
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	3 March 2010
Report By:	Head of Planning and Housing	Report No:	09/0358/IC Plan 03/10
			Local Application Development
Contact Officer:	David Ashman	Contact No:	01475 712416
Subject:	Environmental improvements, landscaping and provision of event space at Cathcart Street Greenock		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of ground either side of the junction of Cathcart Street with Rue End Street. The larger area of ground to the west of the junction presently consists of maintained soft and hard landscaping whilst the smaller eastern part has largely been unmaintained.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to upgrade the quality of the landscaping on either side of the junction with the creation of an event space in the western part of the site. The land is owned by the Council. The central part of this event space will be surfaced with buff coloured paving and punctuated by new tree planting, seating plinths and associated artwork. Bollards will be used to deter vehicles from parking on the area and new litter bins will be provided. The event space will be surrounded by ornamental planting, grass hedges and bulbs. Feature artwork consisting of glass panels are to be introduced to the soft landscaped areas. Cycle racks are also to be introduced adjacent to the rear of Aulds Bakers.

Landscaping in the smaller eastern part of the site is to consist of grass, hedges and bulbs. Both areas are to be delineated by new kerb edging.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Local Plan Policy DS5 - Promotion of Quality in New Building Design and in Townscape/Landscaping

The urban environment and built heritage of Inverclyde will be protected and enhanced through controls on development that would have an unacceptable impact on the quality of this resource. Quality in new building design and landscaping will be encouraged to enhance Inverclyde's townscapes.

Local Plan Policy R1- Designated Centres

The following Centres are designated:

1. Town Centres, as defined on the Proposals Map:

- (a) Greenock, subdivided into a 'Central Shopping Area' and 'Outer Mixed/Commercial Area';
- (b) Port Glasgow;
- (c) Gourock; and

2. Local Centres, as defined or indicated on the Proposals Map:

- (a) Kilmacolm (defined);
- (b) Dubbs Road, Port Glasgow (defined);
- (c) Sinclair Street, Greenock;
- (d) Belville Street, Greenock;
- (e) Lynedoch Street, Greenock;
- (f) Barrs Cottage (Inverkip Road/ Dunlop Street), Greenock;
- (g) Ravenscraig (Cumberland Walk), Greenock;
- (h) Cardwell Road, Gourock (defined);
- (i) Main Street, Inverkip;
- (j) Ardgowan Road, Wemyss Bay;
- (k) By Station/Pier, Wemyss Bay;

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will seek to assist urban regeneration and sustainable travel patterns. This will be achieved by encouraging each Centre to serve its own retail and service catchments without detriment to other Centres and to the overall roles of Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock as the principal Centres serving the Authority.

Local Plan Policy R2 - Support for Designated Centres

The designated Centres identified in Policy R1 will be protected, enhanced and developed, where resources allow, through a range of initiatives aimed at achieving the following:

- (a) encouraging a diversity of retail, leisure, civic, public administration, office, residential and other uses, of the type which the Council, as Planning Authority, considers to be appropriate to the development of the individual Centres, in order to support their vitality and viability, particularly through mixed use developments and through the use of upper floors of commercial premises;
- (b) identifying and promoting opportunities for new development and for the redevelopment and reuse of existing premises, both within and on the edge of the defined Centres;
- (c) improving the quality of the urban environment through implementing programmes for the improvement of individual properties, the streetscape and open spaces;
- (d) improving accessibility and integration of services by bus, train, ferry and taxi;
- (e) improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists through the provision of safe and convenient facilities and routes both into and within the town centres;
- (f) managing provision of freight access and of car, motorcycle and cycle parking for residents, visitors, workers and shoppers in accordance with an approved strategy;
- (g) managing traffic flows to minimise congestion and pollution and to give priority to the disabled, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and service vehicles; and
- (h) developing Town Centre Action Plans in partnership with other agencies.

CONSULTATIONS

Head Of Environmental Services – A visibility splay of 4.5 metres by 90 metres by 1.05 metres high is required at the junction of Cathcart Street with Rue End Street.

Land Use Consultants - No objections. Maintenance of the landscaping will be crucial.

Biodiversity Officer - It is suggested that the tree planting should incorporate species that produce blossom and fruit. Hedgerows should consist of native species such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn. A wildflower mix could be used instead of grass.

Transport Scotland - No objections.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 13th November 2009 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

SITE NOTICES

The nature of the proposal did not require a site notice.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was the subject of neighbour notification and press advertisement. One letter of objection was received. The objector is concerned that the removal of existing trees and shrubbery will adversely impact on wildlife and will remove a source of carbon capture, all of which will adversely prejudice the local environment.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in respect of this application are the Local Plan, the consultation responses and the letter of objection.

The application site is within the town centre boundary, as confirmed by policy R1. Policy R2 identifies initiatives aimed at protecting, enhancing and developing the town centre, including (c), the improvement of streetscape and open space. As the proposal will improve the streetscape it accords with policy R2.

With respect to the consultation replies, concerns expressed by the Head of Environmental Services over visibility can be addressed by condition. I note the changes suggested by the Biodiversity Officer. In this instance I have to consider that the proposal is part of a wider programme of environmental improvements designed to create a modern townscape theme within Inverclyde. The proposed species would not accord with this aim. I also recognise that the Council's landscape consultants have no objections to the proposed scheme. I agree that long term maintenance arrangements will be a key factor in ensuring that the proposed landscaping improvements have the desired long term impact and any permission should be conditioned accordingly.

Turning to the letter of objection, I acknowledge the concerns particularly in respect of the impact of the development on existing flora and fauna. I note, however, that some of the existing trees are to remain and I am comforted by proposals for hedgerow planting and new shrubs. I believe that in view of the highly urbanised environment, a balance between environmental improvement and

conservation has been achieved. I do not consider that the existing landscaping to be lost will have a significant impact on carbon capture.

There are no other material considerations which suggest that planning permission should not be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to conditions

Conditions

1. That a visibility splay of 4.5 metres by 90 metres by 1.05 metres high shall be maintained at the junction of Cathcart Street with Rue End Street.
2. That details of the maintenance and management programme for all areas of soft and hard landscaping within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the start of development. The programme shall commence upon the start of development.

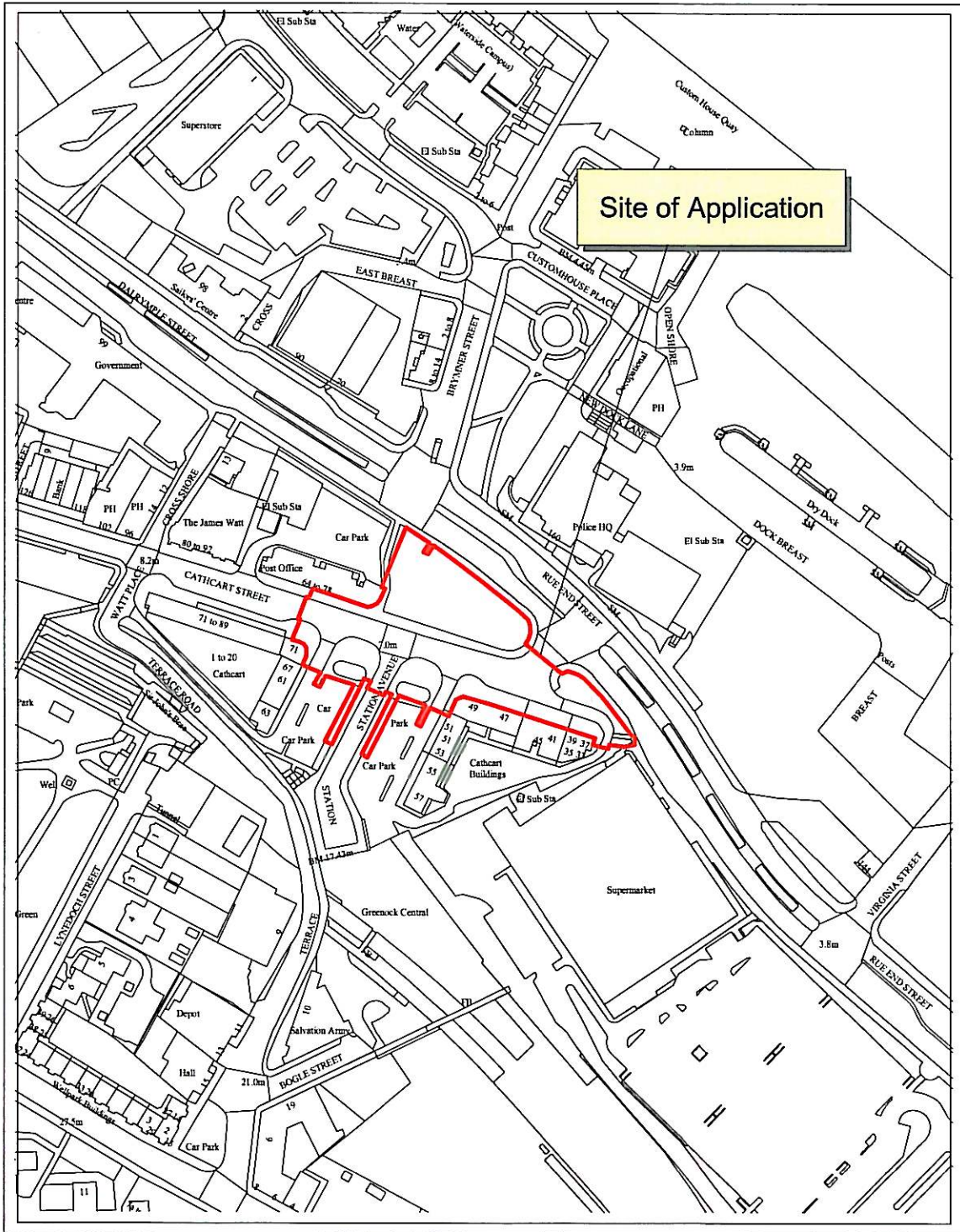
Reasons

1. In the interests of vehicular safety.
2. In the interests of visual amenity.

F. K WILLIAMSON
Head of Planning and Housing

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans.
2. Applicant's supporting documentation.
3. Inverclyde Local Plan.
4. Consultation replies.
5. Letter of objection.



Drawing No. 09/0358/IC
 Cathcart Street, Greenock
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