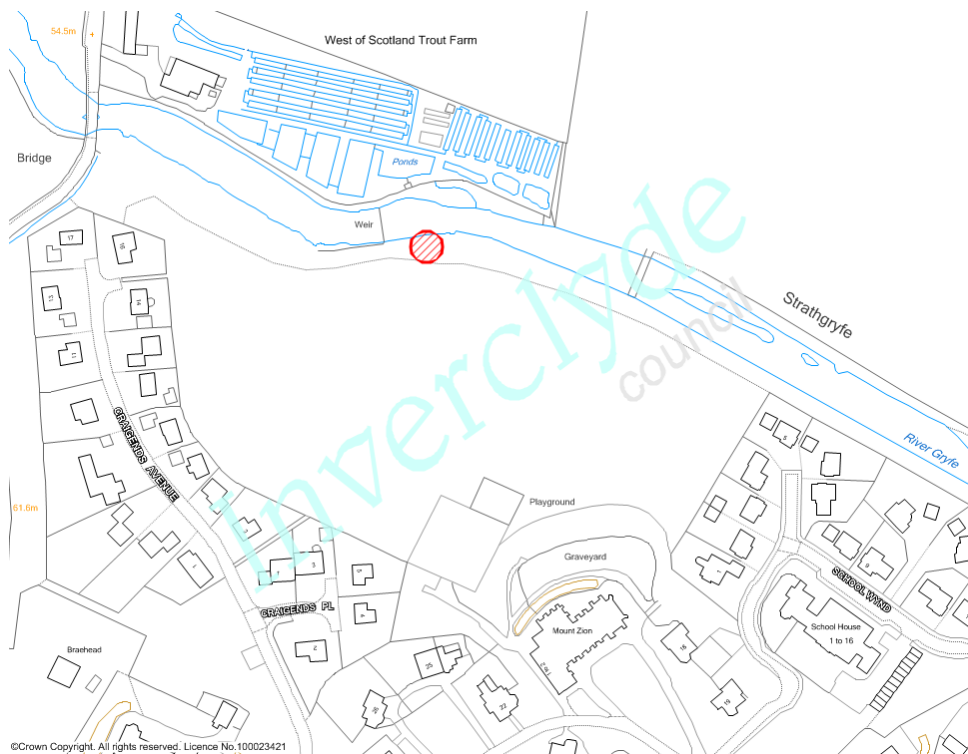


Report To:	The Planning Board	Date:	5 December 2012
Report By:	Head of Regeneration and Planning	Report No:	12/0265/IC Plan12/12
			Local Application Development
Contact Officer:	James McColl	Contact No:	01475 712462
Subject:	Siting of storage container at Playing Fields, Quarriers Village		

SITE DESCRIPTION

The playing fields at Quarriers Village are located immediately west of the former Mount Zion Church and north of houses at Craighends Avenue. To the north is the River Gryffe. The site is located within the Quarriers Village Conservation Area.



PROPOSAL

It is proposed to site a storage container measuring approximately 6 metres, by 2.5 metres by 2.6 metres in height near the northern boundary of the playing fields close to the River Gryffe. The container is of a steel construction and typical of those commonly used for transit. The container will be finished in green and the applicant proposes planting to reduce the visual prominence when viewed from Quarriers Village.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Local Plan Policy HR1 - Designated Environmental Resources and Built Heritage

Development that would adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the natural or built heritage resources listed in Schedule 9.1 and where indicated, on the Proposals Map, will not normally be permitted.

Having regard to the designation of the environmental resource and built heritage, exceptions will only be made where:

- (a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not be compromised;
- (b) visual amenity and townscape will not be compromised;
- (c) no other site, identified in the Local Plan as suitable, is available;
- (d) the social and economic benefits of the scheme outweigh the total or partial loss of the environmental resource;
- (e) the developer has demonstrated that the impact of the development on the environment will be minimised; and
- (f) the loss can be compensated by habitat creation/site enhancement elsewhere, and where there are satisfactory arrangements to achieve this.

Local Plan Policy HR11 - Development Within and Adjacent to Conservation Areas

Development proposals both within and adjacent to conservation areas will be acceptable where they are sympathetic to the existing character, pattern of development and appearance of the area and the following matters are satisfactorily addressed, as appropriate:

- (a) siting and orientation of new buildings;
- (b) overall design and style;
- (c) scale of building, extension or alteration;
- (d) design details;
- (e) finishing materials; and
- (f) landscaping and boundary materials.

Local Plan Policy HR12 - Impact of Development Within Conservation Areas

When assessing Conservation Area development proposals (both within and adjacent to it) consideration will be given to the impact they will have on townscape and the wider landscape, especially when viewed from adjacent transport routes and vantage points accessible to the public.

Local Plan Policy LR1- Safeguarding Open Space

Inverclyde Council, as Planning Authority, will support, safeguard and where practicable, enhance:

- (a) areas identified as 'Open Space' on the Proposals Map;
- (b) other areas of open space of value in terms of their amenity to their surroundings and to the community and their function as wildlife corridors or wedges; and
- (c) where appropriate, encourage other relevant and compatible development for the purposes of leisure, recreation and sport.

CONSULTATIONS

None required.

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 21st September 2012 as there are no premises on neighbouring land and as a development affecting a conservation area.

SITE NOTICES

A site notice was posted on 8th October 2012 for as a development affecting a conservation area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was subject of a press advertisement and a site notice. 52 representations have been received. 42 of these representations are in objection, 7 are in support and 2 seek clarification or make design recommendations.

The objections can be summarised as follows:

1. The site is within Quarriers Village Conservation Area and the container is not appropriate for this location.
2. More suitable sites are available adjacent to Mount Zion Church or within the village.
3. The container may be prone to vandalism.
4. Anti social behaviour may occur.
5. The container will pose a safety risk if children climb on the structure.
6. The container will only be used for limited periods during the year.
7. The site may flood.
8. The current use of the playing fields is too intensive and disturbs residents.
9. An established walking route along the river bank will be impeded as will the fishing area.
10. The application should have been submitted by Quarriers as they are landowners.
11. Residents were not advised of the application.

Clarification/design recommendations suggested are:

1. The container should be finished in green.
2. Strict conditions should be imposed and monitored regarding the screening to shield the container.
3. There is no indication of a base platform for the container.
4. There is no indication of the access route for vehicles or type of vehicles that will get to and from the container.

The letters of support advise:

1. The work of the local football club encourages young children to take part in outdoor sporting activities and the siting of the container will support this.
2. The container will discreetly sited, be screened and painted to blend with the surroundings thus having an acceptable visual impact
3. Similar containers are sited at other sports fields.

ASSESSMENT

The material considerations in the assessment of this application are the Local Plan, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 71 (Conservation Area Management), and the effect on the appearance and architectural integrity the wider Conservation Area.

Inverclyde Local Plan Policies HR11 and HR12 provide criteria for the assessment of development proposals within conservation areas. Policy HR11 encourages proposals where they are sympathetic to the existing character, pattern of development and appearance of the area. Policy HR12 states that when assessing conservation area development proposals, consideration should be given to the impact they will have on the wider landscape, especially when viewed from adjacent transport routes and vantage points accessible to the public.

The SHEP and PAN 71 provide advice and guidance for planning authorities determining applications affecting conservation areas. PAN 71 requires development to be carefully managed to ensure the character and appearance is safeguarded and the SHEP seeks to preserve the historic environment.

The storage container is located on the edge of the Conservation Area adjacent to the existing trees to the river bank. It is located to the periphery of the playing fields to allow the safe storage of equipment used by local sports clubs during games and training on the playing fields; locating the container within other areas of the village would not be suitable. The siting of containers of this nature at sports fields for storage of equipment is not uncommon and as it supports the use of the playing fields by local sports clubs the proposal presents no conflict with Policy LR1 of the Local Plan. Overall, I consider that given the discrete siting the container does not disrupt the wider views of the Conservation Area or form a visually prominent feature which would detract from the architectural integrity of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the applicant proposes to install planting to screen and soften views towards the container from vantage points within the Conservation Area.

The trees at this location are afforded protection by the Conservation Area status and therefore consideration must be given as to whether any undue damage would be likely to occur following the placement of the container adjacent to them. No ground works are proposed and the container will be placed on existing level ground. As the main roots would not be damaged by the placement of the container, the trees should not suffer any damage. The provision and maintenance of appropriate planting to screen the container can also be addressed by way of a condition together with appropriate monitoring.



Considering the outstanding points raised in the representations received, the container will not prevent members of the public accessing or walking along the riverbank. This application will also not impact on the wider use of the playing fields. While noting concern over the extensive use of the playing fields, this is long established. Indeed, there are facilities for the local boy's football club nearby in Somerville Weir Hall. The consideration of this application can have no impact on the level of activity. Whilst located adjacent to the river, the proposal does not necessitate the submission of a flood risk assessment. I note concerns that children may climb on the container and that it may be the subject of vandalism or anti social behaviour, but it is not a function of the planning system to withhold planning permission and restrain a legitimate activity solely to avoid situations arising from breaches of law which may or may not happen. Finally, the applicant does not propose vehicular access to the container and ensuring any damage caused during the placement of the container is rectified can be required by way of a condition.

Moving to procedural matters, the applicant has correctly completed the relevant sections of the application form to indicate that he is not the owner of the application site. There is no requirement for the land owner to personally submit the planning application. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 require that a neighbour notification is issued to any premises within 20 metres of the application site. There are no notifiable premises within 20 metres of the container. In accordance with the legislation a press notice was placed in the Greenock Telegraph. Additionally a site notice was posted in the vicinity of the application site. It was considered that siting this notice at the play

park adjacent to the village rather across the playing fields away from the village and on the site of the proposed container would ensure wider awareness of the application.

Overall, I consider that given the discreet siting, the container will have an acceptable visual impact subject to it being finished in a green colour and subject to suitable planting being provided and maintained to soften and screen views of it. These requirements can be dealt with by way of conditions, as can the requirements to limit use to storage for local sports clubs and to ensure it is removed should it become redundant in the future. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policies LR1, HR1, HR11 and HR12 of the Inverclyde Local Plan, the aims of the SHEP which seeks to preserve the historic environment and PAN 71 which seeks to manage change in conservation areas. Whilst I am mindful of the objections received, there are no material planning considerations which would warrant the refusal of the application.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. That the container hereby permitted shall be used solely in connection with the storage of equipment used by local sports clubs during games and training on the playing fields.
2. That the container hereby permitted shall be finished in a green colour to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and maintained in this colour at all times thereafter.
3. That prior to the siting of the container on site, full details of a landscaping scheme to screen views of the container together with programme for completion and future maintenance shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. Development shall then proceed as approved unless any alternative agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.
4. That any of the trees or planted shrubs approved in terms of condition 3 above that die, become diseased, are damaged or removed shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species within the following planting season, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
5. That prior to the commencement of work on site, details of any ground works required to accommodate the container shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Works shall then proceed as approved.
6. That if the container hereby permitted becomes redundant or falls out of use at any time in the future, it shall be removed and the site restored to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority within 2 months of the date at which the container became redundant fell out of use.
7. That should any damage occur to the ground during the siting of the container, the ground will be reinstated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority within 4 weeks of the date the damage occurred.

Reasons

1. To retain effective control over the use of the container.
2. To ensure the container is finished in an appropriate colour.
3. To ensure the provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme to screen views of the container, in the interest of visual amenity.
4. To ensure the retention of the approved landscaping scheme to screen views of the container.

5. To ensure that no ground works which may unacceptably damage adjacent trees are undertaken.
6. To ensure the future removal of the container in an appropriate timescale, in the interests of the visual appearance of the Quarriers Village Conservation Area.
7. To ensure any damage caused during the siting of the container is addressed, in the interests of visual amenity.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans
2. Inverclyde Local Plan
3. Scottish Historic Environment Policy
4. Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 71
5. Letters of representation



Ordnance Survey maps, and maps created from Ordnance Survey material are subject to Crown copyright. Information on Ordnance Survey map licensing can be found on their website <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite>.