

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 4th April 2012

Report By: Head of Regeneration and Planning

Report No: 12/0068/IC
Plan 04/12

Local Application
Development

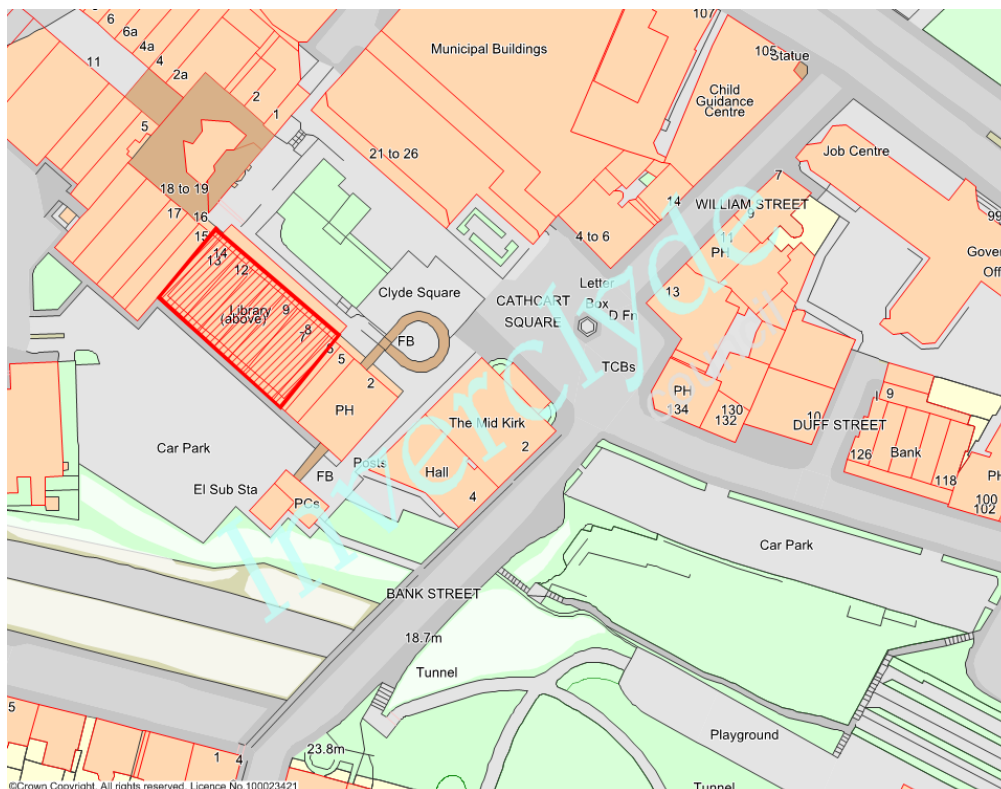
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Subject: Alterations including formation of new access to facilitate conversion of library to Class 2 offices at
7- 8 Clyde Square, Greenock

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Central Library, located on the south west side of Clyde Square, Greenock, forms the upper two floors of a three storey building, with a parade of shops and offices forming the ground floor. Pedestrian ramps leading from Clyde Square and Bank Street lead to a large paved courtyard at first floor level from where public access to the library is gained. Below the courtyard is a bar/diner and shop. To the rear is a car park operated in association with the Oak Mall shopping centre. The Grade A listed Municipal Buildings is directly across Clyde Square, while the building entrance faces the side elevation of the Mid Kirk.



PROPOSAL

In March this year the Planning Board granted planning permission for a change of use of the Business Store at Cathcart Street from Class 4 offices to Class 4 offices and a Class 10 library facility. The application under consideration in this report is pursuant to that planning permission.

It is now proposed to change the use of the library to a Class 4 office, linked by a lift to an existing office at ground floor level.

There are to be fenestration alterations to the north, south and west elevations; on the north elevation wider windows are introduced creating more natural internal illumination, and the south and west elevations benefit from existing window replacement. At ground level a new aluminium double glazed "shop" frontage with roller shutter protection will be introduced to the unit presently occupied by the election office, together with a new pedestrian access. New doors and a controlled entry system is to be introduced at the ground level onto the car park elevation. Changes are also proposed to the main entrance off the first floor courtyard and a new roof protection system is proposed.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

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.

Local Plan Policy R3 - Town Centre Uses

The following town centre uses will be directed towards the Central Shopping Area of Greenock, the other two Town Centres (Port Glasgow and Gourock) and the Local Centres:

- (a) Use Class 1 (Shops)
- (b) Use Class 2 (Financial, Professional and other Services);
- (c) Use Class 3 (Food and Drink);
- (d) Use Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure); and
- (e) Related uses such as public houses, hot food take-aways, theatres, amusement arcades and offices for taxis for public hire.

Outside these designated Centres, the above uses will be permitted in principle in the Outer Mixed/ Commercial Area around the Central Shopping Area of Greenock Town Centre, according to the specification in Policy R5. Applications for any of the uses listed will be considered subject to the criteria outlined in Policy R10. Proposals for other uses in designated Centres will be considered on their merit.

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 – As additional parking provision cannot be made within this part of the town centre a Travel Plan requires to be prepared to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport other than the car.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 9th March 2012 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

SITE NOTICES

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No written representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of this planning application are the Local Plan, the consultation responses and the visual impact of the proposed external alterations.



As a Class 2 office development within Greenock Town Centre, the proposal accords with policies R1, R2 and R3. With respect to the relevant criteria in policy R10, I am satisfied that the proposal will not have a detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre; the size and format of this office is appropriate to a town centre; as a town centre location it is accessible by a range of means of transport and that it will not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal accords with the Local Plan.

With respect to the consultation reply the requirement to provide a Travel Plan can be dealt with by means of condition.

I consider that the proposed external alterations are, in principle, sympathetic to the building's original design. I consider it prudent, however, to reserve the choice of materials by condition.

Overall the change of use of a public library to office use within Greenock Town Centre merits support and accords with the principles of the Local Plan.

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 prior to their use, details and/or samples of the new facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
3. That prior to the use of the premises commencing a Travel Plan 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 that the materials to be used are of appropriate quality and colour.
3. In the interests of sustainability.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans
2. Inverclyde Local Plan
3. Consultation reply



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