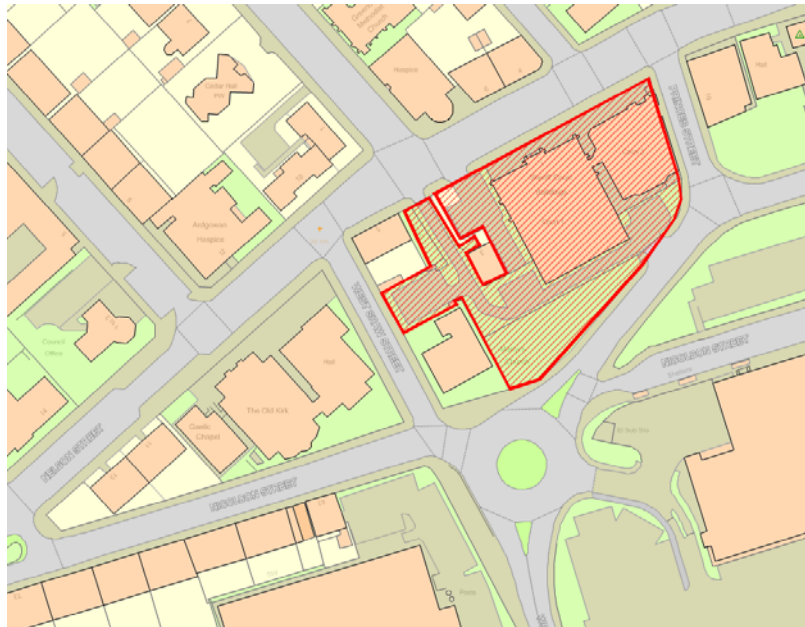

Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	5 February 2014
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	13/0036/LB Plan 02/14
Contact Officer:	Guy Phillips	Contact No:	01475 712422
Subject:	Installation of access ramp to front of building at Court House, 1 Nelson Street, Greenock		

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 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 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 - 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.

Policies HR11 and HR14 of the Local Plan and Policies HER1 and HER4 of the proposed Local Development Plan 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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