
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	4th May 2011
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	10/0382/IC & 10/0001/LB Plan 05/11
			Local Application Development
Contact Officer:	Guy Phillips	Contact No:	01475 712422
Subject:	Extension and alterations to Community Centre at Community Centre, Binnie Street, Gourock		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is on the north east corner of the junction of Binnie Street and John Street, Gourock. It slopes downwards from south east to north west and contains a Grade C listed former school building, last in use as a community centre. The building has a U shaped floor plan and is part single storey and part two storey construction with significant sections of underbuilding accommodating the site's slope. Roofs are steeply pitched and finished in slate, walls are constructed in pink sandstone and windows are of timber sash and case design and painted white. The main entrance is from Binnie Street. Tarmaced areas (the former school playgrounds) lie to the north east (which has vehicular access from Binnie Street) and south east (which contains children's play equipment). To the north east, the site is bound by two and a half storey tenement properties on Royal Street and to the south east by the Grade B listed Old Gourock Parish Church and its two halls. Opposite the site on John Street are three storey tenements and on Binnie Street, two storey, semi detached houses (fronting Binnie Street and McCallum Crescent).

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to convert and carry out alterations to facilitate use as a children's centre. Throughout, it is proposed to re-slate roofs in natural slate, execute stonework repairs, and replace windows with new astragaled double swing units of sash and case appearance and to replace rainwater goods in aluminium. Alterations to the Binnie Street elevation comprise the installation of a disabled access ramp, removal of a flat roofed porch and blocking up of a doorway at lower ground floor level in a recessed part of the building. Changes to the John Street elevation are confined to the aforementioned re-slating, and replacement windows and rainwater goods. It is proposed to partially infill part of an internal courtyard at the rear of the building with a two storey extension to provide a rear entrance lobby and toilet accommodation and improve pedestrian access. The extension is not visible from the public domain. Other alterations at the rear of the building comprise removal of one window, alterations to the size of another and formation of a disabled access ramp. Seven off street parking spaces, including one disabled space are proposed at the rear of the building. In the south east former playground, it is proposed to remove the existing play equipment and install two replacement sets with associated safety surfacing and soft landscaping. Internally, partition works are proposed to form additional rooms and toilets, along with the reconstruction of a rear stair and installation of a lift.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Local Plan Policy H1 - Safeguarding the Character and Amenity of Residential Areas

The character and amenity of existing residential areas, identified on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded, and where practicable, enhanced. New residential development will be acceptable, in principle, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies.

Local Plan Policy H9 - Non-Residential Development Proposals within Residential Areas

The introduction of new, or the extension of, non residential uses in existing residential areas will be acceptable only where such uses are compatible with the character and amenity of the area and satisfy other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

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 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.

Local Plan Policy HR15 - The Setting of Listed Buildings

Development will be required to have due regard to the effects on the setting of, and principal views from, Listed Buildings and shall be without detriment to their principal elevations and the main approaches to them.

CONSULTATIONS

Head Of Environmental And Commercial Services - No objections.

Head Of Safer And Inclusive Communities - No objections subject to details of the containers to be used to store waste materials and recyclable materials and their location being submitted for the prior approval of the Planning Authority.

Historic Scotland - No objections.

PUBLICITY

The nature of the proposal did not require advertisement.

SITE NOTICES

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One written representation has been received.

The objector is concerned that demand for on street parking in the area is high and that the proposal shall result in parking congestion.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of the planning and listed building applications are the Local Plan, the consultation responses, Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy and the written representation.

Policy H1 of the Local Plan seeks to safeguard and, where practicable, enhance residential amenity and character while Policy H9 allows non residential uses where Policy H1 is met. Historically, the building has always had a community focus, being constructed as a school and last in use as a community centre. The proposed use as a children's centre, I consider, is consistent with previous community uses of the building and has a neutral impact on residential amenity and character. Formalised off street parking is proposed within the site along with an improved vehicular access from John Street, segregating pedestrian and vehicular traffic. There are no objections on road safety grounds from the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services.

Policy HR1 advises that development that would otherwise affect, directly or indirectly, the natural or built heritage resources will not normally be permitted. Having regard to the designation, exceptions will only be made in a range of circumstances, including where visual amenity and townscape will not be compromised. The listed building's street elevations are the subject of minor changes. The most significant, I consider, is the proposed disabled access ramp and handrail on the Binnie Street elevation which, due to existing levels, extends approximately 26m across the front elevation and former playground. It is, however, partially concealed behind an existing low boundary wall surmounted by railings. On balance, while the proposed ramp has a visual impact, I am satisfied it does not compromise visual amenity and the character of the listed building to an unacceptable degree. The new build element proposed to the concealed courtyard at the rear of the building has no impact outwith the immediate site. Play equipment proposed to the south east side of the building impacts to a degree on the setting of the listed building, however, it replaces existing equipment and given the original use as a school is, I consider, acceptable. Stonework repairs, re-roofing in natural slate and replacement of rainwater goods in aluminium all combine, I consider, to enhance visual amenity.

Policy HR14 advises that proposals to alter or extend listed buildings 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 a range of matters, including:-

(a) overall design and (b) scale and form. The design of the new build for the rear courtyard is, I consider, subservient and unobtrusive, having no impact on the character and amenity of the listed building from the public domain. Given my favourable assessment of the proposed front disabled access ramp against policy HR1 I consider it to also satisfy criterion (a) of policy HR14. The proposed porch removal and minor alterations to door and window openings are, I also consider, of satisfactory design.

(c) materials and finishes. The choice of astragal, stepped profiled timber windows, natural slate and aluminium rainwater goods are, I consider, sympathetic to the quality finishes in the external fabric of the listed building.

(e) form of boundary enclosure. Existing walling and railings are to be retained, save for two entrance pillars on the John Street elevation which require removal to ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian access and egress. Overall, I consider the retention of the existing boundary treatment a key issue in retaining the character of the listed building.

(f) requires compliance with Policy HR1. Given my favourable assessment against criteria (a), (b), (c) and (e) of policy HR14, I consider the proposal meets policy HR1's overall objective of safeguarding the built heritage resource.

Policy HR15 requires development to have due regard to the effects on the setting of, and principal views from, listed buildings and shall be without detriment to their principal elevations and the main approaches to them. As the proposal incorporates retention of the existing boundary walling and railings, I consider the impact on setting to be neutral. There is no impact on the views from the listed building.

Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy advises that listed buildings, like other buildings, require alteration and adaptation from time to time if they are to remain in beneficial use, and will be at risk if such alteration and adaptation is unduly constrained. In most cases such change, if approached carefully, can be managed without adversely affecting the special interest of the building. Historic Scotland has not objected in their informal consultation response to the listed building application.

The Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities has not objected, however, he has requested that control be retained over waste storage within the site. I am in agreement that this matter can be satisfactorily controlled by condition.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the application for planning permission is granted subject to conditions:-

Conditions

1. 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.
2. The parking layout detailed in drawing 09 215 201 D shall be completed prior to the completion of the building works hereby approved.
3. No development shall commence until full details of bin storage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reasons

1. To ensure an appropriate finishing material for this historic building.
2. To ensure an appropriate level of on site parking.

3. To protect the amenity of the immediate area, prevent the creation of nuisance due to odours, insects, rodents or birds.
2. That it be remitted to the Head of Regeneration and Planning to formally refer the application for listed building consent to Historic Scotland with a recommendation that listed building consent be granted subject to a condition:-

Condition

1. 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

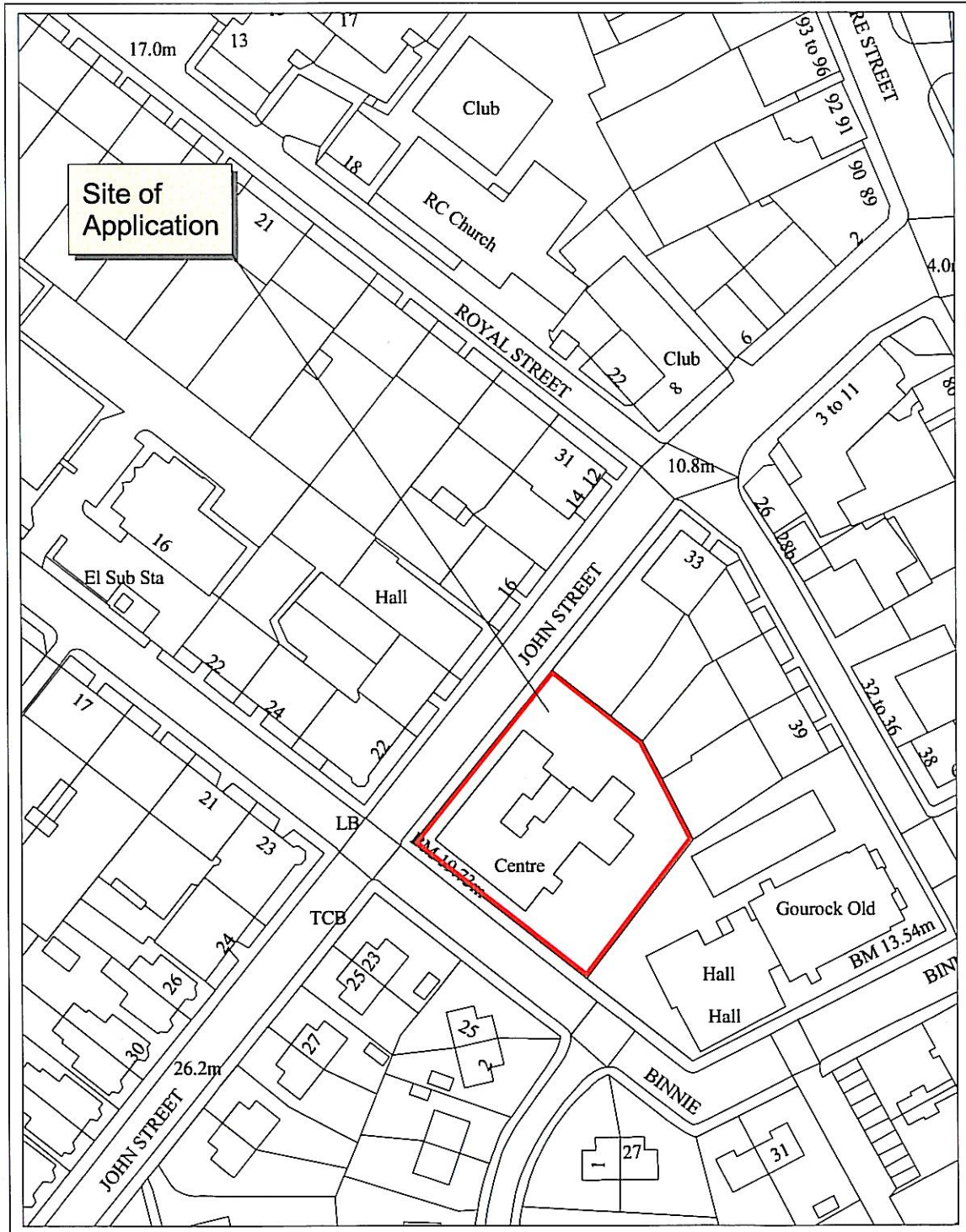
Reason

1. To ensure an appropriate finishing material for this historic building.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application forms
2. Application plans
3. Inverclyde Local Plan
4. Consultation Responses
5. Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environmental Policy
6. Written representation



Drawing No. 10/0382/IC and 11/0001/LB - Community Centre, Binnie Street, Gourrock.

Drawn by: JML

Date: 13:04:11



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