

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Application No: 09/0796/PP

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
RECOMMENDATION ON PLANNING APPLICATION

Regd: 19/11/2009

Applicant

Agent

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Nature of proposals:

Construction of an access road

Site:

Site between Greenock Road and former Royal Ordnance site, Old Greenock Road, Bishopton

Application for:

Planning Permission-Full

Description

Planning permission is sought for the formation of an access road on land to the south of Old Greenock Road and to the south of Greenock Road and north of Old Greenock Road, to the west of Bishopton. The works would comprise of the formation of a roundabout on, and immediately to the south of Greenock Road (A8), on the section between its junctions with Old Greenock Road and Houston Road, and a general distributor road which would form the northern access road (NAR) into the proposed Bishopton Community Growth Area. The road would take the form of a meandering carriageway of 6.5 metres in width with a grassed swale to either side incorporating SUDS, and a 3 metre-wide footpath/cycleway to the eastern edge. Either side of the road would be planted as a wild flower meadow ranging in width from 3 metres to 10 metres and with woodland planting beyond. Lighting will be confined to the area of the proposed roundabout. It is also proposed that the section of Old Greenock Road, between the proposed new road and its junction with Greenock Road to the east will be closed to general traffic and formed as a footway/cycleway with gates to limit vehicular access only to agricultural and service vehicles and traffic associated with the existing telecommunications mast. Additionally, a short section of minor road between Old Greenock Road and Greenock Road to the west of the proposed road would be stopped-up. The proposed road would take the form of both embankments and cuttings and the alignment and cross section are based on a 30mph assumed design speed.

The site of the proposed route comprises predominantly agricultural land, both arable and rough grazing, lying to the north-west of Bishopton all of which lies outwith, and the southernmost end of which abuts, the secured fenceline of the former Royal Ordnance site. The southernmost extremity of the site abuts a former country lane which runs parallel to and is now contained within the ROF factory fenceline. The site is bisected by Old Greenock Road which is a metalled road with grass verges but no footways. The northernmost portion of the site abuts Greenock Road which has a footway on the northern side only. Both Greenock Road and Old Greenock Road are lined by hedgerows and neither are lit outwith the village envelope (apart from the first 100 metres of Old Greenock Road).

History

06/0602/PP - Outline planning application for the redevelopment of the site to form a mixed use community growth area. Disposal to grant subject to conditions and a Section 75 Agreement at the Planning and Economic Development Board on 15 December, 2008. The application was referred to the Scottish Ministers and subsequently cleared to the Council to issue a decision. Permission was granted on 10 August, 2009 following the conclusion of a Section 75 Agreement.

06/1065/PP - Formation of a motorway junction. Granted subject to conditions on 6 February, 2009.

09/0456/PP - Construction of a landfill. Currently under consideration.

09/0527/PP - Application for full planning permission for engineering operations comprising remediation and bulk earthworks. Currently under consideration.

06/1119/PP - Application for full planning permission for engineering operations comprising remediation and earthworks. Withdrawn.

06/1154/PP - Construction of landfill. Withdrawn.

Policy & Material Considerations

Adopted Renfrewshire Local Plan.

Policy SS2 'Royal Ordnance Bishopton'

Policy T1 'Assessment of New Developments'

Policy T3 'Walking and Cycling Routes'

Policy GB1 'Green Belt'

Policy ENV 7 'Planting and Management of Trees and Woodlands'

Policy F1 - F4 'Flood Prevention and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems'

Policy N1 'Noise Protection'

Planning legislation requires that planning decisions be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the proposal requires to be assessed in terms of the policies set out above and the physical attributes of the site.

Publicity

The proposals were neighbour notified by the Council in accordance with the relevant regulations. The proposals were also subject to press advertisement in accordance with statute.

Objections/Representations

None.

Consultations

Head of Roads (Traffic and Transport) - No objection subject to conditions including that the detailed design is compliant with the Council's Guidelines for Development Roads including SUDS, suitable provision is made for footway/cycleway connections between the new road and existing roads, suitable provision is made for pedestrian crossing arrangements, and suitable measures are incorporated for horse riders who may access and cross the new road.

Director of Environmental Services - No response at time of writing.

Bishopton Community Council - No response at time of writing.

Transport Scotland - No response at time of writing.

Amey Highways - No response at time of writing.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service - No objection subject to a condition in respect of securing the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with an approved scheme of investigation. It was commented that the application lies within an area of archaeological potential although there are no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development area. Government policy with regard to archaeology was also noted as was the need to consider the weight to be accorded to archaeological matters when determining a planning application. It was recommended that a prior archaeological

evaluation be carried out before the application be determined and if this was not acceptable, an alternative would be to attach a suspensive condition. It was also commented that such a condition would allow the potentially complex archaeological issues to be addressed in detail after the principle of development has been accepted albeit limiting the opportunities to amend designs or operations to achieve the preferred preservation of remains in situ.

Summary of Main issues of:-

Environmental Statement : Not applicable.

Appropriate Assessment : Not applicable.

Design Statement : Not applicable.

Access Statement : Not applicable.

Other Assessments : Not applicable.

Planning Obligation Summary : Not applicable.

Scottish Ministers Direction : Not applicable.

Assessment

The principal planning issues to be addressed in this instance are considered to be whether the proposals accord with the provisions of the development plan, whether the proposals are appropriate in land use planning terms, whether the proposals are acceptable in terms of siting, design, form, and location, and whether the proposals are appropriate having regard to any other material planning considerations.

Policy SS2 sets out the general context regarding the redevelopment of the former ROF site and the proposals currently under consideration comprise a component part. The access strategy for the site, consisting of a northern and southern access road and motorway junction, has previously been assessed and approved as being in accord with both the strategic and local components of the development plan. The proposals currently under consideration remain consistent with the agreed access strategy albeit following a revised alignment. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Policy SS2.

Policies T1 and T3 require development proposals to be assessed in terms of their impacts including making provision for walking and cycling, bus services and appropriate design and layout. The proposals are considered to accord with these requirements.

Policy GB1 presumes against most forms of development in the green belt apart from a limited number of exceptions but allows for those which require to have a green belt location. As previously noted, the redevelopment of the former ROF site as a Community Growth Area has already been agreed as has the access strategy incorporating a northern access road. The only opportunity to access the wider development site by a route which is outwith the Bishopton village envelope necessarily traverses an area of green belt. The access road is required to have a green belt location in this particular instance and therefore accords with the provisions of Policy GB1.

Policy ENV 7 seeks to enhance trees and woodlands throughout the Council's area by, amongst other measures, encouraging the planting of appropriate trees as an integral part of new development. The proposals demonstrate the inclusion of a continuous avenue of woodland planting along the entire length of the access road and so satisfies the requirements of this policy.

Policies F1 - F4 relate to drainage and flooding matters and the applicant's supporting information confirms the intention to incorporate road-side sustainable urban drainage systems as part of the access road. The requirements of the policy are therefore met although, should planning permission be granted, a safeguarding condition is recommended to require details to be submitted for approval.

Policy N1 requires that sensitive developments are protected from noise sources including those which are transport-related. The proposed re-aligned access route increases the separation between the road carriageway and the nearest dwellinghouse and incorporates a more robust landscape buffer. The terms of policy N1 are therefore considered to have been met.

The principle of a northern access road to serve the redevelopment of the former ROF site has previously been considered in the context of granting approval through outline planning application 06/0602/PP for the formation of the Community Growth Area. The supporting documentation including the Transport Assessment identified the access strategy as comprising of the formation of a motorway junction at the confluence of the M8/A8 and a northern and southern link road connecting into the redevelopment site on either side of the existing urban area of Bishopton. The grant of outline planning permission (now planning permission in principle) was regulated by a condition requiring further justification for the selected option for the northern access road. Of the three options advanced, the preferred option selected by the applicant related to the alignment which followed the most westerly route and which was both furthest from the Bishopton village envelope and closest to the properties on Houston Road. However, concern was expressed that this option was not the least visually intrusive; that it had the potential to impact the greatest on the residential properties on Houston Road; and, that being furthest from the built-up edge of Bishopton, it compromised the ability for future development to be constrained and would allow for further expansion up to the 'new' road line. To this end, a safeguarding condition was attached to the outline planning permission which required additional information to be submitted to demonstrate that the applicant's preferred option was the most appropriate. Following discussions with officers, the applicants were invited to re-visit their original options appraisal rather than addressing only the originally submitted, preferred route alignment. This exercise has resulted in the current application.

In terms of the three concerns over the initial alignment referred to above, the following comments may be made:-

1. Proximity to housing - The proposals as now presented have resulted in an alignment which increases the separation in terms of both distance and the level of landscape treatment between the carriageway and the nearest residential premises. Where previously, the distance between the edge of the carriageway and the closest domestic curtilage was approximately 30 metres, this has now been increased to 150 metres. More robust avenue tree planting is also proposed. This increased separation has the potential to further mitigate noise and air quality impacts on any domestic curtilages.
2. Distance between village envelope and road-line - The previous westerly alignment raised concern that it may be perceived as forming a new urban edge and so render the land between the new road and the Bishopton urban edge as susceptible to development pressure. Whilst I remain satisfied that the continued designation of the land between the road-line and the Bishopton village envelope as green belt in the Renfrewshire Local Plan provides the necessary degree of protection against undesirable expansion of the village envelope into this part of the green belt, this revision to the road form which is less urban and more rural in design further reinforces the existing built-up edge as the most appropriate and definable green belt boundary.
3. Visual impact - The proposal as originally presented comprised a long, sweeping curve which was heavily influenced by engineering criteria and introduced a road form which was not entirely sympathetic to a rural context and which was more suited to a trunk road or major urban road context. The revised alignment adopts a less engineered approach with lower design speeds, narrowed carriageway and reduced forward visibility curves (whilst

remaining within safe design parameters) and thereby achieves a more organic form of horizontal alignment better suited to mirroring a traditional rural road. Enhanced road-side landscape treatment has also been introduced in the form of wild flower meadow creation adjacent to the road edges with woodland planting beyond.

It should also be noted that the applicant seeks the duration of the planning permission, should it be granted, to be 10 years rather than the normal three years imposed by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. Given the size and nature of the community growth area that this access road would serve, the anticipated timescales for its implementation and the phasing arrangements assessed and approved in the outline application and accompanying Section 75 Agreement, it is considered to be appropriate to extend the period within which works must commence. A period of 10 years would be consistent with the likely phasing of works whilst allowing for a degree of flexibility should there be slippage in preparatory works or slow-downs in the rate of house-building completions.

Recommendation and reasons for decision

In the light of all the foregoing I am satisfied that the proposals accord with the provisions of the development plan and that there are no material planning considerations which would render the proposals unacceptable and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed.

Index of Photographs

1. View looking west along Greenock Road.
2. View looking east along Greenock Road.
3. View looking west along Old Greenock Road.
4. View looking east along Old Greenock Road.
5. View looking north from Old Greenock Road towards Greenock Road.
6. View looking south from Old Greenock Road towards former ROF site.
7. View north along lane connecting Old Greenock Road and Greenock Road.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to conditions

Other Action

Conditions and Reasons

- 1 That planning permission lapses on the expiration of a period of 10 years (beginning with the date on which the permission is granted) unless the development to which the permission relates is begun before that expiration.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

- 2 No development shall take place within the development site as outlined in red on the approved plan until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Reason: To ensure that any sensitive archaeological remains or artefacts, affected by the proposed development, can be adequately recovered or recorded.

- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, the redundant section of Old Greenock Road shall be stopped-up and formed into a restricted access route complete with turning-head and vehicle gates. Full details shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority which shall thereafter be implemented in the approved manner prior to the road hereby approved being brought into use.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and pedestrian and vehicular safety.

- 4 Prior to the commencement of development, full details shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority demonstrating the incorporation of a sustainable urban drainage system; suitable provision for footway/cycleway connections between the new road and existing roads; provision for suitable pedestrian crossing arrangements at the new junction with Greenock Road and along the new development access road; and suitable measures for horse riders who may access and cross the new road. The details thereafter agreed shall be implemented in the approved manner prior to the road being brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in the interests of pedestrian and traffic safety.

- 5 That before any development of the site commences a scheme of landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority; the scheme shall include (where appropriate) :-

- (i) an indication of all existing trees and hedgerows, plus details of those to be retained, and measures for their protection in the course of development;
- (ii) details of any earth moulding and hard landscaping, grass seeding and turfing;
- (iii) a scheme of tree and shrub planting, incorporating details of the location, number, variety and size of trees and shrubs to be planted;
- (iv) details of the phasing of these works.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to enable the Planning Authority to consider these aspects in detail.

- 6 Within one year of the road hereby approved being brought into use, or as otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, all planting, seeding, turfing and earth moulding included in the scheme of landscaping approved under Condition 5 above, shall be completed; and any trees, shrubs, or areas of grass which die, are removed, damaged or become diseased within five years of the completion of the road development, shall be replaced within the following planting season with others of a similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure implementation of the approved landscaping scheme.

 Director of Planning and Transport