

Technical Working Note - Rothesay Conservation Area (Replacement Windows)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the new '*Rothesay Windows - Technical Working Note*' which has been previously discussed at this Committee. The Note, once approved by the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing Committee (PPSLC) will be a material consideration when Planning Officers assess and determine applications that relate to replacement windows in the Rothesay Conservation Area. We seek feedback on the document from the Bute and Cowal Committee before the Note is presented to PPSLC in December 2015. A separate meeting took place with the Bute Councillors on 16th October 2015 and a presentation is scheduled to take place with Bute Community Council in January 2016.
- 1.2 The new Technical Working note is contained at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3 There have been a number of unauthorised window replacements in Rothesay over the past few years along with some high profile applications and enforcement cases.
- 1.4 There has also been significant heritage led investment and regeneration of over £4 million through the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS).
- 1.5 This new Technical Working Note is an update of previous guidance that was adopted in 1995 and seeks to foster a proportionate and pragmatic approach to window replacement. It adds a finer grain of detail regarding the development pressures in Rothesay as well as the scale of the Conservation Area and level of public sector investment that has recently been committed to the historic environment. It aims to give flexibility to customers / building owners whose buildings do not significantly contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area. This includes an allowance for good quality uPVC windows to be installed in certain circumstances.
- 1.6 However, for our most important listed buildings and Prime Townscape Blocks we seek to retain the policies and principals as set out in national policy and our Development Plan which is to uphold the historical and traditional window characteristics – mainly by repairing or replacing with white timber sliding sash and case units. The guidance also seeks to ensure an uplift in design quality or windows that have already been replaced by non-traditional windows.

- 1.7 The Technical Working Note also provides information and guidance to applicants on thermal efficiency, noise attenuation, repair, maintenance, cleaning, environmental performance and costs.
- 1.8 It is envisaged that this Technical Working Note shall be an important reference point for assessing window applications and supporting the aspirations of The Rothesay Town Centre Character Area: Management Plan which seeks to boost confidence, reverse the decline and mend damage. It will also support the regeneration commenced by the CARS and THI and potentially support future bids for Heritage Funding.
- 1.9 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- Note the production of the new Technical Working Note for Rothesay
 - Provide feedback to Officers and Members of the PPSLC who shall consider it for adoption at the 16th December Meeting

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Rothesay Conservation Area is one of Scotland's most extensive, stretching five miles along the east coast of the Isle of Bute from Port Bannatyne to Ascog. The area has a distinctive character with its own special architectural form and historic interest. The Conservation Area is made up of 9 distinct character areas, contains a significant number of Listed Buildings and hundreds of windows in both residential and commercial properties all of which contribute to the overall appearance and sense of place.
- 2.2 The Rothesay Town Centre Character Area: Management Plan was approved by Council in May 2010 and had 3 overarching aims:-

A: Boost Confidence

B: Reverse the Decline

C: Mend the Damage

ENFORCEMENT

- 2.3 Significant public, media and elected Member attention has also focussed on Rothesay Windows in the past 18 months principally due to two high profile planning enforcement cases.
- 2.4 The enforcement action has been put on hold pending the outcome of this review of the Technical Working Note. A separate enforcement update report shall also be submitted to the Planning Protective Services and Licencing (PPSL) Committee on both these cases in due course.

TECHNICAL WORKING NOTE

- 1.1 This new Technical Working Note is an update of previous guidance that was adopted in 1995 and seeks to foster a proportionate and pragmatic approach to window replacement. It adds a finer grain of detail regarding the development pressures in Rothesay as well as the scale of the Conservation Area and level of public sector investment that has recently been committed to the historic environment. It aims to give flexibility to customers / building

owners whose buildings do not significantly contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area. This includes an allowance for good quality uPVC windows to be installed in certain circumstances.

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- 1.3 The Technical Working Note also provides information and guidance to applicants on thermal efficiency, noise attenuation, repair, maintenance, cleaning, environmental performance and costs.
- 1.4 It is envisaged that this Technical Working Note shall be an important reference point for assessing window applications and supporting the aspirations of the The Rothesay Town Centre Character Area: Management Plan which seeks to boost confidence, reverse the decline and mend damage. It will also support the regeneration commenced by the CARS and THI and potentially support future bids for Heritage Funding.

INVESTMENT IN THE HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- 1.5 The THI is a 5-year programme which seeks to revitalise the historic town centre, by offering grants to property owners to assist with structural and external repairs to historic buildings. Individual upgrading projects include the upgrading of Guildford Court Apartments, Duncans Hall, Guildford Square gap site and various shop front improvements.
- 1.6 The aims and objectives of Rothesay THI are linked to those of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and Economic Development Action Plan. Rothesay Town Centre and Waterfront is also identified as an 'Area for Action' in the Local Development Plan.
- 1.7 It took 3 years to secure the funding for the THI, during this process it was recognised that successful delivery of the THI and its longer term legacy would only be possible by increasing our dedicated approach to the management of unsympathetic alterations through both consent and enforcement processes.

CONCLUSION

- 1.8 It is considered that this new approach is now balanced and proportionate to the specific market and development pressures of Rothesay. It seeks to retain and preserve the remaining good quality traditional windows in our most important buildings that contribute to the Conservation Area. This approach underpins and positively promotes the significant investment that has already been committed to heritage led regeneration through the THI and CARS.

1.9 The new Technical Working Note also builds in added flexibility for those buildings that have already had unsympathetic window alterations or do not contribute significantly to the Conservation Area (ie limited views from public places or on rear elevations). There is also an acceptance that good quality uPVC window units can be used in the Conservation Area in certain circumstances.

2.12 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- Note the production of the new Technical Working Note for Rothesay
- Provide feedback to Officers and Members of the PPSLC who shall consider it for adoption at the 16th December Meeting

3.0 IMPLICATIONS

3.1 **Policy:** This Technical Working Note shall be a significant material consideration when assessing planning and listed building applications in the Rothesay Conservation Area. It shall also guide planning enforcement activity.

3.2 **Financial:** There has been significant public sector investment in the historic environment in Rothesay to date and we seek that heritage led principals underpin our planning and enforcement strategy / approach.

3.3 **Legal:** None

3.4 **HR :** None

3.5 **Equalities:** None.

3.6 **Risk:** Reputational risk if planning enforcement and strategy is not proportionate, pragmatic and consistent with other plans and initiatives (Town Centre Management Plan, THI and CARS). It is considered the proposed Technical Working Note is balanced seeking to protect our most important heritage assets whilst being flexible with buildings that do not contribute as significantly.

3.7 **Customer Service:** None

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27th October 2015

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Technical Working Note – Rothesay Windows