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| Report To: | The Planning Board | Date: | 1 August 2012 |
| Report By: | Head of Regeneration and Planning | Report No: | 12/0178/IC & 12/0014/LB Plan 08/12 |
| | | | Local Application Development |
| Contact Officer: | Guy Phillips | Contact No: | 01475 712422 |
| Subject: | Extension and alteration to community centre (Amendment to Planning Permission 10/0382/IC and Listed Building Consent 11/0001/LB) at Community Centre, Binnie Street, Gourock | | |

SITE DESCRIPTION

Situated on the north east corner of the junction of Binnie Street and John Street, Gourock, the former school building, last in use as a community centre, is Category C listed. The building has a U shaped floor plan and is part single storey and part two storey 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 there are two storey, semi detached houses (fronting Binnie Street and McCallum Crescent). In November last year, planning

permission and listed building consent were granted for an extension and alterations to the listed building to facilitate its use as a children's centre.

PROPOSAL

Revisions are proposed to the design of a disabled access ramp on the Binnie Street elevation and to levels of the east playground. As approved, the disabled access ramp extends approximately 29m eastwards from the main entrance to the east boundary of the site. It is now proposed that the ramp be reduced to approximately 13m, with access to the ramp via a new opening in the boundary wall and railings. The existing opening, opposite the entrance doorway is to be infilled. Also in the approved drawings is an approximately 2.1m high platform and steps providing a link from the elevated ground floor to the east playground. The platform has been deleted. As an alternative, it is proposed to increase the level of a section of playground by approximately 1m, supported by retaining wall. A flight of steps links between the elevated playground and a door on the east elevation. Another flight links to the playground to the north.

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 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.

Historic Scotland – no objections.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Edinburgh Gazette and the Greenock Telegraph on 15th June 2012 as development affecting a Listed Building.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted on 15th June 2012 for development affecting a Listed Building.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One written representation has been received. It seeks clarification of parking and access arrangements. A response has been provided confirming that planning permission was previously granted for six off street parking spaces in the rear playground, accessed from John Street.

ASSESSMENT

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

Policy H1 of the Local Plan seeks to safeguard and, where practicable enhance residential amenity and character and 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. I am satisfied that the reduction in the scale of the previously approved disabled access ramp and increase in playground level do not compromise the visual amenity and character of the listed building or residential amenity and character.

Policy HR14 advises that proposals to alter 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 access ramp, elevated playground and associated steps are, I consider, subservient and unobtrusive with minimal impact on the character and amenity of the listed building from the public domain.

(c) materials and finishes and (e) form of boundary enclosure.

Infill railings on the front elevation and around the elevated playground match the design of those existing along the Binnie Street frontage. The retaining wall supporting the elevated playground is

finished in glazed brick. I have no objections in principle to this material but consider it prudent to attach a condition reserving the choice of colour.

(f) requires compliance with Policy HR1.

Given my favourable assessment against criteria (a), (b), (c) and (e) of policy H14, 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.

There are no objections from the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services.

Overall, I consider the proposal merits support.

RECOMMENDATION

That listed building consent and planning permission be granted subject to the following condition:

No development shall commence until a sample of all the proposed glazed brick has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority: development thereafter shall proceed utilising the approved brick, unless the Planning Authority gives its prior written approval to any alternatives.

Reason

To ensure an appropriate finishing material for this historic building.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form
2. Application plans
3. Inverclyde Local Plan
4. Consultation responses
5. Scottish Historic Environment Policy



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