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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>The Planning Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Regeneration and Planning</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>11/0293/IC Plan 01/12</b>
			<b>Local Application Development</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>David Ashman</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712416</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Conversion of former car showroom to form two retail units at Car Showroom, 21 Eldon Street, Greenock</b>		

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site consists of the former car showroom premises at the corner of Eldon Street and Fox Street within the Greenock West End Conservation Area. It is a stand alone commercial unit situated in an otherwise residential area.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant seeks planning permission for the conversion and sub-division of the premises to form two Class 1 retail units. The larger of the units has an approximately 280 square metres floor area, with the smaller unit approximately 96 square metres. The proposals also involve alterations to the building, with the removal of the roof on the rear of the premises to provide an external storage yard and the stripping out of the glass and timber framed frontage, replacing with a mix of new glazing and solid walling. There is presently a limited frontage parking area, accessed off Fox Street, which is to be converted to soft landscaping. There will be no off street parking provision associated with the unit.

## **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 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 HR12 - Impact of Development Within Conservation Areas

When assessing Conservation Area development proposals (both within and adjacent to it) consideration will be given to the impact they will have on townscape and the wider landscape, especially when viewed from adjacent transport routes and vantage points accessible to the public.

#### Local Plan Policy R13 - Shopping Facilities to Meet Local Needs

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will support the retention, improvement and, subject to Policy R10, the provision of local shopping facilities where they meet local needs. A proposed change of use to non-retail use will not be supported where it is considered to conflict with this objective.

#### Local Plan Policy R10 - Assessing Development Proposals for Town Centre Uses

Any proposal for a development of one or more of the town centre uses identified in Policy R3, or for any other commercial use within a defined centre, will be required to satisfy the criteria listed below:

- (a) for developments on the edge of, or outside, the designated Centres, and retail developments on the edge of, or outside, Greenock's Central Shopping Area, the applicant should have adopted a sequential approach to site selection, including consideration of sites identified under Policy R6;
- (b) the applicant having demonstrated that there is a capacity for the development in terms of expenditure compared to turnover in the appropriate catchment area, or a qualitative deficiency in existing provision;
- (c) the proposal should not have a detrimental effect, including cumulatively, on the vitality and viability of existing Centres;

- (d) the size and format of the development is appropriate to the Centre for which it is proposed;
- (e) the proposed development should be accessible by a choice of means of transport from its forecast catchment, make provision for improved infrastructure where deemed necessary, not result in unacceptable changes in travel patterns and, where required, be supported by the production of a Transport Assessment;
- (f) the proposed development should be to a high standard of design and its scale, siting and relationship to the surrounding townscape and land uses should make a positive contribution to the quality of the urban environment;
- (g) the proposal should not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity or on the amenity and effective operation of existing businesses;
- (h) the proposal should be consistent with other relevant national, Structure Plan and Local Plan policies and guidelines, including any Town Centre Strategy or other relevant initiative which may have been instigated, the Council's Roads Development Guide, 1995 and any other standards; and
- (i) in Greenock Town Centre the proposed development should be consistent with Policies R4 and R5.

Where the proposal includes either a convenience retail development of over 1,000 square metres gross; comparison retail development of over 2,000 square metres gross; or Use Class 11 (Assembly & Leisure) developments that will attract a large number of users, it should be accompanied by a statement of justification addressing the above criteria and the criteria set out in the Structure Plan and NPPG8. At the Council's discretion, applications for development within designated Centres or small-scale development of town centre uses outwith the designated Centres may be exempted from the requirement to be justified against criteria (a)-(d).

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Head Of Environmental And Commercial Services** - Parking provision of 5 spaces per 100 square metres gross floor area is required. This should allow for 6% accessible parking with drop kerbs. Loading provision should be included to prevent double parking on or close to the A770. A minimum footway width of 2 metres should be provided around the development, however, 3 metres would be desirable where possible.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 4th November 2011 as a development affecting a Conservation Area.

## **SITE NOTICES**

A site notice was posted on 4th November 2011 for Development affecting a Conservation Area.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The application was the subject of neighbour notification, site notice and press advertisement. 8 representations have been received. The points of concern may be summarised as follows:

- 1) Lack of dedicated parking for the shop units will cause parking congestion, dangerous traffic manoeuvres and impede visibility at a junction of two streets.
- 2) On-street parking opportunities are limited due to two adjacent bus bays.
- 3) The proposed shops would generate additional traffic and footfall next to a busy road.

- 4) The Local Plan does not make provision for shops at this location.
- 5) Detrimental effects on existing retail businesses.
- 6) There is no requirement or demand for shops in the vicinity.
- 7) The proposed development is out of character with the area.
- 8) Potential problem with litter.
- 9) Depending on the type of unit to be developed, loitering could be an issue.
- 10) Reduction in value of adjacent properties.
- 11) Hours of operation may impact on residential amenity.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The material considerations in determination of this application are the Local Plan, the consultation responses and the letters of representation.

The Local Plan locates the site within the Greenock West End Conservation Area, under policy HR11 (with the associated HR1 and HR12 policies). This is a residential area as defined by policy H1. As a proposed non-residential use of an existing non-residential building, and as the proposed alterations to the building are considered to have a neutral visual impact on the conservation area, it is considered that the proposed development does not have implications for the issues addressed by policies HR1, HR11 and HR12. The impact of the proposal on residential amenity is more appropriately assessed against policies H1, H9 and R13 (with reference to R10). It should be noted that Policy R13 supports shopping facilities to meet local needs subject to an assessment of the relevant criteria in Policy R10. Criterion (e) of R10 specifically requires assessment of impact on residential amenity.

Compatibility with the character and amenity of the area relates to the nature of the proposed use and the possible material effects associated with it. Class 1 use of premises primarily relates to "shops" (i.e., the retail sale of goods) but can include a range of associated uses such as dry cleaners, travel and ticket agencies and hairdressers. While no specific future occupiers have been identified, the premises have the potential to be occupied by at least one convenience store. Until recently, the premises were in use as a car showroom. This would have attracted members of the visiting public; there is a base level against which activity generated by the proposed use has to be considered, but by their nature, a class 1 shop has the potential to generate significantly more visits by members of the public than a car showroom. This increase in noise and activity would potentially continue for a longer period each day.

Parking and servicing associated with the site is also problematic. The total retail floorspace of 376 square metres requires 18 car parking spaces. Criterion (h) of Policy R10 requires consistency with the Council's Roads Development Guide and there are no dedicated parking spaces or servicing within the site. Indeed, the site is so constrained that it is not possible to make servicing provision given its present configuration. All parking and servicing will have to be carried out on-street, primarily from Eldon Street and Fox Street. Consequently, the failure to satisfy criterion (h) of Policy R10 deems the proposal to be in conflict with Policy R13.

Eldon Street is a busy road at all times of the day and the junction at Fox Street can be busy at peak time with traffic attempting to join Eldon Street from Fox Street. Although generally not subject to formal parking restrictions, there are bus stops on either side of Eldon Street to the front of the premises with on-road markings. I also note that there is already on-street parking on both these streets during the day and that there is no formal road crossing facility in the vicinity. The proposed Class 1 use of the site will generate on-street parking and manoeuvring on both Eldon Street and Fox Street, potentially to the detriment of vehicular safety. I have additional concerns over pedestrian activity, as pedestrians will be attracted to the units with some having to cross Eldon Street and Fox Street. The additional on-street parking and manoeuvring likely to be generated will act as an additional hazard for pedestrians.

In summary, I consider that the proposed use would be detrimental to the character and amenity of the area with the potential for increased noise and activity contrary to Local Plan Policies H1, H9

and R13. The lack of off street parking presents conflict with the Council's Roads Development Guide and Policy R13, and the proposal is also unacceptable on the grounds of vehicular and pedestrian safety.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the application be refused

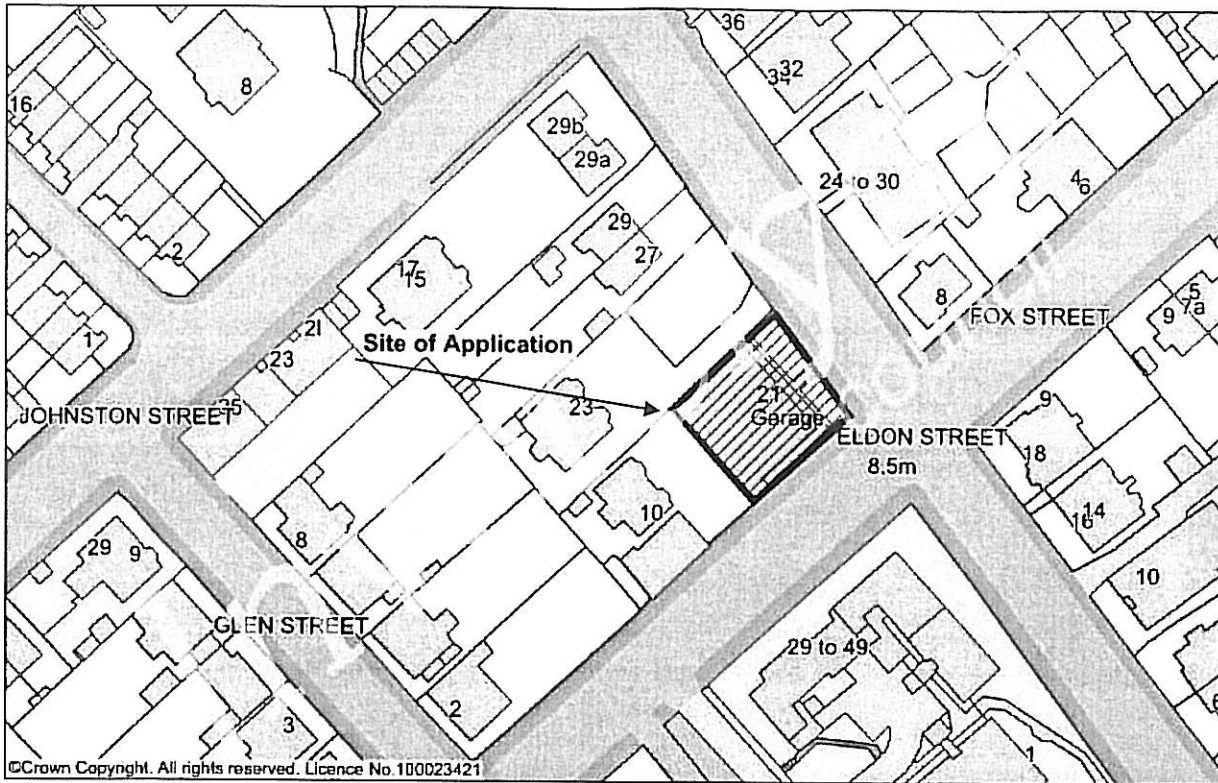
### Reasons

1. The proposed use of the premises would be likely to generate increased vehicular and pedestrian activity which would be detrimental to the character and amenity of the area and, therefore, contrary to Inverclyde Local Plan policies H1, H9 and R13.
2. The proposed use of the premises would be likely to generate levels of parking and vehicular manoeuvres close to the junction of Eldon Street and Fox Street which would be detrimental to traffic and pedestrian safety.
3. The lack of off street car parking is contrary to the requirements of the Council's Roads Development Guide and therefore contrary to Inverclyde Local Plan Policy R13 with reference to Policy R10.

Stuart Jamieson  
Head of Regeneration and Planning

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Application form and plans
2. Inverclyde Local Plan
3. Letters of objection.
4. Consultation responses.



Application Number	11/0293/IC
Location	Car Showroom 21 Eldon Street Greenock PA16 7UG
Proposal	Conversion of former car showroom to form two retail units



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Inverclyde  
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