

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 2 October 2019

Report By: Head of Regeneration and Planning

Report No: 19/0192/IC  
Plan 10/19

Local Application  
Development

Contact Officer: Alexandra Linn

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Subject: Erection of 6m high flagpole at  
Kempock Place, Gourrock



## SUMMARY

- The proposal presents no conflict with the Inverclyde Local Development Plan.
- Nine objections have been received raising a wide range of concerns including impact on residential amenity, visual impact, loss of rose bushes and wildlife, noise, antisocial behaviour and vandalism and public spending.
- Consultations received present no impediment to development.
- The recommendation is to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION.

Drawings may be viewed at:

<https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PVEHCMIMMI900>

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is the area of public garden between Kempock Place and Shore Street, Gourrock. Located within the Kempock Street/Shore Street Conservation Area the gardens are furnished by a variety of trees, bedding plants, rose bushes, a fountain, benches and an information hut. The well-maintained garden is surrounded by a mixture of residential and commercial buildings.

## **PROPOSAL**

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a 6 metre high glass fibre flag pole with internal halyard and collar, all in white, and centrally located within the garden in an area currently occupied by a rose garden. The pole will be supported by a 2 square metre cobble stone base.

The flagpole is to be used by the Council to display flags to celebrate or commemorate national and local events and occasions.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

### **Policy 1 - Creating Successful Places**

Inverclyde Council requires all development to have regard to the six qualities of successful places. In preparing development proposals, consideration must be given to the factors set out in Figure 3. Where relevant, applications will also be assessed against the Planning Application Advice Notes Supplementary Guidance.

### **Policy 28 - Conservation Areas**

Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area are to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to any relevant Conservation Area Appraisals or other information relating to the historic or architectural value of the conservation area. Where the demolition of an unlisted building is proposed, consideration will be given to the contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. If such a building makes a positive contribution to the area, there will be a presumption in favour of retaining it. Proposals for demolition will not be supported in the absence of a planning application for a replacement development that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## **2014 INVERCLYDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

At the time of application submission, the 2014 Inverclyde Local Development Plan formed part of the Development Plan against which planning applications required to be assessed.

### **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 Scotland's SHEP and "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance note series.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

No consultations were required.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 9th August 2019 as development affecting a conservation area.

## **SITE NOTICES**

A site notice was posted on 9 August 2019 for development affecting a conservation area.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The application was the subject of neighbour notification. Nine representations have been received from neighbours, members of the public and Gourock Community Council, all objecting to the proposal. The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

### Visual impact

- The flagpole will look “unsightly” and detract from the existing public gardens and open sky aspects of the area.
- The addition of a flagpole will contribute to the redundant clutter in this area.
- The location of the proposed flagpole within the conservation area is not considered in keeping therefore an alternative location should be sought.

### Amenity

- There will be additional noise created by the flagpole and associated cord and flag.
- The flagpole will incite further antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

### Other issues

- There will be a loss of some rose bushes and wildlife as a result of the installation of the flagpole.
- The proposal is not considered to be financially viable as there are more pressing issues where the funding is needed.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The material considerations in the assessment of this application are Inverclyde Local Development Plan, Historic Environment Scotland’s Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (which supersedes the SHEP), the “Managing Change in the Historic Environment” guidance note series, the impact on the character and amenity of the Conservation Area and the impact on neighbouring amenity and the comments received.

The determining issues are is this an appropriate development within a public garden, is the impact on the Kempock Street/Shore Street Conservation Area acceptable and will there be a detrimental impact on residential amenity? In assessing the planning merits of this application issues of finance and the option of alternative locations can have no bearing on how this application is determined.

Flagpoles are an occasional feature within public gardens and traditionally are often found on or in the immediate environs of a town’s historic public offices and buildings. For example, in Inverclyde this is evident with a flagpole in Clyde Square outside the Municipal Buildings and on the former Municipal Buildings in Fore Street, Port Glasgow. The flagpole on the former Gourock Municipal Buildings may no longer be used as there is no safe access. The application site is immediately adjacent, and in historical context the location of a flagpole is appropriate within a town centre conservation area.

While it is recognised that this will result in the removal of a number of rose bushes, it is considered that in the context of how this area of public garden is viewed and interacts with wildlife, the refusal of planning permission for this reason is not merited. Visually, the flagpole is in the proximity of street lights, lighting decoration poles and trees. While concern over visual clutter is acknowledged, it is considered that this flagpole may be introduced without detriment to visual amenity and the Kempock Street/Shore Street Conservation Area.

In examining the impact on neighbouring residents, this is a town centre location with a range of activities and associated noise. Any noise impact from the flagpole is not such that the refusal of planning permission is merited. Likewise, concern over antisocial behaviour and vandalism is not a basis for refusing this application. While acknowledging concerns, it is not considered that this application should be refused on the basis of a detrimental impact on residential amenity.



Overall, this assessment leads to the conclusion that the proposal complies with LDP Policy 1 as it positively contributes to historic buildings and places and Policy 28 as there is a clear understanding of how the flagpole contributes to the wider streetscape and to the character and amenity of the Kempock Street/Shore Street Conservation Area. I am further satisfied that the proposal is compatible with Historic Environment Scotland's Historic Environment Policy for Scotland as it will protect the positive qualities of this location.

The approach to assessing this proposal has continued from that taken in the 2014 LDP.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the application be granted.

Stuart Jamieson  
Head of Regeneration and Planning

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