the house types after extensive market research which has revealed a demand for smaller family houses.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan

Policy 14 - Green Belt

In support of the Vision and Spatial Development Strategy, Local Authorities should:

- designate within Local Development Plans, the inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt to ensure the objectives set out in paragraph 8.15 are achieved;
- collaborate to ensure consistency across Local Development Plan areas when defining or altering Green Belt boundaries.

Inverclyde Local Development Plan

Policy HER4 - Alteration, Extension and Demolition of Listed Buildings

There is a presumption in favour of the retention of listed buildings, and their demolition, in full or in part, will only be accepted after a full assessment of the importance and condition of the building has been undertaken. Proposals to alter, extend or demolish a listed building must respect the reasons for listing, be of a high standard and will be approved only where the proposed works do not adversely affect the special interest of the building and are satisfactory having regard to Historic Scotland's SHEP and "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note series.

Policy ENV2 - Assessing Development Proposals in the Green Belt and the Countryside

Development in the Green Belt will only be considered favourably in exceptional or mitigating circumstances, while development in the Countryside will only be considered favourably where it can be supported with reference to the following criteria:

- (a) it is required for the purposes of agriculture, forestry or, where appropriate, renewable energy (refer Policy INF1); or
- (b) it is a recreation, leisure or tourism proposal which is appropriate for the countryside and has an economic, social and community benefit (refer to Policy ECN6); or
- (c) there is a specific locational requirement for the use and it cannot be accommodated on an alternative site (refer Policies INF3 and INF7); or
- (d) it entails appropriate re-use of redundant habitable buildings, the retention of which is desirable for either their historic interest or architectural character or which form part of an establishment or institution standing in extensive grounds (refer to Policy RES7); and
- (e) it does not adversely impact on the natural and built heritage, and environmental resources;
- (f) it does not adversely impact on landscape character;
- (g) it does not adversely impact on prime quality agricultural land;
- (h) it does not adversely impact on peat land with a high value as a carbon store;
- (i) it does not adversely affect the visual amenity of the area and is capable of satisfactory mitigation;
- (j) there is a need for additional land for development purposes, provided it takes account of the requirements of the Strategic Development Plan; and
- (k) it has regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes.

Policy RES3 - Residential Development Opportunities

Residential development will be encouraged and supported on the sites and indicative locations included in Schedule 6.1 and indicated on the Proposals Map. An annual audit of the housing land supply will monitor and review, and where necessary, augment the Effective Land Supply, to maintain a minimum five year's supply in accordance with the GCV SDP and SPP guidance.

Policy INF4 - Reducing Flood Risk

Development will not be acceptable where it is at risk of flooding, or increases flood risk elsewhere. There may be exceptions for infrastructure if a specific location is essential for operational reasons and the development is designed to operate in flood conditions and to have minimal impact on water flow and retention.

All developments at risk of flooding will require to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and should include a freeboard allowance, use water resistant materials where appropriate and include suitable management measures and mitigation for any loss of flood storage capacity.

Planning Application Advice Note (PAAN) 7 on "Window Replacement in Conservation Areas and in Listed Buildings" applies.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Policy 8 - Managing Flood Risk

Development proposals will be assessed against the Flood Risk Framework set out in Scottish Planning Policy. Proposals must demonstrate that they will not:

- be at significant risk of flooding;
- increase the level of flood risk elsewhere; and
- reduce the water conveyance and storage capacity of a functional flood plain.

The Council will support, in principle, the flood protection schemes set out in the Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016, subject to assessment of the impacts on the amenity and operations of existing and adjacent uses, the green network, historic buildings and places, and the transport network.

Policy 14 - Green Belt and Countryside

Development in the Green Belt and Countryside will only be permitted if it is appropriately designed, located, and landscaped, and is associated with:

- a) agriculture, horticulture, woodland or forestry;
- b) a tourism or recreational use that requires a countryside location;
- c) infrastructure with a specific locational need;
- d) the appropriate re-use of a redundant stone or brick building, the retention of which is desirable for its historic interest or architectural character, subject to that interest or character being retained; or
- e) intensification (including extensions and outbuildings) of an existing use, which is within the curtilage of the associated use and is of an appropriate scale and form.

Proposals associated with the uses set out in criteria a)-c) must provide justification as to why the development is required at the proposed location.

Policy 18 - New Housing Development

New housing development will be supported on the sites identified in Schedule 4, and on other appropriate sites within residential areas and town and local centres. All proposals for residential development will be assessed against relevant Supplementary Guidance including Development Briefs for Housing Sites, Planning Application Advice Notes, and Delivering Green Infrastructure in New Development. There will be a requirement for 25% of houses on greenfield housing sites in the Inverclyde villages which are brought forward under Policy 17 to be available for social rent. Supplementary Guidance will be prepared in respect of this requirement.

Policy 29 - Listed Buildings

Proposals for development affecting a listed building, including its setting, are required to protect its special architectural or historical interest. In assessing proposals, due consideration will be given to how the proposals will enable the building to remain in active use.

Demolition of listed buildings will not be supported.

Policy 33 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Natura 2000 sites

Development proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site will be subject to an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal on conservation objectives. Proposals will only be permitted if the assessment demonstrates that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site or if:

- there are no alternative solutions;
- there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature; or
- compensatory measures are provided to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura network is protected.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Development affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest will only be permitted where the objectives of the designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised, or if any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

Protected Species

Development affecting Protected Species will only be permitted where:

- it preserves public health or public safety or is for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and has beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- it maintains the species in a favourable conservation status.

Local Nature Conservation Sites

Development is required to avoid having a significant adverse impact on Local Nature Conservation Sites. Any adverse impacts are to be minimised. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, compensatory measures will be required.

Local Landscape Area

Development that affects the West Renfrew Hills Local Landscape Area is required to protect and, where possible, enhance its special features as set out in the Statement of Importance.

Non-designated sites

The siting and design of development should take account of local landscape character. All development should seek to minimise adverse impact on wildlife, especially species and habitats identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Development should take account of connectivity between habitat areas. Where possible, new development should be designed to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Proposed Planning Application Advice Note (PAAN) 7 on "Window Replacement in Conservation Areas and in Listed Buildings" applies.

CONSULTATIONS

Historic Environment Scotland - Welcome this application, particularly given the ongoing deterioration and vandalism that is occurring. Although content with the principle of the proposals, it is considered that the application is light on detail, particularly regarding the method of repairs and materials. Comment will be offered on further submissions in this regard.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Edinburgh Gazette and Greenock Telegraph on 10th November 2017 for development affecting a listed building.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted on 10th November 2017 for development affecting a listed building.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two objections have been received. The points of objection may be summarised as follows:

- Blacksholm Road is not capable of supporting the amount of traffic this proposal would generate either in the short term through construction work, or in the longer term when residences would be occupied.
- People will have to walk on the unlit road or poor quality footpaths to access Kilmacolm, which is a danger.
- Anticipated issues with traffic management.
- The length of time to build out the site will cause a long period of disruption to existing nearby residents' way of life.
- Loss of green belt.
- There is no gas supply or connection to main sewers.
- Concerns over drainage.
- Concerns over plot size, total number of units and the variations therein.
- Loss of outlook.
- Destruction of wildlife.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in determination of this listed building application are the Inverclyde Local Development Plan, Planning Application Advice Note 7 on “Window Replacement in Conservation Areas and in Listed Buildings”, Supplementary Guidance on “Enabling Development”, the proposed Local Development Plan and proposed Planning Application Advice Note 7, Historic Environment Scotland’s Policy Statement (which supersedes the SHEP) and “Managing Change in the Historic Environment” guidance notes on “Demolition”, “Doorways”, “External Walls”, “Interiors”, “Roofs” and “Windows”, the impact on the architectural integrity and historic interest of the buildings, the consultee reply, the representations and the applicant’s supporting information.

As a listed building application for the conversion of listed buildings, this assessment relates specifically to the heritage implications. Wider implications in respect of the Green Belt, biodiversity, flood risk, drainage, sustainable transport and land contamination are not material, being separately addressed by the parallel planning application 17/0351/IC.

Policy HER4 of the adopted Local Development Plan and Policy 29 of the proposed Local Development Plan are the key policies in consideration of the impact of the proposals on the listed building status. Policy HER4 presumes in favour of the retention of listed buildings. Proposals to alter, extend or demolish them must respect the reasons for listing, be of a high standard and will be approved only where the proposed works do not adversely affect the special interest of the building and are satisfactory having regard to Historic Environment Scotland’s Policy Statement and “Managing Change in the Historic Environment” guidance note series. Policy 29 addresses proposals for development affecting a listed building, including its setting, indicating that they are required to protect its special architectural or historical interest. In assessing proposals, due consideration will be given to how the proposals will enable the building to remain in active use. Demolition of listed buildings will not be supported.



Balrossie House

Historic Environment Scotland acknowledges in its Policy Statement that in assessing an application for the conversion of a listed building, a planning authority is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In this instance the most significant buildings are to be retained, with the extent of external modification to Balrossie House largely limited to the demolition of an extension and rear elevation alterations. The main alterations to the villa annexe are to the rear with a side elevation demolition. I am satisfied that the applicant has sensitively limited the number of interventions required to bring these two buildings back into use as residences. Substantial vertical enlargement is required to the water tower feature building to facilitate conversion to form a dwellinghouse, but the historical evidence suggests that this is an attempt to restore the building to close to its original exterior. I consider all the modifications will be in harmony with the character of the buildings, will largely preserve the architectural integrity and allow for their longer term retention to the benefit of the heritage of the

area. I also note that there are no remaining internal features of merit that would be adversely affected by the proposals.

Turning to the relevant Historic Environment Scotland guidance notes, although the “Demolition” guidance note is aimed at whole building demolitions, I am satisfied that the demolitions of non-original extensions and associated buildings of lesser importance are a positive development in respect of the architectural integrity of the main building, the annexe and their setting. There are no demolitions affecting the water tower.

Referring to guidance on “Doorways”, the original doorways in all three buildings are largely being respected. One opening is being closed on a side elevation of the main building but this is not to the detriment of the character. Changes are necessary to external walls and roofs to bring the buildings into habitable condition but I regard these as being sensitively handled with reference to the corresponding guidance notes. As noted earlier, little of the interior of the buildings remains intact either due to previous alterations or as a result of the effects of weathering and vandalism.



Annexe

Finally, considering “Windows”, the guidance note accepts there will be circumstances where windows are beyond retrieval and require to be replaced. It specifies a number of matters to be addressed in their replacement. Adopted PAAN7 and proposed PAAN7 note that replacement windows should match the design of the original windows, should be painted to accord with the original colour, where appropriate glazing bars should match the original in position and size and that, if sash and case windows are used the bottom sash should be capable of opening inwards. I note that most of the existing windows are boarded up and that those exposed have significantly weathered or been vandalised to the extent that they cannot be re-used. Where visible on the site, most of the original windows appear to be timber sliding sashes. I note that the applicant intends to refurbish the buildings generally with double glazed timber sash and casement windows, which is acceptable. The detailing of these can be covered by condition but the replacement windows proposed are, in principle, largely in character with the buildings and in accordance with the guidance note on “Windows” and adopted and proposed PAAN7s.

I am also influenced by the consultation reply from Historic Environment Scotland. It indicates that this application is welcomed, particularly given the ongoing deterioration and vandalism that is occurring; the proposals do not raise historic environment issues of national significance. Historic Environment Scotland is happy to comment on further submissions, and that consideration on outstanding matters such as repair details and new fittings may be addressed by conditions.

I therefore consider that the proposals accord with the relevant policies of the adopted and proposed Local Development Plans directly related to listed buildings. It remains to be

considered, however, if there are any material considerations which suggest that listed building consent should not be granted. In this respect I turn to the points of objection and, in particular, those matters not already covered by the above assessment. Although these largely relate to the associated planning issues rather than built heritage they have nevertheless been submitted as objections and therefore require consideration.

Whilst I note concerns expressed about the capability of Blacksholm Road in handling the additional traffic likely to arise from this proposal and traffic management generally, disruption from the construction project, concerns over drainage from the site, gas mains connection, sewerage treatment and the merits of enabling building, the listed building application only considers the architectural and historic merits of the project; these are all issues to be considered in assessing the parallel planning application.

Clearly the wildlife concerns insofar as they relates to the listed buildings have to be taken into account, however the appropriate surveys have been carried out by the applicant and the results, showing no bats within the buildings, have been accepted by the Council's Greenspace Manager He advises that no further reference to SNH is required on the basis that the concerns it expressed in the consultation response have been met.

I am therefore satisfied that the proposed conversion of the listed buildings to residential development is acceptable and accords with both the adopted and proposed Local Development Plans and associated guidance. Suitable conditions should be imposed to address some aspects of detailing of the proposed works.

RECOMMENDATION

That listed building consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. That no development shall commence until full details of the following works to Balrossie House, the villa annexe and the watertower have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland:
 - Stonework repairs/replacement
 - Roof repairs.
 - Fenestration repairs/replacement.
 - Door repairs/replacement.
 - Guttering and downpipe repairs/replacement.
2. That no development shall commence until full details of the following works, including timescales for implementation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland:
 - Garden feature repairs/replacement.
 - Boundary repairs/replacement.
 - All hard and soft landscaping works.
3. That no development shall commence on site until full details of a programme for the completion and maintenance of hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
4. That no development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
5. That the recommendations in the Bat Hibernation Survey by Stone's Wildlife Management dated 25th January-10th March 2018 shall be implemented in full.

Reasons

1. To ensure that the detailed works reflect the design and character of the existing listed buildings.
2. To ensure that the works within the curtilage of the listed buildings reflects the design and character of the buildings.
3. To ensure that landscaping works within the curtilage of the listed buildings are maintained to reflect the design and character of the buildings.
4. To allow for archaeological monitoring of any and all ground breaking work associated with the proposed development in the interests of antiquity.
5. In the interests of nature conservation.

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Head of Regeneration and Planning

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – Background Papers. For further information please contact David Ashman on 01475 712416.