

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 6 December 2011

DC11/219: Erection of replacement community centre including office accommodation and associated car parking and landscaping on the site of Howatshaws Hall, Howatshaws Road, Dumbarton.

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This application relates to land over which the Council has an ownership interest. Under the terms of the approved scheme of delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 2.1** The application relates to Howatshaws Hall which serves as a local community centre. It sits within a site extending to approximately 0.2 hectares in the northern part of Bellsmyre. Most of the surrounding land is open space, although there are high flats to the east and low rise flats/houses further to the west. The hall is a single storey timber building covering an area of approximately 245m², constructed in the late 1970s. There is currently no dedicated parking provision on site, as the hall is used mainly as a community resource for residents living within walking distance, but off-site parking is available on nearby streets or in a nearby car park serving the high rise flats and the location is easily accessed by bus. The hall is used by various community groups including a youth club, bingo group and senior citizens' group, as well as being available for functions such as children's birthday parties.
- 2.2** Planning permission is sought for the erection of a replacement community centre which would be larger than the existing building, extending to 333m², and would include a hall, storage areas, kitchen, office accommodation, meeting room and toilet facilities. It would be orientated to face directly onto Howatshaws Road in order to create a clear public frontage. The single storey building would be finished with a combination of a flat roof and traditional pitched roof areas and would use a mixture of black timber cladding, red/bronze zinc cladding and aluminium faced timber windows and doors. The front of the premises and a larger area of land to the north of the site would be landscaped whilst a private garden would be created at the rear. At the front of the building, four off-street parking spaces would be provided along with bike stands. The project is Lottery funded and aims to gain support to set up a Development Trust which will take over the management and ownership of the hall and ultimately employ a team of staff and volunteers to generate community activities including for the young and elderly. The premises would continue to be available for community uses on a daily basis, and the new building would allow additional groups to make use of the facility. The building aims to offer a flexible hall and office/meeting space which will allow simultaneous functions such as sports and community meetings or coffee mornings to take place.

3. CONSULTATIONS

3.1 West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Service has no objection to the proposal.

3.2 West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Section is aware of the proposal and has no objections.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 None.

5. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

5.1 The site is identified as being located within an existing residential area and Policy H5 states that there is a presumption against development which adversely affects the use, character or amenity of residential areas. The replacement of the existing community centre would not have any negative impact on the surrounding area and would comply with Policy H5.

5.2 Policy PS3 encourages the provision of new or enhanced public service and community facilities. The replacement building would ensure the retention of a community centre serving the Bellsmyre area, and would provide improved facilities relative to the existing building and for the local area. Policy PS3 therefore supports the proposal.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Appearance and Location

6.1 The current building is falling into disrepair and the applicant advises that replacing the building would represent better value for money and would better suit the needs of the community than attempting to refurbish the existing structure. It is considered that the provision of a replacement of the building is to be welcomed as this will ensure the future of this valuable community facility. The existing building does not address the road frontage (having been designed specifically to serve the residents of the multi storey buildings to the rear), and the redevelopment of the site affords an opportunity to improve the building's relationship with Howatshaws Road. The proposal would retain the building in a prominent location as befitting a community use, whilst reorientating the new building to front onto the road. This will ensure that the building is as accessible and welcoming as possible whilst being far enough away from any nearby residential properties to ensure that there will be no unacceptable disturbance.

6.2 The new building will have a slightly larger footprint than the current premises, and has been designed specifically to sit within the open setting of the site without detracting from the amenity of the area. The design is modern and is considered appropriate for this location. It will use a simple colour palette of red zinc cladding and black timber cladding in conjunction with large window openings to allow as much natural light into the premises as possible. For security, the glazed elements

will be protected by sliding timber screens when the building is closed which match the black timber cladding. The building has been designed as a functional and flexible community centre which will sit comfortably within its surroundings.

- 6.3** Externally, the grounds of the community centre will be significantly improved. There is currently no dedicated parking at the site and four off street parking spaces will be created, as well as bicycle stands. The grounds will be upgraded with new paving being used to complement the private garden area to the rear and landscaping to the front. The private garden at the rear will be enclosed by 1.8m high fencing for security and privacy. In addition to the above, a later phase of the development will see the land directly to the north of the building being landscaped to complete the scheme.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The proposal would provide an improved community centre at a prominent location which would provide an enhanced facility for Bellsmyre residents and would assist in regenerating the area. In addition, it will complement the surrounding area in terms of appearance and use and would accord with local planning policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1** **Grant** full planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Section 9 below.

9. CONDITIONS

- 01.** The development hereby approved shall commence within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision notice.
- 02.** The developer shall submit to the Planning Authority in writing upon the forms specified for the purpose and attached to this decision notice:
- a)** A Notice of Commencement of Development as soon as practicable once it is decided to commence the development hereby approved (which shall be prior to the development commencing);
 - b)** A Notice of Completion of Development as soon as practicable once the development has been completed.
- 03.** Exact details and specifications of all proposed external materials, including roller shutters and vandal shields shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site and shall thereafter be implemented as approved.
- 04.** Prior to the commencement of works, full details of all hard surfaces shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and implemented as approved.

05. Prior to the commencement of works, full details of the design and location of all walls and fences to be erected on site shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and shall be implemented as approved.
06. Prior to the commencement of development details of the design and location of the bin stores shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and thereafter implemented as approved.
07. A landscaping scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development on site and shall be implemented not later than the next appropriate planting season after occupation of the building. The landscaping shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with these details.
08. Prior to the commencement of development full details of the foul and surface water drainage system shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority and shall be implemented as approved. The drainage system shall incorporate the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within its design and shall thereafter be implemented prior to the occupation of the community centre.
09. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved the car parking spaces shown on approved drawing no. (PL)100-3A, shall be constructed, surfaced and delineated on the site.
10. During the period of construction, all works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other places that may be agreed by the Planning Authority shall be carried out between 8am and 6pm Mondays to Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.
11. The presence of any previously unsuspected or unencountered contamination that becomes evident during the development of the site shall be brought to the attention of the Planning Authority within one week. At this stage, if requested, a comprehensive contaminated land investigation shall be carried out.

Elaine Melrose
Executive Director of Housing, Environmental
and Economic Development
Date: 21st November 2011

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Appendix: None.

Background Papers:

1. Application forms and plans;
2. Consultation responses; and
3. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010.

Wards affected: 2 (Leven)