

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration

Planning Committee: 8 December 2021

DC21/205/FUL: **Installation of various artworks including two metal bench seats, four barrel seats, three metal geese sculptures, eight cast iron paving reliefs, eight acrylic resin wall plaques, and a view point sculpture at Dumbarton Walkway, Castle Street, Dumbarton by Dunbritton Housing Association**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** The application raises 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 proposes the installation of various artworks to be placed throughout a new residential development within Dumbarton town centre and along Dumbarton Waterfront. The development is nearing completion. Many of the properties are already occupied, consisting of a mix of terraced house and flats which are owned and managed by Dunbritton Housing Association.
- 3.2** The artworks include the following:
- A viewpoint sculpture to be positioned adjacent to the new riverside walkway. The sculpture will consist of an oval ring of silver/grey Jesmonite (an acrylic resin cementitious compound) mounted on a cast concrete plinth with stainless steel resin anchors. It will bear the Dumbarton coat of arms and will measure approximately 3.25 metres high, 4.25 metres wide and 1 metre deep. The sculpture will frame the view of Dumbarton Rock and Dumbarton Castle.

- Two metal bench seats incorporating a cast iron elephant design on the legs will be positioned on an area of landscaping adjacent to the riverside walkway. Each bench will measure approximately 1.8 metres long, 0.8 metres high and 0.3 metres deep.
- Four recycled whisky barrel seats and three geese sculptures made from galvanised/painted steel wire, each measuring approximately 0.9 metre high and 0.7 metre wide. The barrel seats and geese sculptures will be grouped together and positioned on a raised area of landscaping adjacent to steps leading down to the riverside walkway.
- Eight cast iron carved roundels, diameter 450mm, set within a 720mm by 720mm white concrete paving slab will be placed throughout the development adjacent to entrances to the flatted blocks. Each roundel will have a relief of an image associated with Dumbarton's industrial past including shipbuilding, distilling and glassworks
- Eight acrylic resin wall plaques, diameter 250mm, with building number, street name and relief image to match the corresponding cast iron roundel at entrances to the flatted blocks.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 None.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 One objection has been received in response to the application. The objector supports most of the planned artwork but considers the proposed view point sculpture to be out of place with its surroundings and is concerned that it will become a target for graffiti.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Adopted Local Plan 2010

6.1 Policy GD1 seeks to ensure that all new development is of a high quality of design and respects the character and amenity of the area. In terms of residential amenity Policy H5 is most relevant and seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the residential character and amenity of existing residential areas at all times.

- 6.2** The proposal complies with the policies of the adopted local plan and is assessed fully in Section 7 below.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP1) Proposed Plan
- 7.1** On 27 April 2016, the Planning Committee took a final decision not to accept the Local Development Plan Examination Report recommended modification in respect of including the Duntiglennan Fields site in Clydebank as a housing development opportunity, and therefore, as a result of the Scottish Ministers' Direction, the Local Development Plan has remained unadopted but continues to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.2** Policy DS1 expects all new development to contribute towards creating successful places by having regard to the relevant criteria of the six qualities of a successful place, including making new developments distinctive, welcoming, and safe and pleasant. Policy BC4 seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the residential character and amenity of existing residential areas.

The proposed development is assessed against the LDP1 Proposed Plan in Section 7 below.

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP2) Proposed Plan
- 7.3** The modified Plan and associated documents was approved by the Council on 19 August 2020. The Council has advised the Scottish Ministers of its intention to adopt the Plan. On 18th December 2020, the Scottish Ministers issued a Direction in relation to the housing land chapter of the Plan. None of the policies considered in the determination of these applications is affected by the Direction. Therefore, Local Development Plan 2 is the Council's most up to date policy position and is afforded significant weight in the assessment and determination of planning applications.
- 7.4** Policy CP1 seeks to ensure that new developments take a design led approach to creating sustainable places which put the needs of people first and demonstrate the six qualities of successful places. New developments should contribute towards the distinctive identity of West Dunbartonshire. Furthermore, Policy H4 seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the residential character and amenity of existing residential areas which reflects the requirements of Policy H5 of the Adopted Plan and Policy BC4 of the Proposed Plan.

Planning History

- 7.5** In early 2021, Dunbritton Housing Association submitted an application for the installation of the view point sculpture only. The application received 11 representations, most of which objected to the proposed sculpture because they did not like the design and considered it to be out of character with its surroundings. The application was subsequently withdrawn and the applicant was advised to undertake a consultation exercise to provide information to the local community on the background to the proposal, including the origin of the design concepts. Prior to the submission of the current application, Dunbritton Housing Association actively engaged with the local community through online sessions where the public could meet the artist and an open day was held at Dumbarton harbour in May this year. The event was well attended by residents and positive feedback was received. This is evidenced by the fact that only one objection has been received in relation to the current application

Principle of development

- 7.6** The proposal involves the installation of various structures, some of which are purely decorative while others are both functional and decorative, such as the barrel seats and benches. It is common for street furniture such as seating to be provided within public areas, and the provision of bespoke artwork adds a distinctive local character to the new development. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Design and Visual Impact

- 7.7** Each piece of artwork has been designed to incorporate local history. The design of the view point sculpture is based on the shape of a torc, which was a symbol of power and wealth during the time of the early Britons, who first settled Dumbarton and established it as the ancient capital of Strathclyde. The site of the proposed sculpture is a viewing area that has been formed as part of the wider development of Dumbarton Waterfront, which includes the adjacent walkway and residential development that is currently nearing completion. The viewing area and walkway have been formed to allow the public access to the riverside so that they can enjoy views across the river towards Dumbarton Rock and its castle. The sculpture will be positioned so that it frames Dumbarton Rock and draws attention to this important landmark in the town's history. The design and colour of the sculpture is relatively simple so as not to draw attention away from Dumbarton Rock, while the inclusion of the Dumbarton coat of arms within its design is a unique feature that ties the sculpture to the local area. The Dumbarton coat of arms dates back to the 17th century and incorporates an elephant with a tower on its back, which is said to

represent the Rock and its Castle. The sculpture will be constructed from Jesmonite, which is a versatile material that is used widely in art works and can replicate the appearance of different materials such as stone and metals. It is lightweight and hard-wearing, which is an important property as the sculpture will be located in an exposed position adjacent to the river.

- 7.8** The objector has raised concerns that the view point sculpture will not fit with its surroundings and will become a target for graffiti. As has already been stated, the sculpture incorporates aspects of local history within its design and it is considered that it will be a positive addition to the local urban landscape. While it is possible that the sculpture could become a target for graffiti, it will be constructed from a durable material that can be sealed with an anti-graffiti coating if necessary, therefore this potential issue can be resolved if it occurs.
- 7.9** The barrel seats and geese sculptures represent the distilling industry in Dumbarton, while the benches incorporate an elephant design which is found in the Dumbarton coat of arms. The paving reliefs and matching wall plaques will each depict an industry that has close connections to Dumbarton: Dennystoun Forge, Whisky distilling, Glassworks, Levenbank Foundry, Rope and Sailmaking, Sawmills, Shipbuilding and Aviation. The sculptures will help to create a unique sense of place, providing a visual reminder of the area's industrial past, which is in-keeping with the aims of policy DS1 of the proposed LDP1 and policy CP1 of the proposed LDP2.
- 7.10** It is considered that the artworks will not affect the residential amenity of the development. The view point sculpture will be sufficiently distanced from the adjacent flats, which are also elevated above the proposed site, and therefore it is considered that they will not be affected by the sculpture, and while it may attract people to the site, the walkway and viewing area has already been designed with this in mind. The cast iron paving reliefs will be laid adjacent to footpaths at the entrance to the flatted blocks and will not present a trip-hazard for pedestrians due to their location.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The proposed artworks will add to the distinctive local character of the development. The view point sculpture will draw attention to Dumbarton Rock and its castle, an important local landmark, while the other structures will help to create a unique sense of place that draws on the history of the local area and will attract people to the town centre and use of the

walkway. The artworks will help to create an inviting and attractive place to live and visit and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Prior to the commencement of the development, details of any hard surfaces to be laid under or around the benches and barrel seating shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and thereafter implemented as approved.

Peter Hessett

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Date: 8th December 2021

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Appendix: None

Background Papers:

1. Application forms and plans;
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010;
3. West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan Proposed Plan;
4. West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2 Proposed Plan.
5. Representation

Wards affected: Ward 3 - Dumbarton