

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Strategic Lead – Regulatory****Planning Committee****28 August 2019**

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**Subject: Proposed Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area****1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To seek approval of the final boundaries for the proposed Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area, and authority to submit the Conservation Area to Scottish Ministers for designation.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) approves the following revisions to the proposed Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area boundaries, as shown in Appendix 1:
    - Removal of the majority of the Artizan Centre except for the units facing onto the High Street and removal of the Lennox Evangelical Church on Risk Street Map Reference(A);
    - Removal of properties on the High Street north of the Bridge Street junction(B);
    - Inclusion of the full extent of Dumbarton Central Station, together with embankment walls and underpasses, from the Bankend Road bridge in the west to the former goods yard east of Church Street (C );
    - Inclusion of a triangle of land on Meadowbank Street (D);
    - Regularising the boundary in the south east to follow existing boundaries and features on the ground, including the 16 Church Street car park boundary walls and retained historic rails inset on Castle Street/Glasgow Road (E);
    - Removal of the modern pumping station on Riverside Lane and parts of the new residential development site on Castle Street (F).
  - b) approves the revised boundary shown in Appendix 2 to be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for designation as a Conservation Area for Dumbarton Town Centre.
  - c) approves the commissioning and preparation of a full Conservation Area Appraisal for the new conservation area.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.
- 3.2** There are currently five conservation areas in West Dunbartonshire: High Dalmuir Conservation Area (Clydebank) was designated in 1980, Knoxland Square

(Dumbarton) and Kirktonhill (Dumbarton) in 1984, and the Lusset Road and Mount Pleasant Drive Conservation Areas (Old Kilpatrick) in 1993.

- 3.3** Dumbarton Town Centre is of medieval origins and the High Street, in particular, retains much of its medieval street pattern. There are 23 listed buildings (6 'A' listed), and many other unlisted buildings of significant interest and quality, however many have suffered from insensitive changes, loss of original fabric and a general lack of maintenance and investment due to high vacancy levels. Designating a Conservation Area would form the first part of restoring and regenerating the heart of Dumbarton, helping to revitalise the High Street and reconnect it to the riverside.
- 3.4** A report was commissioned from accredited Heritage Consultants in February 2018, to appraise the potential for a conservation area in the town centre based primarily on the heritage quality of the area and the opportunities to release funding for improvement work. The report made recommendations on a potential boundary for the conservation area.
- 3.5** The Place and Design Panel in June 2018 considered the Heritage Consultants' report and strongly endorsed the principle of designating a conservation area, while recommending several changes to the proposed boundary. These changes were included in the final version of the report by the Heritage Consultants.
- 3.6** The Planning Committee of September 2018 approved a proposed Conservation Area for Dumbarton Town Centre for public consultation, based on the boundaries proposed in the Heritage Consultants' final report. Public consultation was conducted for 6 weeks, between 28th January and 11th March 2019, and included a drop-in exhibition at 16 Church Street, Dumbarton which approximately 30 people attended. A letter and leaflet was also forwarded to all residents, businesses and Community Councils within the proposed conservation area boundary .

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** A total of 24 written responses were received to the consultation. These are summarised in Appendix 3, together with the Council's response to each. All of the responses were in favour of designating a conservation area for the town centre, but 15 responses suggested changes to the proposed boundary.

##### Artizan Centre

- 4.2** A mix of responses were received of both retaining the Artizan Centre within the Conservation Area or removing it. Those wanting it retained referred to the potential to control future development of the Centre and retaining the historic link from the High Street to the Station. Historic Environment Scotland consider that while the Artizan Centre is broadly respectful of the historic townscape in terms of its height, its overall appearance detracts from the historic character of the High Street. They agree that including the High Street facing buildings of the Artizan Centre within the Conservation Area boundary is logical, but see little benefit in including the rest of the centre. Given their comments it is considered that inclusion of the rear of the Artizan Centre would not be beneficial to the conservation area and it is not necessary to control future changes for the centre or to protect the route of the former College Way, which can be managed through other planning mechanisms . It is agreed that the High Street frontage of the Centre should be retained in the proposed Conservation Area.

##### Dumbarton Central Station

- 4.3** Responses received advocated extensions to the conservation area to include the full

extent of the listed station, platforms, underpasses, goods yard ramp and supporting embankment walls on Station Road and Bankend Street. The comments from Dumbarton Stations Improvement Trust (DSIT) are particularly noted in this regard, as they tie in with the recently published Station Conservation Management Plan and the Trust's plans to fully restore the station, and this is to be supported. It is agreed that there is merit including the full extent of the station and its embankment walls, which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

#### Town centre area around A814

- 4.4** Several responses were in favour of including the area between the High Street and Station, which was redeveloped post-war, in order to better control the future development of the area and protect potential archaeological remains. This is not supported as it is no longer in keeping with the character of the remaining historic town centre, and has no buildings of particular historic/architectural interest. Control of future development can be controlled by other planning mechanisms.

#### Other Changes

- 4.5** Historic Environment Scotland recommended several further small changes to the boundary to focus the conservation area on the core areas of historic interest. These included removal of buildings on the High Street north of Bridge Street, the pumping station on Riverside Lane, and the Lennox Evangelic Church on Risk Street, as these are mostly modern and of little historic interest. They also suggest aligning the boundary to the south east with logical property boundaries and existing features on the ground. These changes are supported as logical amendments. A resident also suggested including a triangle of land at Meadowbank Street, as it relates closely to the adjacent historic tenements and this is now included.
- 4.6** Several further suggestions were made which are not supported, as they would include areas which would not meet the criteria or purpose of the conservation area, or would not be beneficial to the conservation area. These include the River Basin and Harbour, Denny Tank building, River Leven and Old Dumbarton Bridge. The Basin, Harbour and Denny Tank building would require including intervening non-historic areas, while Dumbarton Bridge and the Denny Tank building already receive protection through their listed status. The River itself is not a built element of the town centre and would not be suitable for inclusion.

#### Next steps

- 4.7** If agreed by Committee, the final boundaries shown in Appendix 2 will be submitted to Scottish Ministers for designation as a new Conservation Area. Following this a full Conservation Area Appraisal would be commissioned which will identify key features, opportunities and challenges in the area, to guide future management, development and improvement projects.

### **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues associated with this report as the work will be carried out within current workload of the Forward Planning team.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications associated directly with designating a conservation area, however the budget for commissioning the full Conservation Area Appraisal, which is anticipated to be £10,000 will be taken from existing budgets.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** It was not considered necessary to carry out a risk assessment on the matters covered by this report.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** A screening has been undertaken and no equalities issues have been identified.

## **9. Environmental Sustainability**

- 9.1** At this stage a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for consultation purposes.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1** The Council has undertaken the required public consultation on the proposed Conservation Area, as detailed in Section 3 of the report.

## **11. Strategic Assessment**

- 11.1** The proposed Conservation Area is considered to contribute to all of the Council's strategic priorities.

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Map of recommended revisions to the proposed conservation area boundary Appendix 2 – Map of final proposed conservation area boundary Appendix 3 – Summary of responses to the consultation on the proposed conservation area.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area Proposal Report Austin Smith Lord July 2018  Report of West Dunbartonshire Place and Design Panel Meeting, 20 June 2018  Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Ward 2 – Leven Ward 3 – Dumbarton