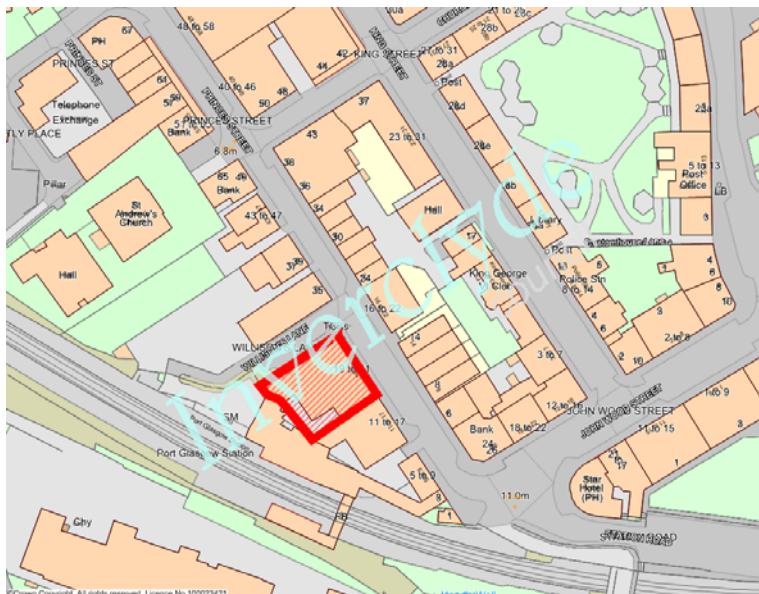


Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	6 February 2013
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	12/0341/IC Plan 02/13
			Local Application Development
Contact Officer:	David Ashman	Contact No:	01475 712416
Subject:	Change of use from retail unit to create Class 2 office accommodation at Former Peacocks Store, 19 - 29 Princes Street, Port Glasgow		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two storey former retail unit on Princes Street within Port Glasgow Town Centre. It fronts onto both Princes Street and Willison's Lane and is faced with a mix of red coloured reconstituted stone, light grey coloured tiling and roughcast. The unit, last occupied by Peacocks, is currently vacant.



PROPOSAL

It is proposed to change the use from retail to Class 2 office accommodation for Council staff to be relocated from offices at Kempock Place, Gourrock. This will necessitate some external changes to the building including the fitting of upper level replacement windows, recladding of the front and part of the side elevation onto Willison's Lane with panelling, a new render finish to the existing reconstituted stone facing and rendered areas, and the refurbishment of existing metal cladding.

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; and
- (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 Safer and Inclusive Communities – No objections subject to the imposition of conditions requiring details of waste containers and external lighting.

Head of Environmental and Commercial Services – The application site is within the town centre with existing parking restrictions adjacent to the development, hence obstructive parking is unlikely. Details should be provided of how servicing is to take place. The footway in Willison's Lane should be reconstructed over the existing break in the footway.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 7th December 2012 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

SITE NOTICES

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In addition to the press advertisement, the application was the subject of neighbour notification. One representation has been received. This is from a neighbouring business concerned that future occupiers of the building could reduce parking opportunities in this location to the detriment of their business. Presently ongoing works to create new parking provision at Willison's Lane restrict parking opportunities outside their premises and essential for the operation of their business.

ASSESSMENT

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

The application site is within Port Glasgow Town Centre, as defined by Policy R1 of the Local Plan. Offices are identified by Policy R2 as one of the diversity of uses to be encouraged to protect, enhance and develop town centres. Policy R3 identifies Class 2 uses among those to be directed towards town centres, although assessment against the relevant criteria in Policy R10 is required. In this respect, the proposed use will have a positive effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre in bringing a vacant unit back into use, increasing workers in the town centre and resulting in potential increased numbers of customers for the local shops (criterion (c)). It is accessible by a choice of means of transport (criterion (e)). The upgrading of the external appearance of the building will make a positive contribution to the quality of the urban environment, although I would suggest that permission be conditioned in respect of the submission of samples of facing materials

(criterion (f)). As an office development it is not likely to have an adverse impact on residential amenity or the amenity and, putting to one side concerns over parking issues, the effective operation of existing businesses (criterion (g)). Finally, the proposed development and its location is consistent with Development Plan policies and as the application site is within a town centre location the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services has confirmed that the Roads Development Guide makes no specific requirements for dedicated parking provision for the development (criterion (h)). I am therefore satisfied that the proposal accords with the Local Plan.



Turning to the consultation responses, all of the issues raised can be addressed through the use of conditions or advisory notes on a grant of planning permission.

I note the representation received and while no individual trader has a right to exclusive on street parking to the front of their premises, I acknowledge the present temporary reduction in available parking. This is due to the construction of a 53 space Council-owned car park adjacent to the development on the opposite side of Willison's Lane. I appreciate that ongoing works associated may be having a temporary impact on parking opportunities but, in the longer term, the provision of 53 off street car parking spaces will be of overall benefit to the town centre.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. That prior to their use, samples of the facing materials to be used on the external walls of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and that these materials shall be used during construction unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
2. That the adjacent footway in Willison's Lane along the frontage of the building shall be fully reinstated over the existing break.

3. That the applicant shall submit to the Planning Authority a detailed specification of the containers to be used to store waste materials and recyclable materials produced on the premises as well as specific details of the areas where such containers are to be located. The use of the development shall not commence until the above details are approved in writing by the Planning Authority and the equipment and any structural changes in place.
4. All external lighting on the application site should comply with the Scottish Government Guidance Note "Controlling Light Pollution and Reducing Lighting Energy Consumption".

Reasons

1. To ensure the appropriateness of these materials.
2. In the interests of pedestrian safety.
3. To protect the amenity of the immediate area, prevent the creation of nuisance due to odours, insects, rodents or birds.
4. To protect the amenity of the immediate area, the creation of nuisance due to light pollution and to support the reduction of energy consumption.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans.
2. Inverclyde Local Plan.
3. Consultation replies.
4. Letter of representation.



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