

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

**Planning Committee: 5 December 2012**

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#### **DC12/209: Formation of car park at Alexandria Railway Station, Station Road, Alexandria by West Dunbartonshire Council**

##### **1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1** This application has been submitted by the Council's Roads Service and relates to land owned by the Council. Under the approved scheme of delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

##### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1** Grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Section 9.

##### **3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS**

- 3.1** This application relates to an area of land located immediately to the east of Alexandria railway station between the railway and the road. The site forms part of the existing landscaped area within the gyratory road around the station, and it is currently covered with grass, trees and shrubs. The site measures 0.3 hectares and the land rises slightly toward the railway line. The site is located within Alexandria town centre, and the immediate area surrounding the site contains a variety of uses including a public house, a school, a church and residential properties.
- 3.2** The proposal involves constructing a 55 space car park with a new vehicular access to be formed on the eastern boundary of the site, from the existing road. New footpaths would be formed and this would enable access from the car park to the street at the northern end of the site and to an existing path and set of steps leading up to the station platform. A gravel trench with a field drain along the edge of the site would provide sustainable drainage for the car park, and new lighting columns would be installed along the edge of the new footpath and adjacent to the car parking spaces. The car parking area would be confined to the relatively level area next to the road, and there would be no significant alteration to ground levels. The main purpose of the car park is to provide replacement parking facilities for the railway station in the event that the existing parking areas are subject to redevelopment, but the proposed parking would also be more conveniently sited than the existing car park for station users.

- 3.3 The development would result in the loss of approximately 25 trees, with around 10 of these being fairly mature trees. Most of the trees are ash and sycamore.

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 West Dunbartonshire Council Environmental Health Service has no objections to the development provided that a condition relating to unexpected contaminated land is attached to any consent.
- 4.2 The Council's Regeneration Section supports the proposal as it is linked to the wider planned redevelopment of the Mitchell Way area, and will also be more conveniently sited for the station than the existing car parking.
- 4.3 The Council's Roads Service is the applicant for this proposal. They confirm that the proposal would be completed to the Council's current roads and parking design standards.
- 4.4 Scottish Water has no objections provided that access to their existing infrastructure is maintained.
- 4.5 West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Service has no objection.
- 4.6 Network Rail had not responded at the time of writing this report, but no objection is anticipated.

#### 5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 None.

#### 6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

##### West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 6.1 The site is within Alexandria Town Centre and Policy RET 5 states that the Council will seek to improve the environment of town centres and applications for non-retail uses within the town centre will be favourably considered where they contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and do not conflict with other local plan policies.
- 6.2 Policy T1 indicates that the Council supports measures to provide sustainable transport modes including footpaths, cycle routes and improved access to public transport. The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which increase access to public transport services and path networks, particularly in respect of employment areas, provided there are no adverse impacts on the amenity of the surrounding area.
- 6.3 Policy T3 indicates that the Council will, in partnership with other agencies, endeavour to undertake or support transport schemes. Improvements to Alexandria railway station and increased public car parking in town centres are identified in the Council's list of short-term transport projects in terms of

the local plan. The proposed development accords with the above policies of the local plan for the reasons discussed in Section 7 below.

## **7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1** The proposed development would replace existing car parking within an area which is to be redeveloped, and would provide more convenient parking for the station which would support the Council's policy of improving access to sustainable transport. Most of the existing station car parking is located to the west of the railway line within the boundary of the planned Mitchell Way regeneration area. The proposed new car park would ensure that parking remained available at the station during the future redevelopment of the town centre. Furthermore, the new car park would be located on the same side of the railway as the station platform and would therefore be more conveniently sited for rail users than the existing parking areas it would replace.
- 7.2** The formation of the car park would result in the loss of part of a landscaped area which at present provides a reasonably attractive area of informal open space. However, it is considered that the loss would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area, as the application site relates to only part of the landscaped area and the area or trees and shrubs to the south-west of the site would be unchanged. In addition, a condition could be attached to require that replacement trees are planted elsewhere within the site to soften the appearance of the development and minimise its impact on the visual amenity of the area. Overall, it is considered that the benefits gained from the car park would outweigh the loss of an open space area. There would be no adverse impact upon any nearby residential properties or businesses.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1** The proposal would provide improved parking facilities at Alexandria railway station, whilst facilitating the planned regeneration of Mitchell Way. It would therefore accord with development plan policies which encourage regeneration of Alexandria town centre and the promotion of sustainable travel. The scheme would involve the loss of some landscaping, however, it is considered that this loss would not be significant and that subject to suitable new landscaping the appearance of the development would be appropriate.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

- 01. 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.**
- 02. 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.**

03. 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 and any actions arising shall be implemented within a time scale agreed with the Planning Authority.
04. A landscaping scheme which shall include tree planting 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 following the use of the car park.

**Elaine Melrose**  
**Executive Director of Housing, Environmental**  
**and Economic Development**  
**Date: 19 November 2012**

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**Appendix:** None.

**Background Papers:**

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

**Wards affected:** Ward 2 (Leven)