
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	6th June 2012
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	12/0001/CA Plan 06/12
Contact Officer:	Mike Martin	Contact No:	01475 712412
Subject:	Display of sign board at Entrance to James Watt Dock, East Hamilton Street, Greenock.		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located at the western junction of East Hamilton Street and James Watt Dock, Greenock adjacent to the Sugar Warehouse.



PROPOSAL

The proposal is to erect a free standing sign board, 2.23 metres in height and 3.05 metres in width and formed in composite aluminium panels mounted on plastic clad steel poles. The top of the signboard is approximately 4.0 metres in height above the existing ground level. The purpose of proposed sign board is to highlight the James Watt Dock and name the various commercial companies located with the Dock area.

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 DC1 - Development Control Advice

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will support applications for planning, listed building and advertisement consent, where applicable, which accord with the principles established in the Council's Planning Practice Advice Notes.

PPAN13 - Signage and Advertisement applies.

CONSULTATIONS

Transport 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

No representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

As an application under the Control of Advertisements Regulations the determining factors in the assessment of this application are public safety and amenity.

In relation to road safety no adverse comments have been received from Transport Scotland. It rests therefore to consider the amenity aspects. Of relevance is PPAN no. 13 on Signage and Advertisements.

The James Watt Dock has been a commercial area with access previously being via a controlled security barrier. I have no record of complaints that visitors faced difficulty in locating the access to the James Watt Dock and access to the area is now considerably easier, with the opening up of the

Dock to public access and the provision of a public road. This proposal is categorised as an advanced directional sign, in that it is remote from the businesses it identifies, access into the area is via a public road, and all the businesses within the Dock have individual accesses from it.



PPAN 13 does not support advance directional signs for businesses that are clearly visible from the public road network, as to permit such signage would lead to a proliferation of similar developments at road junctions throughout Inverclyde. There are no exceptional circumstances requiring signage in the interests of road safety.

The site is also in relatively close proximity to the former Sugar Warehouse, which is a category A listed building. Given that the positioning of this signboard would adversely impact upon visual amenity and townscape at this sensitive location the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy HR1.

It should also be noted that as part of a previous planning approval for public realm landscaping work, this location is identified as the site for for the Smith Rodley crane, which is to be refurbished and relocated on a plinth, thus forming a dock entry feature. The positioning of a signboard at this locus would be in direct conflict with this approved comprehensive scheme.

As an alternative, the applicant was requested to consider a proposal to signpost the Dock by placing individual letter on the Dock Wall at this junction to highlight James Watt Dock, but this suggestion was rejected on the basis of cost.

In conclusion I consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact in terms of visual amenity and townscape, and would introduce advance directional sign contrary to approved policy guidance and therefore is unacceptable in terms of Policies HR1 of the Local Plan and PPAN no.13. Furthermore it would directly obstruct the implementation of an approved comprehensive landscaping scheme for the areas of the James Watt Dock and the former Sugar Warehouse.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused.

Reasons

1. As the proposal would have an adverse impact upon visual amenity and townscape and as such is contrary to Policy HR1 of the Local Plan, and to the guidance contained within the Council's Planning Practice Advice Note no.13 (Signage and Advertisements).
2. As the proposal would directly obstruct the implementation of the approved comprehensive landscaping scheme for the areas of the James Watt Dock and the former Sugar warehouse, to the overall detriment of the locality.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans.
2. Inverclyde Local Plan



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