
Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	5 February 2014
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	13/0315/IC Plan 02/14
Contact Officer:	Guy Phillips	Contact No:	01475 712422
Subject:	Installation of access ramp to front of building at Court House, 1 Nelson Street, Greenock		

SITE DESCRIPTION

Greenock Sherriff Court is a Grade B listed Victorian building on the south-east side of Nelson Street and within the Greenock West End Conservation Area. An approximately 4.5m deep area of formal landscaping intervenes between the building's front elevation and low walling, decorative metal railings, stone gate piers and decorative metal gates which combine to form the boundary with Nelson Street. Five steps lead from the landscaped frontage to the decorative stone, main entrance which contains outer panelled timber storm doors with a curved deadlight above and inner half glazed timber doors.



PROPOSAL

It is proposed to form an approximately 11m long disabled access ramp through the formal landscaped frontage to the court's front access steps. It incorporates 900mm high, protective steel

railings with uprights at 100mm centres. The ramp extends across approximately 50% of the frontage of the building. It is further proposed to automate and replace the inner entrance doors.

DEVELOPMENT 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 R5 - Greenock Town Centre: Outer Mixed/Commercial Area

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will seek to protect the character, both existing and potential, of the different divisions of the Outer Mixed/Commercial Area of Greenock Town Centre, as defined on the Proposals Map and below. In addition to development in keeping with the existing character of the area, the following town centre uses will also be permitted in the identified divisions (G) to (L)

- (G) CLARENCE STREET MIXED-USE AREA:
Use Class 2 (Financial, Professional and Other Services);
Use Class 3 (Food and Drink);
Use Class 10 (Community Uses);
Use Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure); and
Related uses, including public house, hot food take away or taxi office, and the sale of motor vehicles.
- (H) WEST END OFFICE AND CIVIC AREA and
- (I) SIR MICHAEL STREET/KING STREET RESIDENTIAL AREA
Use Class 2 (Financial, Professional and Other Services);
Use Class 10 (Community Uses); and
Use Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure).
- (J) DELLINGBURN STREET/RUE END STREET
Area fully developed for Class 1 Use (Shops).
No further opportunities. Intensification of current retail use would not be appropriate.
- (K) THE HARBOURS AREA *
Use Class 9 (Residential Flats)
Use Classes 1, 10 or 11, where related or ancillary to tourism or to maritime-based leisure or commercial enterprises;
Use Class 2 (Financial, Professional and Other Services);
Use Class 3 (Food and Drink); and
Use as a public house.
- (L) WATERFRONT: EDUCATION AND LEISURE AREA
Use Class 8 (Residential Institutions), if halls of residence associated with James Watt College;
Use Class 10 (Community Uses); and
Use Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure).

Local Plan Policy HR11 - Development Within and Adjacent to Conservation Areas

Development proposals both within and adjacent to conservation areas will be acceptable where they are sympathetic to the existing character, pattern of development and appearance of the area and the following matters are satisfactorily addressed, as appropriate:

- (a) siting and orientation of new buildings;
- (b) overall design and style;

- (c) scale of building, extension or alteration;
- (d) design details;
- (e) finishing materials; and
- (f) landscaping and boundary materials.

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.

PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Policy TCR1- Network of Designated Centres

The following hierarchy of centres are designated as locations where a range of town centre uses will be appropriate in order to support the role and function of the particular centre, as well as their vitality and viability:

Strategic Town Centre:

- (a) Greenock, subdivided into a 'Central Area' and 'Outer Area'

Town Centres:

- (a) Port Glasgow
- (b) Gourock

Local Centres:

- (a) The Cross, Kilmacolm
- (b) Dubbs Road, Port Glasgow
- (c) Sinclair Street, Greenock
- (d) Lynedoch Street, Greenock
- (e) Barrs Cottage (Inverkip Road and Dunlop Street), Greenock
- (f) Cumberland Walk, Greenock (proposed redevelopment)
- (g) Cardwell Road, Gourock
- (h) Kip Park, Inverkip
- (i) Ardgowan Road, Wemyss Bay

Policy TCR5 - Outer Area of Greenock Town Centre

Proposals for development in the five divisions of the Outer Area of Greenock Town Centre, as defined on the Proposals Map and below, should have regard to their respective roles, functions, character and amenity. The following uses will be encouraged and supported, subject to there being no adverse impact upon the amenity of the area:

A - WEST END (Civic, Office and Residential)

- Use Class 2 (Financial, professional and other services)

- Use Class 4 (Business)
- Use Class 8 (Residential institutions)
- Use Class 10 (Non-residential institutions)

B - CLARENCE STREET AREA (Mixed Use)

- Use Class 3 (Food and drink)
- Use Class 4 (Business)
- Use Class 11 (Assembly and leisure)

C - WATERFRONT (Education and Leisure)

- Use Class 3 (Food and drink)
- Use Class 4 (Business)
- Use Class 7 (Hotels and hostels)
- Use Class 8 (Residential institutions)
- Use Class 10 (Non-residential institutions)
- Use Class 11 (Assembly and leisure)

D - KING STREET AREA (Business and Residential)

- Use Class 2 (Financial, professional and other services)
- Use Class 4 (Business)
- Use Class 8 (Residential institutions)
- Use Class 10 (Non-residential institutions)

E - ROXBURGH STREET AREA (Business and Community)

- Use Class 2 (Financial, professional and other services)
- Use Class 3 (Food and drink)
- Use Class 4 (Business)
- Use Class 8 (Residential institutions)
- Use Class 10 (Non-residential institutions)

Policy HER1 - Development which Affects the Character of Conservation Areas

Development proposals which affect conservation areas will be acceptable where they are sympathetic to the character, pattern of development and appearance of the area. Such proposals will be assessed having regard to Historic Scotland's SHEP and 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' guidance note series.

Policy HER4 - Alteration, Extension and Demolition of Listed Buildings

There is a presumption in favour of the retention of listed buildings, and their demolition, in full or in part, will only be accepted after a full assessment of the importance and condition of the building has been undertaken. Proposals to alter, extend or demolish a listed building must respect the reasons for listing, be of a high standard and will be approved only where the proposed works do not adversely affect the special interest of the building and are satisfactory having regard to Historic Scotland's SHEP and 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' guidance note series.

CONSULTATIONS

Historic Scotland - Historic Scotland were consulted on an application for listed building consent for the proposed ramp, submitted along with the planning application, and offered no objections.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised as a development affecting a listed building.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted as a development affecting a listed building.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No written representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the determination of this planning application are the Local Plan, the proposed Local Development Plan, Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy and Managing Change in the Historic Environment design guidance series, and the consultation response.

Town Centre Policies R1, R2 and R5 of the Local Plan and Policies TCR1 and TCR5 of the proposed Local Development Plan combine to locate the site within the Outer Area of Greenock Town Centre. They provide no guidance in the assessment of this application.



Of relevance are Policies HR11 and HR14 of the Local Plan and Policies HER1 and HER4 of the proposed Local Development Plan, which combine to locate the Grade B listed building within the Greenock West End Conservation Area. Development proposals are required to respect the pattern of development and character of the Conservation Area, respect the reasons for the building being listed, be of a high standard and be approved only where they do not adversely affect the special interest of the building; all with reference to Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy and the Managing Change in the Historic Environment design guidance series.

Scottish Historic Environment Policy advises that protecting the historic environment is not about preventing change. Change should be managed intelligently and with understanding. The

Managing Change in the Historic Environment design guidance series advises that boundary treatments form important elements in defining the character of historic buildings and conservation areas. It is important to protect the visual importance of the boundary treatment and the contribution that it makes to the overall setting of the building. In this instance the frontage is formal and clearly defined by the low wall and decorative railings and is devoid of visual clutter. The proposed ramp extends across approximately 50% of the frontage of the listed building, and will significantly impact upon the visual balance that exists between the historical site boundary and the building, presenting a dominant intrusion. While not affixed to the existing walling and railings, I am concerned that the 11m long ramp and associated protective metal barriers shall interrupt and degrade views of the formal frontage to one of Greenock's most historic buildings. Consequently, in this instance, I do not agree with Historic Scotland's position.

I have requested that the applicant provide a discrete wheelchair lift as an alternative to the proposed ramp, but am advised that management considerations render this option unacceptable and that their preference is to have the application determined as submitted. While acknowledging the applicant's management concerns, I consider that these are significantly outweighed by the adverse impact of the proposed ramp on the Grade B listed building's frontage and its setting within the Greenock West End Conservation Area.

Moving on to the proposed automation and replacement of the inner entrance doors, I note that these doors are not original to the listed building and am thus satisfied that replacement is an acceptable option.

Overall, however, I do not consider that the proposal merits support.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the following reason:

The design and location of the proposed ramp and associated protective barriers shall adversely affect the frontage of the Grade B listed Sheriff Court and be to the detriment of the pattern of development and character of this part of the Greenock West End Conservation Area, contrary to policies HR11 and HR14 of the Local Plan and policies HER1 and HER4 of the proposed Local Development Plan.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans.
2. Inverclyde Local Plan.
3. Inverclyde Local Development Plan.
4. Consultation reply.
5. Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy and Managing Change in the Historic Environment design guidance series.



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