

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Change of use from a credit union / office to a public library and museum, external alterations, demolition of the rear existing extension and construction of a three storey rear extension and construction of a standalone single storey children's library at the end of Quay Pend Glencairn House Dumbarton

Elected Members Pre-Application Briefing Meeting 28th June 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is to advise Members of pre-application consultation taking place regarding the redevelopment of Glencairn House Dumbarton.

This briefing is also to give members an opportunity to highlight any issues which they consider any future planning application or listed building application ought to address. The merits of the proposals are not being considered, and no decisions will be made at this stage. The agreed procedures and protocol for Elected Member involvement at the pre-application stage are attached as appendices.

2. Background

Glencairn House is the oldest building in Dumbarton and was once the townhouse of the Earls of Glencairn. The property is a category "B" listed building and was built in 1623. Glencairn House is now re-imagined as a key community asset for the town. Glencairn House, the adjacent Artizan Centre and 'Connecting Dumbarton' form the Council's Levelling Up Project.

Regular pre-application meetings between the developer and the Planning Service have taken place.

3. Site description

Glencairn House sits in the heart of Dumbarton Town Centre. The site is bounded to the north by High Street and is surrounded by shops, cafes, takeaways, public houses and other commercial properties. To the south is Riverside Lane beyond which there is an area of car parking, the riverside walkway leading to Dumbarton Rock and Castle and the River Leven. Glencairn House is a 3 storey with dormerheads 4-bay town house. Constructed of coursed squared rubble stone to the front and rear elevations. The site includes the rear curtilage which includes a later extension which is to be demolished as part of the proposals. The rear of the building is south facing providing views to the River Leven, Levensgrove Park and Dumbarton Rock and Castle.

Quay Pend – a pedestrian lane adjacent to Glencairn House gives access from Riverside Lane to the town centre. To the east of the site a small grassed area is included within the proposals. This area includes an electrical substation, a grassed open space and a mature tree.

4. Development Details

The proposals involve the refurbishment and extension of the existing building to house a new combined public lending library and museum. In addition, a standalone children's library pavilion will sit at the end of Quay Pend opening out onto a library garden centred on a storytelling tree. The property was last occupied by the Dumbarton Credit Union but has been vacant for a number of years.

The existing rear extension will be demolished and replaced with a new three storey extension. The architecture of the new extension takes inspiration from the town of Dumbarton and its illustrious history of industry, manufacturing and innovation. In the eighteenth century the townscape was dominated on one side by the tall conical forms of the glasswork chimneys, and on the other side by the distinctive volcanic forms of Dumbarton Rock. Both of these structures, manmade and natural, symbolise important aspects of Dumbarton's story.

The glassworks chimneys no longer exist, but the Rock and the legacy of the glassworks do. Similarly the Skellat Bell, one of the most important objects in the Council's museum collections, is a beautiful tactile faceted form. The proposals for the new extension to Glencairn House and the associated children's library pavilion take inspiration from these forms, with the roofs of both new buildings displaying a similarly faceted conical construction. From Riverside Lane these two "modern chimneys" will be seen in the context of the Rock.

Visual and physical connections to Dumbarton Rock underpin the planning of the proposed extension and children's library pavilion with the form of both buildings to open up towards the Rock, visually linking all three structures together. The proposed cladding material is colourful, bold and contemporary but is also rooted in the story of Dumbarton glassworks and inspired by glass objects from the Council's museum collection, which will be on display in Glencairn House. Bespoke ceramic tiles are proposed to form this cladding, finished with the unique colour and texture developed by working with an artist to create an effect that is both visually striking as well as in keeping with the town of Dumbarton. A distinct contemporary approach has been taken, looking to Dumbarton's future, while celebrating its innovative industrial and craft heritage.

The existing single glazed shop windows on the High Street elevation of Glencairn House will be replaced with new double glazed modern shop windows. At the ground floor the first area is a tall space with library shelving and comfortable seating in the shop windows. Large bespoke museum display cases will be integrated into openings creating a dramatic statement as people enter the building. The library desk and toilet area are located in the extension to the rear. A new glazed entrance would open out onto Quay Pend to encourage movement down the pend and into the children's library pavilion, or onto the river walkway beyond. Stairs and a lift are proposed to the first floor which incorporates the second museum display and a reading room which has large window looking out to the River Leven and Levensgrove Park. The second and third floors may be used for reading rooms, meeting rooms as well as digital access points, with space for printer, etc. and staff facilities. Lift access is available to all floors of the building.

5. Planning Policies

In the Adopted Local Plan Policy RET 5 - Town Centre Enhancement seeks to improve the environment of the town centres in partnership with other agencies. Applications for non-

retail uses particularly where they involve the re-use of vacant upper floors, will be favourably considered where they contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and do not conflict with other Local Plan policies.

Policy BE2 Listed Buildings also applies, which aims to ensure that in relation to any works affecting a listed building or its setting, its appearance, character and setting is not adversely affected. Proposals for alterations or extensions that detract from the character of the listed building will not normally be supported.

The Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area post-dates the Local Plan so there are no references in the Adopted Plan.

In Local Development Plan 2 Proposed Plan the site is within the core town centre area and Policy SC2: Core Town Centre Areas will support a range of different uses where they help to improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre, do not negatively affect the vitality and viability of the Town Centre or the surrounding area, and Class 1 shops remain the predominant ground floor use within the core Town Centre; provide added value in service provision, or meet a qualitative deficiency in service provision; have substantial day to day contact with the public; keep a full and attractive window display or appropriate 'active frontage' to the street and do not result in an undesirable concentration of uses, or 'dead frontages'.

It identifies the following uses as appropriate within the Core Town Centre Area:
Shops; Financial, professional and other services; Food and drink; Hotels and hostels; Leisure; and Public Houses.

Dumbarton Policy 1: High Street and Retail Development supports a more diverse and vibrant Town Centre and will encourage a range of uses within the Core Town Centre area where they accord with Policy SC2. Policies BE2 and BE3, which aim to protect Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas respectively, also apply.

6. Main Issues

The redevelopment of the site for a library, museum and community spaces is supported in principle by the framework of planning policy. The main issues requiring to be addressed as part of the planning and listed building applications include the following:

Placemaking –. The design should be of very high quality so that it provides a landmark building in the town centre and along the riverside to provide a catalyst for other development in the town centre and along the river front and supports long term town centre regeneration.

Listed Building – The design, scale and materials of the new development should be in keeping with the character of the listed building and be of a quality that it adds to the listed status and character of the building. The proposed alterations should not detract from the listed building and it should strengthen the Conservation Area status. Dumbarton has a rich history and this should be reflected in the design and proposed uses of the building.

Relationship with River and Dumbarton Rock and Castle - Consideration needs to be given to ensure that the new development reconnects to the River Leven and the Dumbarton Rock and Castle and the relationship with these main anchors are maximised. Panoramic views onto the River Leven and Levenshoe Park should be maximised.

Sustainability – The development should use modern sustainability construction methods in its design and materials as well as in how it is used by customers and staff.

Natural environment – Consideration should be given to adding further biodiversity and natural elements. Retention of a tree and providing quality open space for wider health and wellbeing benefits is to be encouraged. Integration with the River Leven, Levensgrove Park and Dumbarton Rock and Castle.

Accessibility and parking – The site is highly accessible with good connections to the surrounding area including footpath network and nearby bus stops and the train station. The new development should encourage use of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. There is adjacent car parking in the vicinity. The building should be fully accessible to the wider public.

Community and Economic Benefits -The wider community and economic benefits it brings to the local area in terms of creating jobs for local people and providing health and wellbeing facilities for use by local people needs considered. Local people will benefit from these facilities but will attract visitors and tourists to the Town Centre and wider area.

Technical Matters – The development should ensure that any issues regarding grounds works, flooding and sustainable drainage matters are fully addressed in terms of the design of the proposals.

7. Next Steps

All Elected Members are invited to attend a presentation on the proposals by members of the design team, and to participate in a subsequent discussion.

Following this pre-application meeting, the applicant intends to prepare their planning application and listed building application for submission and address any comments received during this meeting. On receipt of any such application it would be advertised in the press, weekly list and the Council website to allow the public to view the plans and make representation. It will also be promoted on social media. The applications would then be presented to Planning Committee for consideration and determination in due course.

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Appendices: Location plan

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: Ward 3 - Dumbarton