

Report To: The Planning Board

Date: 5 June 2013

Report By: Head of Regeneration and Planning

Report No: 13/0004/LB  
Plan 06/13

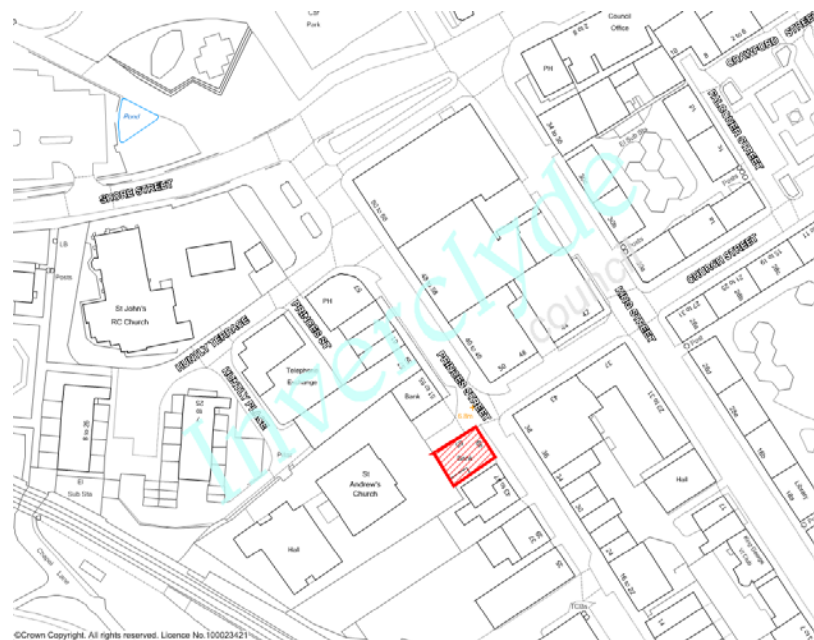
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Subject: Alterations to facilitate the formation of new betting office including internal alterations, the installation of external air conditioning condenser units, satellite dishes, the removal of existing ATM, and new illuminated and window signage at  
Former Royal Bank Of Scotland, 49 Princes Street, Port Glasgow

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a ground floor former bank premises, finished in a mix of traditional blonde sandstone and render, located on the corner of Princes Street and Church Street, Port Glasgow and adjacent to the entrance of St Andrews Church. The property is three storeys high and features a grey slate roof and traditional white timber sash and case windows painted white. The building lies within Port Glasgow Town Centre and is a Category B listed building.



## PROPOSAL

It is proposed to undertake alterations to the property to facilitate a new betting office. Externally, two air conditioning condensing units and two satellite dishes are proposed to the rear of the southern elevation adjacent to 47 Princes Street. New signage is also proposed, comprising a projecting hanging sign illuminated by a trough light with fluorescent lamps on each of the front and

side elevations, illuminated stainless steel letters and logo with LED rope lights inside the digits to provide a halo illuminated effect sign inside the storm doors, and poster boards located behind the four windows to Princes Street.

Work to remove the existing ATM has already been undertaken, with the sash and case window being reinstated. Also retrospectively, glazing has replaced the nightsafe.

Internally, there will be a full fit out for the new use. These works comprise a new secondary timber door, the removal of the existing internal walls primarily comprising the strong room, the formation of a new suspended ceiling, provision of new studwork, accessible toilet and internal fittings.

## **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 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**

**Historic Scotland** - The proposed external alterations are broadly acceptable, the proposed condenser units and satellite dishes are in a discrete location to the rear of the building and will have a minimal impact on the historic character of the building. The proposed signage is also broadly acceptable although consideration should be given to whether the number of signs could be reduced. Concern is raised regarding the removal of internal surfaces. It is advised that if the proposal was accepted, evidence of the former layout should be preserved.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph and Edinburgh Gazette on 15th March 2013 as development affecting a listed building.

## **SITE NOTICES**

A site notice was posted on 15th March 2013 for development affecting a listed building.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The application was subject of neighbour notification, a press advertisement and a site notice. One objection was received.

The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

- The signage proposed is inappropriate and will detract from the appearance of the B listed building.
- The proposed alterations to the building will distract from the appearance of the B listed building and from the views to the adjacent church building.
- The new satellite dishes will have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the listed building and views to the adjacent church.
- The window from which the nightsafe has been removed is not as per the existing drawings or original listing.
- It is not clear if the door pediment and lion brackets will be retained.
- Works to remove the ATM have already been undertaken without permission.

I will consider these concerns in my assessment.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The material considerations in the assessment of the application are the Inverclyde Local Plan, the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), Historic Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes, the impact upon the listed building, the consultation response and the objection received.

Policy HR1 of the Inverclyde Local Plan seeks to ensure that development that does not adversely affect the natural or built heritage resources listed in Schedule 9.1. Listed buildings are a built heritage resource. Policy HR14 of the Local Plan provides criteria for the assessment of development proposals in relation to listed buildings. The relevant criteria of policy HR14 in this instance consider overall design, scale and form, materials and external finishes and compliance with policy HR1. The premises are currently vacant but were last in use as a bank. It is acknowledged that the interior has been altered and modified during the period of use by the bank. It is important however to ensure that any surviving historic features are preserved.

In first considering the interior alterations, Historic Scotland's guidance notes acknowledge that the interior of historic buildings forms an important element in defining its character. Any internal

alterations must therefore ensure that the overall character is preserved and historic features are not lost. In their consultation response, Historic Scotland express concern regarding the removal of internal surfaces. It advises that if the proposal is to be accepted, evidence of the former layout should be preserved. Historic internal features remaining largely comprise sections of decorative corncicing on existing walls and retained downstands. The drawings show that downstands will remain to indicate the position of original internal dividing walls and retain existing decorative corncicing. This will ensure that evidence of the original layout and the original features remain. Whilst they will be located above the new suspended ceiling, this arrangement is not uncommon within historic buildings when altered to accommodate new uses. The new studwork will be formed across the inside of the existing windows to Church Street. The use of opaque glazing within these windows will ensure that when viewed externally, these unexpected features are not visible behind the window. The new accessible toilet together with the internal fixtures and fitting will not impact on the historic character of the building. Overall, I am satisfied that the proposed internal alterations to the building will not result in the removal of any notable internal features and will acceptably impact on the character and appearance of the building. Downstands and corncicing will remain undisturbed and preserved above the new suspended ceiling. As no historic internal features will be further lost, there is no conflict with Historic Scotland's Guidance which seeks to protect the interior of historic buildings.



Examining the external changes, the ATM was a modern feature and the loss of this does not have any impact on the historic interest of the building. The timber sash and case window has been reinstated following the removal of this item. The removal of the nightsafe is also acceptable and the reinstatement of the sash and case window will create a symmetrical appearance to the front elevation. I note concern regarding the depiction of this in the drawings submitted however these have now been amended to accurately show this. The existing timber storm doors will be retained and refurbished with a new timber entrance door being provided behind. The condenser units and satellite dishes are new features which will be located on the exterior of the building. Whilst visible from the new car park to the rear, it is considered that they will have a minimal impact on the historic character of the building. Historic Scotland also take this view in their consultation response. The minimal visual impact is outweighed by the benefit of the new use to ensure the premises does not remain vacant.

Assessing the signage, I note Historic Scotland's guidance notes seeks to ensure that new signage must be carefully designed to respect the character of a building and located appropriately to avoid damage to any architectural features. The number, design, illumination and siting of projecting signs should be carefully considered. PPAN 13 advises on signage and advertisements. In listed buildings fascia advertising should be limited to the name of the business with no extraneous logos. Any non-timber panels should have a non-reflective finish. Projecting signs should be positioned at the upper fascia level and be hung from a traditional bracket and have a maximum dimension of 600mm. External illumination may be by a trough light. The proposed projecting signage, which overall is of a similar design to that previously displayed by the bank, varies from the guidance in PPAN 13 only in respect of dimensions; the proposed signs are 750mm by 700mm whereas PPAN 13 expects a maximum dimension of 600mm. This limitation may be specified by condition.

In their consultation response, Historic Scotland noted that the proposed signage is broadly acceptable although consideration should be given to whether the number of signs could be reduced. Wall mounted signs to each side of the entrance door together with the window graphics on the Church Street elevation were removed from the proposal during processing.

The sign proposed above the entrance door will be visible only when the storm doors are open. The use of individually mounted letters with a halo illumination from within each letter is acceptable in terms of the appearance of the listed building. The poster towers located behind the front windows will also not impact unacceptably on the historic character of the building. The number and position of the signs are appropriate for the building in view of its corner location and they have an acceptable impact on the overall character and appearance of the listed building and subject to the condition below accord with the advice and guidance within PPAN 13.

With regard to the outstanding points raised in the objection received, there is no proposal to alter or remove the door pediment and lion brackets to the front elevation. Whilst I share concern that the ATM was removed prior to permission being granted, this alone does not justify the refusal of the application.

Overall, I consider that the internal and external alterations to the property together with the new signage have an acceptable impact on the appearance of the listed building and are not to the detriment of its overall character and appearance. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal presents no conflict with the relevant criteria of policies HR1 and HR14, PPAN 13, and the spirit of Historic Scotland's Guidance and the SHEP which both seek to preserve the integrity of the Historic Environment. I therefore consider that Listed Building Consent should be granted subject to the conditions below.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the application be granted subject to the following conditions:

### Conditions

1. That prior to the commencement of works on site, full details of the downstands which will remain to indicate the position of original internal dividing walls and retained cornicing must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Works shall then proceed as approved unless any alternative is agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.
2. Existing cornicing shall remain undisturbed during the works on site and at all times thereafter.
3. That any previously concealed original features which are exposed during the works shall be retained. Prior to undertaking any repair to the features full details of repairs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

4. The face of any projecting sign shall have a maximum dimension of not more than 600mm and prior to the commencement of works on site, revised details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Works shall then proceed as approved.

#### Reasons

1. To retain and preserve evidence of the former layout in the interests of safeguarding the historic character of the building.
2. To retain and preserve original features in the interests of safeguarding the historic character of the building.
3. To retain and preserve original features in the interests of safeguarding the historic character of the building.
4. To ensure the projecting signage is appropriate for the listed building by according with the advice within PPAN 13.

Stuart Jamieson  
Head of Regeneration and Planning

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application forms and plans
2. Inverclyde Local Plan
3. Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)
4. Historic Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes
5. Planning Practice Advice Note No 13 on Signage and Advertisements
6. Consultation response
7. Objection received.



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