

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

**Planning Committee: 1 November 2011**

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**Subject:      Erection of 3 storey side extension and re-cladding of existing building at 151 Glasgow Road, Clydebank (DC11/133)**

#### **1.      Purpose**

- 1.1**      To provide further information in relation to the impact of the proposed development on trees within the site.

#### **2.      Background**

- 2.1**      The above planning application was considered by the Planning Committee on 4 October 2011. The application was continued in order to obtain further information regarding the trees which would require to be cleared in order to allow the extension and car park to be constructed and to allow a site visit to take place.

#### **3.      Main Issues**

- 3.1**      The application site and the land to its east were once occupied by a row of tenements, a cinema and a church, backing onto railway sidings. The applicant's office building appears to have been built as an infill replacement for one of the tenement blocks, but subsequently all of the other buildings were cleared leaving the office building standing alone. The cleared site was landscaped in grass and trees as a means of improving the appearance of a vacant site rather than as a formal amenity area.
- 3.2**      The trees are predominantly birch, a type which grows quickly and is therefore useful for screening and landscaping. It would appear that the larger trees were planted as part of the landscape scheme, and the smaller trees are self-seeded as birch spreads very readily and is quick to colonise wasteland. The trees are arranged in a row, set back from the edge of the road by several metres. The trees also extend forward to the back of the footpath along the side of the office building, and further east on either side of a gap in the row which has presumably been left in order to allow maintenance access to the grass behind them.
- 3.3**      Within the application site, there are approximately 19 large birch trees, plus a significant number of smaller trees which are mainly self seeded birch along

with a few other species including beech and rowan. All of these trees would be lost as a result of the development, however the application site only covers about half of the length of the landscaped area, and approximately 18 large trees to the east of the site (which are of similar character and density) would not be affected. The applicant also proposes to include some tree planting within the landscaping of the proposed development which would ensure that the development blends in with the adjacent area.

- 3.4** The trees are not covered by a tree preservation order, and whilst they are reasonably attractive, their original purpose appears to have been the landscaping of vacant ground, which would not have been regarded as a permanent arrangement. Individually, none of the trees is of particular value. Overall, it is considered that the redevelopment of the site would be of benefit to the character and appearance of the area, and that in this context the loss of the trees would be acceptable.

#### **4. People Implications**

- 4.1** None

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** None

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** None

#### **7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 7.1** None

#### **8. Strategic Assessment**

- 8.1** The proposal contributes to the social and economic regeneration of the area by allowing the expansion of a local business which should be encouraged.

#### **9. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 9.1** Although the trees do contribute to the visual amenity of the area it is considered that their removal would enable the redevelopment of the site which would be of greater value to the character of the area. Additionally, the proposal would allow the expansion of an existing business which would help to boost economic activity in the area. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions listed in the previous report.

**Elaine Melrose**  
**Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**  
**Date: 18 October 2011**

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**Appendices:** 1. Report to 4 October 2011 Planning Committee

**Background Papers:** a) Committee report DC11/133

**Wards Affected:** Ward 6 (Clydebank Waterfront)