

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services)**

**Planning Committee: 19 June 2007**

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**DC07/116/FUL:      Erection of replacement retail units and refurbishment of existing retail units, formation of public square, relocation of electricity substation and associated works, at the Artizan Centre, High Street, Dumbarton by Jermon Developments Ltd.**

#### **1.      Development Details**

- 1.1**      Planning permission is sought for the erection of replacement retail units and the refurbishment of existing retail units within the Artizan Centre, Dumbarton. The ancillary work which forms part of this application will involve the demolition of an existing building to allow the formation of a public square within the Artizan Centre along with public realm improvements. An existing electricity sub station is also to be relocated.
- 1.2**      The current proposal involves the partial demolition and reconstruction of several units and the reconfiguration of the use of the units within the Artizan Centre. There are presently a mixture of retail and office uses within the centre and this proposal will see a number of the office units relocate nearer the High Street whilst the newly formed units will involve a mixture of food and non-food retailing. There will also be additional upper floor space provided above the newly formed units. In particular, a number of the units are to be increased in size in order to meet current demands and two of the new units are to be formed over a public car park that was previously accessed from Risk Street. The construction on this car park will result in the loss of 65 parking spaces, however planning permission has previously been granted for the formation of a new car park in the vicinity that will provide 55 parking spaces.
- 1.3**      As part of the current proposal, external changes would be made to each building and there would be direct pedestrian access to every ground floor unit. Furthermore the external changes will be significant on the main elevations facing onto the centre and High Street. This will involve a new circular feature tower at the north end of the centre, facing onto the area that will be occupied by the new public square. There will also be a mixture of materials used both natural and man-made materials which will emphasise the external alterations such as pop out windows, overhangs, a feature tower and new glass panels which will break up the shopfront elevations. Existing rear service access will remain in place.

## **2. Consultations**

West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Services have raised no objections to this proposal provided the developer implements the planning permission for 55 parking spaces and provides a contribution of £90,000 to town centre car parking provision and alterations to the service yard.

West of Scotland Archaeological Services have not yet responded at the time of writing this report.

## **3. Representations**

**3.1** Three letters of objection have been received in relation to this application and the following grounds of objection have been raised:

- (a) The proposal will result in the loss of permanent parking within the town centre and will lead to parking problems and exacerbate the current situation.

## **4. Assessment Against The Development Plan**

Dumbarton District, District Wide Local Plan (1999)

- 4.1** The application site is covered by the Dumbarton District, District Wide Local Plan (1999) and is identified as part of the existing prime retail frontage in the town centre area. Policy R1A and R2A presumes in favour of retail uses within this area. The proposed development will result in the units being used for Class 1 (Retail) shops. Consequently the proposal to redevelop the Artizan Centre complies fully with the adopted Local Plan.
- 4.2** The proposed reuse of the upper floors within the buildings to provide further business space would be supported by Policy R2B as it seeks to encourage the use of vacant upper floors including for non retail related purposes within the town centre area.

## **5. Assessment Against Material Considerations**

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan Finalised Draft

- 5.1** In the Finalised Draft of the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan, the site is covered by Policy RET 1 and RET 5 which seek to protect the town centre retail core in Dumbarton and directs all significant retail proposals to the Town Centre. Policy RET. 1 states that significant retail developments within the town centre should be assessed against specified criteria such as the effect on the vitality and viability of the existing centre, the availability of suitable alternative site and the impact of the development on the surrounding environment and infrastructure implications. Policy RET 5 further seeks to protect and enhance retail and commercial uses within the town centre of the area. It is considered that the town centre will be sustained and improved by directing significant retail proposals to within this area. It is generally

considered that the redevelopment of the Artizan Centre would be acceptable under the terms of Policy RET1 and RET 5, since it would reinforce and revitalise the town centre by introducing vitality and activity within the retail core.

### Consultations

- 5.2** The consultees have not raised any adverse comments regarding the proposed development. Roads Services are content that the development can be accommodated without compromising parking requirements in Dumbarton town centre provided compensatory arrangements are met.

### SPP8 Town Centre and Retailing

- 5.3** Government guidance in the form of SPP8 encourages a mix of uses and activities in town centres by encouraging retail and commercial uses such as leisure, entertainment and recreational uses such as food and drink establishments to be located in town centre locations. Such uses will add to the vitality and viability of the centre. It recognises that shopping patterns are changing and this has led to the role of the town centre changing.
- 5.4** SPP8 advocates the application of the sequential approach requiring all significant retail development being directed to the town centre firstly before considering other locations. It further indicates where development for town centre uses is proposed within a town centre, assessment of its impact on the viability of similar uses in that centre will not be necessary.
- 5.5** SPP8 goes on to further advise that town centres should welcome initiatives that promote distinct, competitive places that encourage regeneration and create town centres that are attractive to investors and suited to the generation of new employment opportunities. It also aims to promote development in area that are easily accessed and can improve the physical quality and sustainability of town centre environments. Therefore the proposed development fully complies with recent government guidance SPP8.

### Representations

- 5.6** The concerns of the objectors are not considered sufficiently significant to justify a recommendation of refusal. The previous retail premises had no allocated car parking spaces however they did access public car parking in the town centre. The current proposal will also have access to these car parking spaces. Furthermore, Roads Services are content that the proposal can be accommodated without compromising parking requirements in Dumbarton town centre provided the planning permission for 55 car parking spaces is implemented and a monetary contribution is made to improving town centre car parking.

## Design

- 5.7** The application site sits at the heart of Dumbarton town centre and was refurbished within the past three years. Whilst this refurbishment resulted in some general improvements, the units have been difficult to let due to the restricted size. The current proposal aims to provide a variety of retail spaces with larger units being located to the north of the site along with a mixture of uses including retail, leisure and office opportunities. There is also an aim to break up the monotony through the introduction of a varied street frontage line. This will in turn add to the scale and complexity of the street frontage and benefit from the use of a varied palette of materials. The reintroduction of the upper floors will also add vibrancy to the area and a new public space can act as a node around which new activities can occur whilst appropriate landscaping can add to the interest and character of external spaces.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1** Although it is recognised that Dumbarton town centre has suffered a decline in its role as a comparison retail destination in recent years with a number of vacant units within the town centre, it is considered that this proposal will result in the regeneration of the Artizan Centre. It is anticipated that this in turn will benefit the existing uses within the vicinity and breathe new life into the town centre. Therefore it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the Artizan Centre and associated works is acceptable.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1** **Minded to grant** full planning permission subject to a legal agreement being concluded to ensure the provision of 55 car parking spaces off Church Court along with a financial contribution of £90,000 to town centre car parking provision and the conditions set out in Section 8.

## **8. Conditions**

1. The development hereby permitted shall commence within a period of 5 years from the date of this permission.
2. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external materials shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site and shall be implemented as approved.
3. The new build units and extended units that form part of this consent are only permitted to be used for uses that fall within Class 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997.
4. 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. Good quality materials shall be used and shall

demonstrate accordance with the Public Realm Design Guidelines for Dumbarton.

5. Prior to commencement of works, full details of the realignment of the service yard access onto Risk Street, including design, forward sight stopping distance, sightline splays, shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority and must be in accordance with West Dunbartonshire Council Guidelines. The agreed works shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the new build and extended retail units.
6. Notwithstanding the submitted plans revised plans shall be submitted in relation to the north and west external elevations of the development facing onto Risk Street for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site. These details shall allow for greater articulation on these elevations with the introduction of windows and a wider use of materials and design features and shall be implemented as approved.
7. Public access shall be maintained through College Way between 6am and 12pm at all times during construction work and thereafter maintained permanently.
8. The development shall be landscaped in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority before development commences on site. The scheme shall indicate the siting, numbers, species and heights (at the time of planting) of all trees, shrubs and hedges to be planted and the extent of any earthmounding, and ensure that:
  - (a) completion of the scheme during the planting season immediately following the completion of the development, or such other dates as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
  - (b) maintenance of the landscaped areas for a period of five years or until established, whichever is the longer. Any trees or shrubs removed, or which in the opinion of the Planning Authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within three years of planting, shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Thereafter the agreed landscaping scheme shall be implemented as approved.

9. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved details of the type and position of all plant, machinery and air conditioning units on or within the vicinity of the buildings shall be submitted for the further written approval of the

Planning Authority. Thereafter the plant, machinery and air conditioning units shall be installed/sited

in the agreed positions and shall not be relocated without the prior approval of the Planning Authority.

10. 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. The drainage system shall incorporate the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within its design and thereafter implemented as approved.
11. No development shall take place within the development site as outlined in red on the approved plan until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted and approved by the Planning Authority in conjunction with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in conjunction with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

**Irving Hodgson**

**Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services  
(Housing and Regeneration Services)**

**Date: 11 June 2007**

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**Appendices** None

**Background Papers:**

1. Planning application form and plans;
2. Consultation responses;
3. Letters of representation.

**Wards Affected:** Ward 3 (Dumbarton)