

**HEARING STATEMENT
FOR
ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL
LOCAL REVIEW BODY**



**REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE
ERECTION OF AN AMBULANCE STATION AT THE
VICTORIA INFIRMARY, 93 EAST KING STREET,
HELENSBURGH**

**DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATION
REFERENCE NUMBER 09/00790/DET
LOCAL REVIEW 09/0002/LRB**

26th February 2010

STATEMENT

Introduction

The Planning Authority is Argyll & Bute Council ('the Council'). The appellants are The Scottish Ambulance Service ('the appellants').

The detailed planning application, reference number 09/00790/DET, for the erection of an ambulance station and associated car parking at the Victoria Infirmary, 93 East King Street, Helensburgh ('the appeal site') was refused under delegated powers on 31 August 2009. The planning application has been appealed and is subject of referral to a Local Review Body.

The Local Review Body has identified 4 'Specified Matters' that will be considered at a Hearing Scheduled for 11th March namely:-

1. Details of the parking provision within the site;
2. Why must the ambulance station be in this position;
3. The justification for the need to be on the particular site and the reasons why the ambulance station must be located in Helensburgh;
4. Details of the proposed materials to be used in the construction of the ambulance station.

This statement relates solely to the above 4 Specified Matters and shall aid presentation at the forthcoming Hearing. All previous material including the Council's Statement of Case, Officers Report and Note of Further Information shall be referred to.

REASON FOR REFUSAL

For ease of reference the Council's Reasons for Refusal detailed in the Officers Report has been provided below:-

The proposed ambulance station would be located 20 metres in front of the principle elevation of the Victoria Infirmary. This is a Category B listed building designed by William Lieper, dating back to 1895. It has a two story central section with single storey wings on either side. The two storey central section has bellcapped bays and an asymmetrically set doorway.

The principle viewpoint of this hospital building is the view on entering the site from the main access road. On entering the hospital grounds there is a large garden area in the centre of the site with the listed building set towards the back. This layout creates a sense of open space which gives open views of the listed building and is vitally important for the building's setting. Any building erected in front of this building, no matter how small, would have an undesirable affect on this listed building's setting. The proposed ambulance station with a footprint of 192 square metres is sizeable building. It would be 18.5 metres in length and would completely disrupt the main view to this key central section of the building, with only part of the western wing and upper section remaining visible. This loss of open space would take away the open aspect of the main approach to the listed building, severely and unacceptably detracting from its setting.

Notwithstanding the fundamental problem of the erection of any building in this location, the proposed design of the building is also incompatible with the site. It is a functional building, rectangular in shape with a shallow pitched roof. Its finishes are modern including a grey panelled roof and brick cladding. The introduction of this style of building with associated car and ambulance parking in front of the principle elevation of this Category B listed building would be visually intrusive, visually discordant and would unacceptably detract from its setting.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies STRAT DC 1 and STRAT DC 9 of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan, Policies LP ENV1, LP ENV 13a and LP ENV19 and Appendix A of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan Adopted August 2009 and the Council's Design Guide. These require, inter alia, that in relation to any works affecting listed buildings or their setting, special attention is paid to siting and design in order that the building's character and setting is not eroded. Furthermore, the proposal would fail to accord with criteria contained within Historic Scotland's Technical Guidance Notes relating to development within the curtilage of listed buildings that may affect their setting. This states that the listed building's principle elevations should remain entirely visible from all main viewpoints and that they should always be the main focus of their setting.

SPECIFIED MATTER 1 – DETAILS OF PARKING PROVISION WITHIN THE SITE

This information will be detailed by the appellants or owner of the site, NHS Highland, in their Hearing Statement. The Council has previously submitted documentation recording the parking and responsibilities for the roads around the Victoria Infirmary site (contained within Request for Further Information Document) and confirm that the NHS Highland have sole responsibility for parking within the site.

It is noted that formal parking management within the site is limited, with internal bays being poorly delineated or not marked out at all. During site inspections there have often been examples of double parking around the Community Nursing building to the north west of the site and partial obstruction of the internal footpath as shown below:-

PHOTO A – EXAMPLE OF DOUBLE PARKING AT COMMUNITY NURSING BUILDING



PHOTO B – EXAMPLE OF FOOTPATH AND ROAD OBSTRUCTION



The site currently has two access points to East King Street and operates a 'one way' system to the rear around the Victoria Infirmary building. One access is solely used for Engineering and Servicing Vehicles (access furthest to the south) whilst the majority of public and ambulance traffic use the more northerly one as shown in Photo B above.

The access and egress of the ambulance within the wider Victoria Infirmary site is obviously of paramount importance and shall contribute towards overall rapid response times in emergency cases. It has been acknowledged by the appellant that there are a number of 'bottle necks' caused by inappropriate parking at both the rear of the site and close to the access with East King street.

The Appellant has also acknowledged that site selection should be influenced by, amongst other factors, *'a site with a one-way system is preferable as it ensures free and unrestricted movement of vehicles, and traffic flow can be controlled to give precedence to designed emergency vehicles'* (Comments on Note of Further Information, Atkins, 26th February 2010).

Whilst the Council do not raise objection to the parking arrangements, it would concur with the provided statement that a one way system which could allow ambulance priority would be a preferable arrangement.

The submitted proposal shall retain existing access and parking arrangements with the construction of 18 new spaces adjacent to the new ambulance station which is currently patient garden land.

The Area Roads Officer has also examined the potential of creating a dedicated or realigned access to the Ambulance Station in Memo to Case Officer dated 4th February 2010 and is enclosed at appendix A. It is noted that these options were examined post decision in isolation from the appellant using the footprint of their proposal with a key aim of reducing impact on the listed building and improving traffic flow / response times for the ambulance service.

SPECIFIED MATTER 2 – WHY MUST THE AMBULANCE STATION BE IN THIS POSITION

The response to this Specified Matter is directed towards the appellant.

The Council reaffirm that the patient garden creates a sense of open space which gives open views of the listed building and is vitally important for the building's setting. Any building erected in front of this building, no matter how small, would have an undesirable affect on this listed building's setting.

The Council seek to work constructively with the appellant to robustly examine all possible alternatives taking cognisance of impact on listed building, access and egress issues and future expansion plans for the site which have been alluded to. It is considered that the alternatives identified within the appellants statement of case can benefit from a more comprehensive approach to access / egress and parking as implied by the two options provided by Technical Roads Officer at Appendix A.

SPECIFIED MATTER 3 – JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS PARTICULAR SITE AND THE REASONS WHY AMBULANCE STATION MUST BE LOCATED IN HELENSBURGH

The response to this Specified Matter is directed towards the appellant.

While the Council accept the principle of the provision of a new ambulance station within the Helensburgh and Lomond area and potential use of 93 East King Street complex, the proposed site chosen is unacceptable. This consistent advice was initially intimated in pre-application correspondence in January / February 2009.

SPECIFIED MATTER 4 – MATERIALS

The proposed ambulance station is a large, modular building. It will be 18.5 metres long, 10.4 metres wide with a footprint of approximately 192 square metres. It will have a pitched roof, with a height of approximately 5.5 metres. It will accommodate offices, storage room and staff facilities. It will be finished in brick clip cladding and will have a grey plastisol insulated panel roof. Its design is purely functional, with little architectural merit.

The ambulance station will be located some 20 metres in front of the listed building on the existing grassed area. It will have associated car and ambulance parking to the front. Siting a building of this massing, scale and design at this location would reduce this area of open space and reduce the open aspect of the main approach to the building, as well as obscuring views of the listed building, consequently affecting its setting.



Memo

Transportation & Infrastructure

To: Stephanie Glen
Planning Officer

From: Campbell Divertie,
Technical Officer



Date: 4th February 2010

Your Ref: 09/00790/DET

Our Ref: RPL 1G

Telephone: X 8866

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: SCOTTISH AMBULANCE STATION
LOCATION: VICTORIA INFIRMARY EAST KING STREET, HELENSBURGH**

I refer to our recent site meeting and email relative to the above and enclose herewith plans showing the following detail as requested.

1. The maintenance responsibilities for the roads and footpaths out with the site.
2. Option 1. Re-align the main access road to create an area to the front west of the development site. Vehicle access can either be taken from East King Street or a spur off the re-aligned access road.
3. Option 2. Improve the existing east vehicle access and construct a link to the upper level therefore allowing access into the north east corner of the development site. This area also has the potential to be accessed from the north west side.

With regards to the provision for vehicle parking within the site, it would appear to be heavily congested with parked cars and currently there is evidence that vehicles over flow out onto the public parking areas in East King Street normally reserved for local residents.

Site option 1 would result in a minor number of parking spaces being "lost" due to the realignment of the main access road. However, there is scope to compensate this loss with addition number of spaces being created either side of the realigned access road.

Site Option 2 would have no adverse impact on the existing parking arrangements with the existing site.

In order to establish the full car parking arrangements, the Local plan gives no guidance for this type of development. Therefore I would be required to revert to the roads development guide and enclose a copy for ease of reference. The guidance on Hospitals and Health Centres/Clinics would require further information from the applicants. Also it would be necessary to establish if parts of the building are being utilised as administration offices and if so, the parking facilities to accommodate this usage would have to be taken into consideration.



I trust this is of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact this office should you require any further information.



Network & Environmental Manager



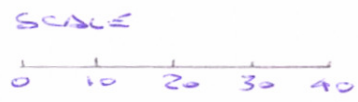


CLOSE EXISTING ACCESS
AND REALIGN ACCESS
ROAD MAINTAIN EXISTING
PARKING BAYS.

CAR PARKING. [Yellow Box]
POTENTIAL ACCESS TO
CONSTRUCT FURTHER CAR
PARKING SPACES

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Operational Services
Director: Andrew R. Law

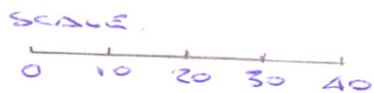


OPTION No 1.



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OPTION No 2.