
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	6th October 2010
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	10/0206/IC & 10/0016/LB Plan10/10
			Local Application Development
Contact Officer:	Guy Phillips	Contact No:	01475 712422
Subject:	Proposed alterations to Municipal Buildings to provide additional office accommodation at the Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, Greenock		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The grade A listed Municipal Buildings are located on the south side of Clyde Square within the William Street Conservation Area, Greenock. The ground floor frontage comprises a collonade with polished granite, Corinthean columns and contains the grand entrance to the building. Recessed behind the columns is a timber, glazed frontage with louvered windows dating from the 1970s. Accommodation behind the glazed frontages comprises office space and the Council's main reception. The space between the columns and the glazed frontage serves as a covered pedestrian walkway. There is a crossfall across the frontage of the building, with columns increasing in height from east to west.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to remove the ground floor glazing on the frontage and to install glazing adjoining the rear of the columns in the collonade, returning at the east and west elevations to form additional internal floorspace. The proposed glazing would be supported by a sandstone basecourse. Sliding glass doors would be formed to align with the existing grand entrance. On Clyde Square a paved entrance plinth with steps would be formed to accommodate the change in levels between the square and ground level at the grand entrance. The crossfall across the frontage of the building determines that there would be no steps on the east side of the plinth and four on the west side.

Internally, existing partitions would be removed to form a large customer service desk, waiting area and meeting rooms. A recessed mezzanine level would be formed above the ground floor to provide open plan office space.

This report considers applications for listed building consent and planning permission.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Local Plan Policy HR1 - Designated Environmental Resources and Built Heritage

Development that would adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the natural or built heritage resources listed in Schedule 9.1 and where indicated, on the Proposals Map, will not normally be permitted.

Having regard to the designation of the environmental resource and built heritage, exceptions will only be made where:

- (a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not be compromised;
- (b) visual amenity and townscape will not be compromised;
- (c) no other site, identified in the Local Plan as suitable, is available;
- (d) the social and economic benefits of the scheme outweigh the total or partial loss of the environmental resource;
- (e) the developer has demonstrated that the impact of the development on the environment will be minimised; and
- (f) the loss can be compensated by habitat creation/site enhancement elsewhere, and where there are satisfactory arrangements to achieve this.

Local Plan Policy HR11 - Development Within and Adjacent to Conservation Areas

Development proposals both within and adjacent to Conservation Areas will be acceptable where they are sympathetic to the existing character, pattern of development and appearance of the area and the following matters are satisfactorily addressed, as appropriate:

- (a) siting and orientation of new buildings;
- (b) overall design and style;
- (c) scale of building, extension or alteration;
- (d) design details;
- (e) finishing materials; and
- (f) landscaping and boundary materials.

Local Plan Policy HR14 - Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings

Proposals to alter or extend a listed building must respect the reasons for listing, be of a high standard and will only be approved where the proposed works are satisfactory in terms of the following matters (as and where appropriate):

- (a) overall design;
- (b) scale and form;
- (c) materials and finishes;
- (d) landscaping proposals;
- (e) form of boundary enclosure; and
- (f) compliance with Policy HR1.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Environmental and Commercial Services - No objections.

Historic Scotland - Content with the principle of the proposed alterations to provide additional office accommodation within the ground floor of the Municipal Buildings. The detailed treatment of the glazed infill, to be recessed behind the arcading to Clyde Square is a significant element of the scheme. Suitably scaled drawings require to be made available to demonstrate how the junction between the new glazed screen and the sandstone arcading will be articulated.

PUBLICITY

The planning application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 9th July 2010 as a development affecting a conservation area. The listed building application was advertised on the same date in the Edinburgh Gazette and the Greenock Telegraph as development affecting a listed building.

SITE NOTICES

Site notices were posted on 9th July 2010 for Development Affecting Conservation Areas and Development Affecting a Listed Building.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No written representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of this proposal are the Local Plan, Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy and the consultation responses.

Policies HR1, HR11 and HR14 combined seek to ensure that works to listed buildings in conservation areas have an acceptable impact.

The colonnade on the Clyde Square frontage is, I consider, a key component in the character of the listed building and the conservation area. Balanced against the loss of the covered walkway formed by the colonnade is the replacement of the 1970s timber, glazed, frontage, containing louvered windows, which detracts somewhat from the quality of the building. It is appropriate to maintain the prominence of the colonnade by locating glazing behind, and it is encouraging to note the combination of the use of minimalist frameless glazing with a natural stone basecourse. These details will enhance the architecture of the building.

Since the opening of the present reception area at the western end of the Clyde Square facade, the grand entrance to the municipal buildings has been closed, thus denying public access to the stairway leading to the grand corridor on the first floor. The proposed glazed frontage, with sliding doors shall allow the doors at the grand entrance to be opened, thus affording a renewed view of the stairway leading to the grand corridor. Security would be retained by an existing, lockable, revolving, glazed door at the foot of the stair. I consider the reinstatement of the grand entrance and stair to the public domain to be a further significant benefit of the proposal.

Key to the assessment of the proposal against policies HR1, HR11 and HR14 are the informal observations of Historic Scotland on the listed building application and application of the Scottish Historic Environment Policy. The investment in listed buildings to encourage their long term well being is supported, as is the use of quality materials in modern design. Historic Scotland is supportive of the proposal.

On balance, I consider that the visual impact on visual amenity and townscape is positive and the proposal thus satisfies the aim of national and local policies relating to listed buildings.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the planning application be granted subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. No development shall commence until a samples of all finishing 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 a continuity of finishes with the Grade A listed building and the William Street Conservation Area.
2. That the listed building application be referred to Historic Scotland as required by section 12 of the Planning (Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 with a recommendation that listed building consent be granted subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. No development shall commence until samples of all finishing 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.
2. No development shall commence until drawings to demonstrate how the junction between the new glazed screen and the sandstone arcading will be articulated have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

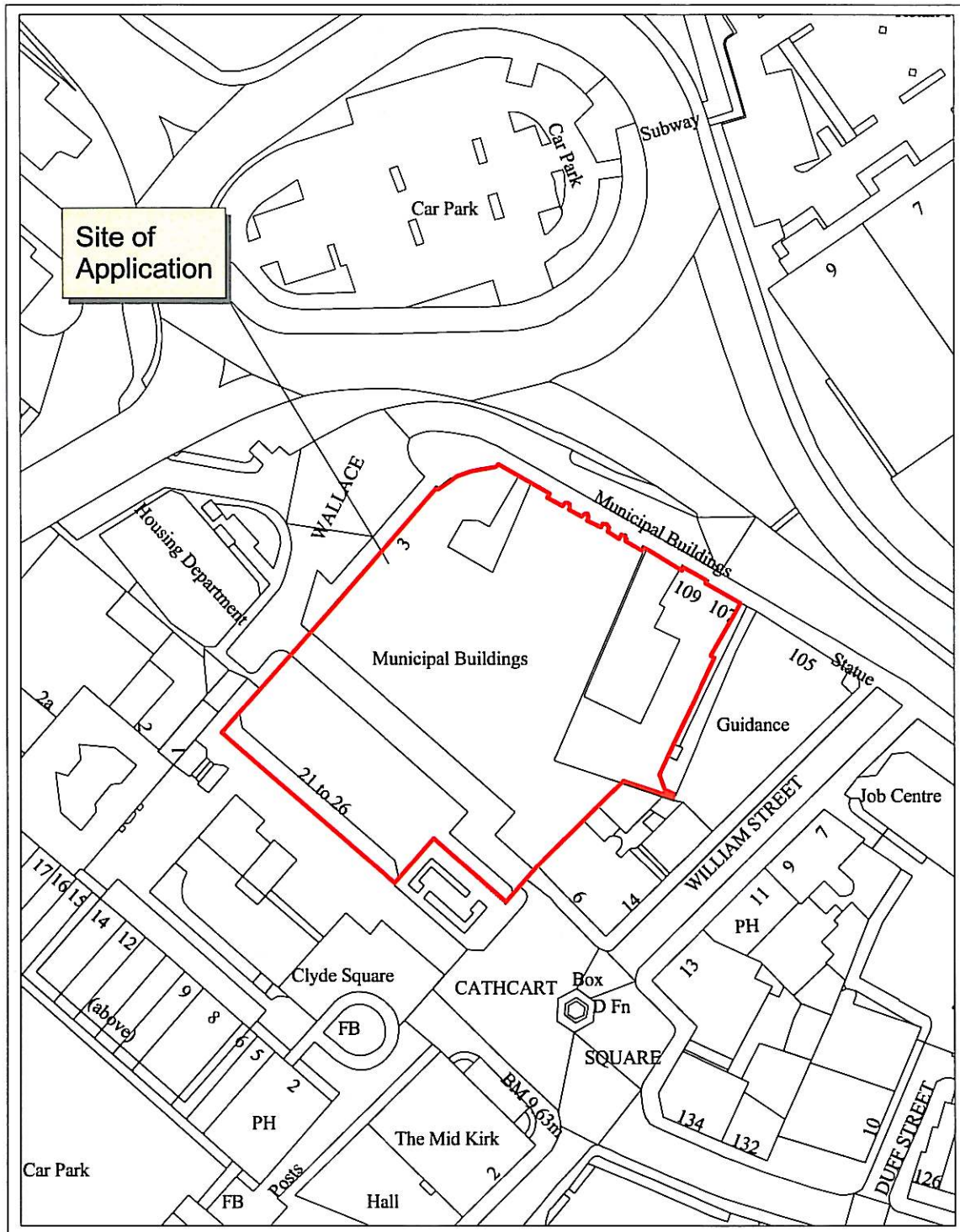
Reasons

- 1&2 In the interests of the integrity of the design of the Grade A listed building and to comply with the requirements of Historic Scotland.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form
2. Application plans
3. Inverclyde Local Plan
4. Consultation Responses
5. Scottish Historic Environment Policy



Drawing No. 10/0206/IC Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, Greenock

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