
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	1st February 2012
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	11/0298/IC Plan 02/12
			Major Application Development
Contact Officer:	David Ashman	Contact No:	01475 712416
Subject:	Erection of non-food retail development including car parking, landscaping, access works, service yards, security building and ATM pod at Land north of Ardgowan Street, Former Scott Lithgow and East Glen Yards (Part), Port Glasgow		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of an approximately 14 hectare area of presently vacant ground to the west of the Tesco Extra store in Port Glasgow. The site was prepared as a development platform in 2007 at around the time the Tesco store was built but has since lain undeveloped.

It is separated from the Tesco store by a spine road and bound to the north by the re-routed A8 trunk road and beyond that the River Clyde; to the west by the re-routed A8 trunk road and the Kingston Dock residential development beyond that; and to the south by Ardgowan Street, Belhaven Street and a series of derelict buildings.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to develop 24,633 square metres of non-food retail floor space set out in three distinct buildings.

A single large unit of 4,181 square metres (with an associated 1,115 square metres of garden centre, a 743 square metres builders yard and 232 square metres non-trading mezzanine for office use) is to be built at the western end of the site backing onto the A8. The remaining 20,452 square metres of floor space is to be divided between one large elongated building to the southern edge of the site (179 metres long and 43 metres deep) backing onto Belhaven Street and incorporating 9 units of variable size, and a "U" shaped building to the northern edge of the site (81 metres long by 43 metres wide, at its widest point) backing onto the A8 and incorporating 3 units of variable size. With the exception of the single large unit, all the units are to incorporate full width mezzanine floors. These units are all approximately 9 metres in height with the single unit rising to 12.6 metres at its highest point. 607 car parking spaces are concentrated in the centre of the site between these buildings. A small security building and ATM pod are also to be constructed. The proposal also includes a scheme of soft and hard landscaping works, including highway works.

The buildings are to be designed to a common theme with the use of buff or red colour bricks at lower level and a combination of slate grey and metallic silver coloured panels at upper level. The "shopfront" elevations will be largely glazed at lower level with glass canopies above the entrances.

Projecting arched signboards above the entrances will provide a relief design feature. There will be key pedestrian linkages through to the Tesco Extra store and Ardgowan/Belhaven Street framed by soft planting.

Planning permission was previously granted for a similarly designed development on this site which, due largely to the prevailing economic situation, was never implemented. Compared to the previously approved scheme, the current proposal represents an increase in floorspace of 3,870 square metres. The increase is accounted for by the inclusion of full width mezzanines. Previously the mezzanines were designed to cover less than a half of what is now proposed. The applicant also seeks relief from a restriction imposed on the previous planning permission requiring occupation of the ground floors of the units to be at least 50% by bulky goods operatives. The applicant has submitted a supporting statement which indicates that a significant proportion of this non-food proposal will still be occupied by bulky goods retailers and it is unlikely that all of the mezzanine floorspace proposed will be occupied for retail purposes. The new internal configuration proposed is considered necessary to ensure that the scheme is able to meet operator demands and to ensure the successful delivery of the scheme.

The applicant has submitted various supporting documents including a design and access statement, a transport statement and a flood risk assessment.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Policy SA2(j)(2) Port Glasgow Waterfront (Town Centre Extension)

Sub Area (j)(2) is identified on the Proposals Map as a 'Major Area of Potential Change' (AO). Development of sites within the area will be acceptable where it conforms to a Masterplan/Development Brief, to be agreed in advance by the Council and where it is in accordance with the following planning policy framework.

Land Uses

- (a) Shops (Use Class 1) for food and non-food retail;
- (b) Food and Drink (Use Class 3);
- (c) Use as Residential Flats;
- (d) Business (Use Class 4);
- (e) Hotels and Hostels (Use Class 7);
- (f) Residential Institutions (Use Class 8);
- (g) Community uses (Use Class 10);
- (h) Assembly and Leisure (Use Class 11); and
- (i) Public open space and other general environmental improvements, including the extension of the Inverclyde Coastal Route, where practicable.

Built Environment and Design

Development will be required to have regard to the following principles:

- (j) the area immediately adjacent to the amended Town Centre boundary should be well integrated in land use and urban design terms with the existing Town Centre. There will be a requirement for strong physical linkages to be formed between the Town Centre and the new development and, in turn, between the new development and the coastal route;
- (k) an urban sense of place and scale to be created, compatible with the tenemental urban form of the Town Centre; and
- (l) the opportunity should be taken to create a new public open space/square as a focal point for the new development and to help integrate it with the existing Town Centre.

Access

- (m) The realigned A8 trunk road will provide access for vehicles to this area, from three new roundabouts, as indicated in Schedule 5.1 and shown on the Proposals Map.

Local Plan Policy DS1 - Preference for Development on Brownfield Sites

A sustainable settlement strategy will be encouraged by having a clear preference for all new development to be located on brownfield land within the urban areas of existing towns and smaller settlements.

Local Plan Policy DS3 - Promotion of the Inverclyde Waterfront

The social, economic and physical regeneration of Inverclyde requires the strategic role of the Waterfront to be recognised as part of the 'Clyde Waterfront Metropolitan Flagship Initiative' and priority in new investment and development to be directed to this location in accordance with the respective development frameworks of Special Areas, SA1, SA2 and SA4, identified on the Proposals Map.

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 TA2 - Accessibility of Major Developments

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will seek to reduce the need to travel by private car by directing new major travel-generating developments to locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Developers may be required to submit Transport Assessments and Green Transport Plans demonstrating that such developments will be easily accessed by means other than the private car.

Local Plan Policy - TA7 Promotion of Walking and Cycling

In order to increase the use of walking and cycling as a means of transport, Inverclyde Council will require that:

- (a) major destinations, including town and local centres, educational establishments, centres of employment and public transport nodes, are accessible and linked by clearly signposted, and well lit and direct footpaths and cycle routes; and
- (b) the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are recognised in new developments and considered in Green Transport Plans.

Planning Policy Position Statement (PPPS) – Town Centres and Retail Development

The Council adopted the PPPS in May 2008; it sought to clarify and expand on the planning strategy of town centre complementarity in the adopted Local Plan. The principal focus is on the complementary role envisaged between Greenock (as the strategic centre) and Port Glasgow, in recognition of its enhanced status with the addition of significantly more floorspace. The PPPS acknowledges the changing relationship, nevertheless the strategy for this site is that it should complement Greenock Town Centre by providing a range and type of retailing that cannot be easily accommodated there and by providing a fuller range of retailing within Inverclyde. The PPPS and the most recent Inverclyde Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report (May 2011), emphasises the importance of having policies which will protect the range of retail provision in Greenock, particularly in the Central Shopping Area, and that the Port Glasgow development does not replicate that provision.

CONSULTATIONS

Head Of Environmental And Commercial Services – No objection subject to conditions in respect of the submission of drainage details, provision of 43 disabled and parent/child car parking spaces, parking for 40 bicycles and details of pedestrian crossings.

Transport Scotland – No objection.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency West – No objection.

PUBLICITY

The application was the subject of neighbour notification and was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 11th November 2011 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

SITE NOTICES

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One representation was received on behalf of the owner of the Oak Mall. The objector has asked that their letter be treated as a “holding” objection. It is considered that the proposals will compound a perceived imbalance in retail floorspace provision between Port Glasgow and Greenock caused by the existing permissions. This will make it harder to secure investment in and around Greenock town centre. It is also stated that the bulky goods restriction has helped to limit the adverse impact on existing floorspace and proposals within Greenock town centre. Its removal, however, will cause further adverse impact.

ASSESSMENT

Planning permission has previously been granted for the development of a non-food retail park on this site, judged to be in accordance with the Local Plan and the subsequent 2008 Planning Policy Position Statement. It only remains to be determined whether or not the proposed changes to the approved scheme, and specifically the introduction of a further 3,870 square metres of mezzanine floorspace and the removal of the bulky goods restriction which was imposed on the previous planning permission for this site, are acceptable.

The issue of the potential for diversion of expenditure caused by the relocation of custom from Greenock to Port Glasgow has been assessed by the applicant through a retail analysis included with a supporting planning statement. This concluded that there is the potential for diversion of comparison goods expenditure from Greenock to Port Glasgow but not at a level that would adversely affect the vitality and viability of the centre. Having considered the submitted analysis I am satisfied over the conclusion that the impact on Greenock Town Centre will not adversely affect its vitality and viability.

The potential impact of the proposal on future investment in Greenock Town Centre is difficult to establish as there are no current applications for significant extensions or free standing retail proposals under consideration. The only significant extant planning permission, until recently, was that to extend the Oak Mall at Hunter’s Place. This has now expired without implementation. It would not be a defensible position for the Council to refuse planning permission for the proposed development on the basis of future investment elsewhere that may or may not materialise.

With respect to concerns over the lifting of the bulky goods restriction, the minimum size of the proposed units is to be fixed at 750 square metres remains unchanged. This condition was imposed in order to ensure that the occupants of the proposed units were more likely to be

comparison based outlets and not the type of small, often convenience based retail outlets, such as butchers, bakers and grocers that would be expected to be found in a typical high street location. Accordingly there is a greater likelihood of the units being occupied by comparison floorspace based outlets, both bulky and non-bulky goods.

Since the original application was approved the economy has been adversely affected by recession; consequently delivery of the full Port Glasgow retail scheme has been frustrated. The applicant seeks to have the bulky goods restriction lifted to assist with marketing of the site. I am sympathetic to this request but marketing considerations in themselves are not an issue which would cause me to consider suggesting the lifting of the restriction. What is important is ensuring that a range of retail offer of various formats, not readily available in Greenock Town Centre, is made available to the economic benefit of the local economy.

There are only 2 out of 32 retail units of more than 750 square metres in size within Greenock Town Centre vacant. This is a very low vacancy rate and notably occurring during an austere period in the local economy. Once these units are occupied there will be no such format offer available within the Greenock/Port Glasgow area. This suggests that future provision of comparison floorspace has to be addressed at the present time to ensure adequacy of investment opportunities. All types of comparison floorspace requirements will have to be met to address this concern. I consider that in the public interest a modern retail format offer should be available for businesses looking to locate within the Council area, and the proposed scheme will help to meet this demand given the lack of opportunities within Greenock.

It is not in the public interest that the future success of this offer be prejudiced by a bulky goods restriction creating the possibility of a future vacancy problem. A condition ensuring that no retail unit is less than 750 square metres gross will prevent sub division and ensure that traders operating from smaller units will be directed to, and will continue to benefit, Port Glasgow and Greenock town centres. Indeed, by the nature and size of the units this development will provide a different and complementary retail offer to the existing town centres. Although I note the objector's concern over lifting the bulky goods restriction, I consider that there are wider public interests suggesting that such a position may be supported.

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to conditions:

Conditions

1. That the development to which this permission relates must be begun within 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. That before development starts full details of the specification of lighting columns, street furniture (including seating, bins and bollards), directional signage and a Stanley Spencer feature along the footpath within the south west corner of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
3. That before development starts details of the phasing of the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
4. That before trading starts from any units hereby approved details of the management of the car parking spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

5. That no parking restrictions shall be enforced in the parking areas, with the exception of disabled and parent/toddler parking and staff parking within the service areas, without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.
6. That the retail units shall not provide for an in-house dry cleaner, post office, travel agent or pharmacy.
7. That notwithstanding the provisions of Article 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984, the express approval of the Planning Authority shall be required in respect of the display of any advertisements of a temporary nature specified in Class IV of Schedule 4 to the Regulations.
8. That no retail unit shall be less than 750 square metres gross floor area.
9. That prior to the commencement of development, full details of the hard and soft landscaping scheme, including details of the species, size, numbers and density shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the phasing of landscaping including completion of planting and surfacing upon completion of construction of the approved buildings.
10. That any trees, shrubs or areas of grass which die, are removed, damaged or become diseased within five years of completing of the landscaping shall be replaced within the following year with others of a similar size and species.
11. That all surface water drainage from the site shall be treated in accordance with the principles of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Manual (C697) (CIRIA 2007). Before development commences, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority of the maintenance regime for the water detention areas.
12. That floor levels of the buildings shall be no lower than 5.0 metres above Ordnance Datum.
13. That before the commencement of development a Drainage Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
14. That notwithstanding the submitted layout, a revised plan shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority prior to the start of development showing a total of 43 disabled car parking spaces, 43 parent and child car parking spaces and 40 cycle space.
15. That prior to the start of development full details of the pedestrian crossings, including dropped kerbs and surfacing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reasons

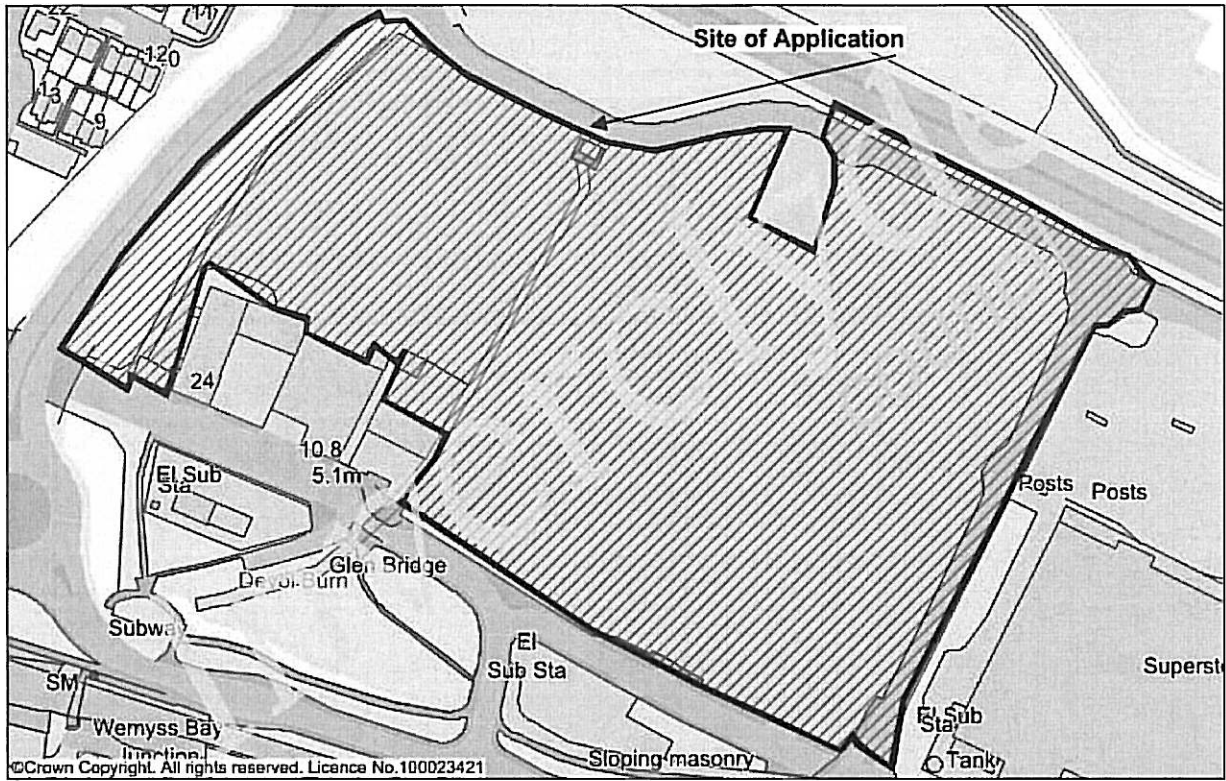
1. To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
2. To ensure cohesion and continuity between the individual elements of the overall development.
3. To ensure that the development proceeds in an agreed sequence.
4. To ensure an adequate level of public car parking to serve businesses, residents and visitors is available at all times during and after the construction of the development.
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6. To protect the retail functions of the existing town centre in the interests of its vitality and viability.
7. To safeguard against the proliferation of temporary signage that would otherwise be permitted.
8. To help ensure the nature of future occupiers is unlikely to compete with or result in the displacement of retail outlets within the existing Port Glasgow Town Centre.
9. To ensure the provision of a standard of landscaping appropriate to the development.
10. To ensure the retention of the approved landscaping scheme in the interests of visual amenity.
11. To control runoff from the site to reduce the risk of flooding.
12. To help prevent flooding of the premises.
13. To ensure the site is adequately drained to help prevent flooding.
14. To ensure the provision of adequate dedicated parking provision.
15. To ensure the acceptability of the crossings in the interests of pedestrian safety.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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



Application Number	11/0298/IC
Location	Land North Of Ardgowan Street Former Scott Lithgow And East Glen Yards (Part) Port Glasgow
Proposal	Erection of non-food retail development including car parking, landscaping, access works, service yards, security building and ATM pod



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