

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration

Planning Committee: 27 August 2014

DC14/145 **Erection of Memorial at Titan View, Glasgow Road,
Clydebank by Clydebank Asbestos Group**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This application is considered to raise issues of local significance, and under the terms of the approved Scheme of Delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1** The application relates to an area of public open space at Titan View, on the north side of Glasgow Road in Clydebank. This area previously contained a section of road forming part of the former one-way loop linking Alexander Street and Hume Street, but as part of a road remodelling scheme carried out several years ago it has become a pedestrianised public space containing high quality hard surfacing with ornamental tree planting, landscaping and seating. The site is bordered to the south by Glasgow Road, with the vacant Queens Quay development site beyond. Located to the east are modern 4-storey flats on the corner of Hume Street and Glasgow Road, while to the north are the side elevations of the Clydebank Co-operative undertakers' building on Hume Street, and of tenement flats with ground floor shops/offices on Alexander Street. To the west of the site is a turning head at the south end of Alexander Street with the car park for Chandler's public house beyond.
- 3.2** The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a memorial within the Titan View open space. The memorial would commemorate all of the victims of asbestos around the world, and is proposed by the Clydebank Asbestos Group which has been fundraising for the project for a number of years.
- 3.3** The memorial would consist of five upright marble blocks each measuring 2.2 metres square and 0.5 metres thick. The blocks would be arranged as a line of standing stones in the centre of the open space parallel to Glasgow Road, but with each block angled at 45° to the street. The two outer marble blocks would be engraved with the title "International Asbestos Memorial" on their outer faces, and with the words "Truth" and "Justice" on their inner faces. The three centre blocks would contain the names of local and international victims

of asbestos who have contributed (or in whose name family have contributed) towards the memorial. A descriptive plaque explaining the memorial would also be installed on the ground at the eastern end of the row of blocks. Three small trees which form part of the public realm works would require to be removed, along with some repositioning of the existing metal chairs and litter bins in order to accommodate the memorial. No illumination of the memorial is proposed.

- 3.4** The applicant has provided a statement explaining the design principles underlying the memorial, which has been designed by local sculptor Jephson Robb. The stone slabs are designed to be of human scale, appearing strong and upright but with no specific gender, to symbolise the fact that asbestos has curtailed the lives of many otherwise healthy men and women. They would be carved from Carrara marble on the basis that the white colour symbolises peace and hope, whilst also providing a reference to white asbestos (the most widely used form of asbestos). The font used would be modern in order to avoid appearing like gravestones, as the blocks are intended as a modern take on the Celtic Standish stones which celebrated life and the future. When viewed from the ends the memorial would appear as a single block, but as the viewer moves around it the full scale of the memorial is revealed, symbolising the scale of the asbestos problem being much greater than first perceived. As a person walks around the memorial the angled blocks “open” and “close” relative to where the viewer is standing, symbolising the actions of the human lungs, and each of the four spaces between the five stones is intended to represent both the need for clean fresh air and also to mark a decade (as asbestos victims often do not succumb to their illness until many years after having been exposed to asbestos)
- 3.5** From a practical perspective, the applicant explains that the memorial has been designed to require minimal maintenance, due to the use of robust materials and the avoidance of any electrical or mechanical parts, and the open nature of the memorial would ensure that there were no hiding places behind it which might encourage vandalism or anti-social behaviour. The proposal would involve the removal of several small trees, but existing street furniture which needed to be moved could be repositioned elsewhere within the public space.
- 3.6** The design of the memorial has been subject to some amendment during the course of the application, and it should be noted that a stylised bronze figure which was originally part of the application no longer forms part of the proposal.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads and Greenspace Services each have no objection to the proposal.
- 4.2** West Dunbartonshire Council Environmental Health Service has no objection subject to a condition relating to construction operating times.

- 4.3 West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Service has no objection subject to agreement being reached with the applicant regarding final details of the maintenance regime and construction arrangements for the memorial.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 6.1 The application site is located within the defined Clydebank Town Centre. The Local Plan seeks to improve the vitality and viability of town centres as retail and commercial destinations, and also to enhance the appearance and character of town centres in order to make them more attractive places to visit, live and work. Town centres are traditionally suitable locations for monuments, memorials and sculptures, and the provision of such features adds interest to the town centre and would thus be in accordance with the strategy.
- 6.2 Policy GD1 seeks to have development which is of a high quality and which respects the character and amenity of the area in which it is located. The design is considered in Section 7 below and it is concluded that the proposal would comply with Policy GD1 and the town centre policies of the adopted local plan.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan)

- 7.1 The application site is within Clydebank Town Centre and is directly opposite Queens Quay, both of which are identified as “Changing Places” in the emerging LDP. The strategy for Clydebank Town Centre as it relates to this application is similar to that of the current Local Plan. For Queens Quay, the plan seeks to encourage a predominantly residential development incorporating mixed business, commercial, public service, leisure and retail uses, amongst others. A high standard of urban design will be required. The proposal would occupy part of an area of open space directly opposite the Queens Quay site and the provision of a memorial within this space would enhance the setting of Queens Quay, and would thus be in accordance with the LDP strategy.
- 7.2 Policy DS1 is of consideration and this states that all development will be expected to contribute towards creating successful places by being, distinctive, adaptable, resource efficient, safe and pleasant, welcoming and accessible. It is considered that the proposal would comply with this policy.
- ### Principle of Memorial
- 7.3 Clydebank is considered to be a suitable location for an international asbestos memorial because the local community has suffered a particularly high rate of asbestos-related illness, primarily as a legacy of former local industries such

as shipbuilding which used asbestos extensively. There was also an asbestos cement factory at Dalmuir which was itself a significant employer, and in addition to people directly employed in these industries many people in the wider community were exposed to asbestos as a result of contact with family and friends whose work clothes were contaminated with asbestos fibres. Asbestos is a worldwide problem, but there are few public monuments to mark it, and it is considered appropriate that such a memorial should be erected within Clydebank. The Titan Crane is a very prominent monument to the town's proud industrial past, and the proposed asbestos memorial would complement it by serving as a reminder of the high human cost of some of that industry.

Siting at Titan View

7.4 Historically, Titan View contained a row of tenements which were demolished as part of the widening of Glasgow Road. This exposed the side elevations of adjacent buildings which are well set back from Glasgow Road, and as a result the built form in this location appears somewhat disjointed. When road remodelling provided an opportunity to redevelop the site it was recognised that the ideal architectural solution would have been a new building to restore the "missing tooth" in the Glasgow Road streetscape. However, for practical and technical reasons it was not feasible to do this, and instead the site was suitably landscaped to create an attractive, south-facing public space directly opposite the Queens Quay development site. Titan View is therefore something of a compromise as a public space – it provides an attractively landscaped area which improves the appearance of the important Glasgow Road corridor, but until such time as the Queens Quay site is developed its outlook is onto an area of undeveloped land and there is currently only a limited amount of pedestrian traffic through the space.

7.5 The application therefore provides an opportunity to enhance Titan View. A memorial within this space would serve not only as a monument but also as a piece of public sculpture and may encourage greater use of the public space if people are coming to visit the memorial and public sculpture. The memorial would occupy the centre of Titan View, giving the space more of a function, and assisting in the longer-term goal of making Titan View into the northern end of the future Queens Quay open space extending north from the River Clyde / fitting-out basin. Once Queens Quay is developed, Titan View will be an important crossing point of Glasgow Road and the footfall through the public space will increase substantially, making it a suitably public place for an important memorial.

Design and Amenity

7.6 The proposed memorial is of a simple and understated design, but it is considered to be visually attractive and interesting. Other than the loss of three ornamental trees, the high quality landscaping and materials used in the construction of Titan View would be retained. Precise details of the arrangements for construction of the memorial and its ongoing maintenance require to be agreed between the applicant and the Council's Estates Service, however the design of the memorial is such that it should not give rise to significant ongoing maintenance costs beyond normal cleaning.

7.7 Whilst there are some residential flats which overlook the ends of Titan View, the proposal would not impact upon nearby residential properties as the buildings closest to the memorial site are blank side elevations of commercial property, and the nature of the proposal is such that it is not likely to cause any impact upon residential amenity. The memorial would generate visits by people who wish to commemorate a loved one, and very occasional larger gatherings to mark specific events, but such activities would not impact on nearby homes. The construction of the memorial may however result in some short term disruption, and the Environmental Health Service has recommended a condition to minimise the risk of nuisance during this period.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The provision of a memorial to the victims of asbestos is considered to be appropriate within Clydebank, and the design and location proposed are also suitable. The formation of a memorial within Titan View would also contribute to the character of what is currently an underused area of open space within the Town Centre, and the site is one which will take on increased importance in future years once the neighbouring Queens Quay area is redeveloped. The proposal is consistent with all relevant policies and is acceptable.

9. CONDITIONS

1. **No development shall take place on site until such time as the intended arrangements for the relocation of existing tree planting and long term management and maintenance of the memorial have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Such arrangements, including any contracts or legal agreements, shall also be put in place before the development commences on site.**
2. **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.**

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Date: 6 August 2014

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Appendix: None

Background Papers:

1. Application documents and plans
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010
3. West Dunbartonshire LDP - Proposed Plan
4. Consultation responses

Wards affected: Ward 6 (Clydebank Waterfront)