



APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION:

PROPOSED NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON SITE OF SEACROFT, INVERKIP,
INVERCLYDE, PA16 0EA
FOR SLAM TRANSPORT

DESIGN STATEMENT

Project No. 22056

1st Issue: 30/11/23

Revision A: 13/12/23



1.0 Introduction

'Seacroft' was the name of the one and a half storey cottage that previously occupied one of four detached plots. The cleared site is owned by our Client, Slam Transport. This is the application site. It is important to note that the location, the former dwelling and it's



previous occupants were the focus of an investigation and subsequent murder trial from 2016 – 2019. "Seacroft" was demolished in 2018. The site has a sustained recent melancholy and negative history, which has been reinforced in recent years by timber boarding, erected to provide an element of security, but it remains visually insensitive to the locality and it is a constant reminder of the horrific events that took place. Unfortunately, the recent history is now a stigma associated with this site. A redevelopment of the site would be a positive step forward and would help lift the mood associated with it's history.

2.0 Foreword

This Design Statement is a supporting document that should be read in conjunction with submitted drawings:

22056_D_101 – Proposed Site Plan; 22056_D_102 – Proposed Plans;

22056_D_103 – Proposed Typical Elevations; 22056_D_104 – Proposed Cross Section and 22056_D_105 - Proposed Computer Generated Renderings.

The scheme design comprises of a development of four detached one and a half storey dwelling houses. The road, access and seafront to the West have greatly influenced the design; a North Westerly and South Easterly configuration to take advantage of views and daylight. This also continues the semi-rural theme of all properties adjacent and in the wider context. The properties to the West all have the benefit of a sea view.

This statement sets out the ethos and justification for design of the four dwellings, which we intend to demonstrate is achievable, appropriate, that they sit well on the site and that the proposals are consistent with Inverclyde Council planning policies and guidance.

3.0 Previous Consent

An application for 2No. Contemporary 5 bedroom dwellings, application reference **19/0047/IC**, was granted in January, 2020. This application expired in January 2023. In light of the current economic climate, our Client assessed the financial viability of the two large dwellings to be unsustainable and instructed Nicholson McShane to proceed with a scheme of four smaller dwellings, which should appeal to a large market. Should the application not be supported, our client will be forced to assess whether the site is worth developing at all.

Slam Transport, commented:

“Our comprehensive review of local house prices, rental rates, and prevailing market demand has shown that construction of four units is required to ensure economic feasibility of the project. Four units will ensure optimised land use, leverage economies of scale, and ensure a return that justifies the project's progression, making it both viable and beneficial for the community. Given current market conditions and future forecasts, the development would inevitably not proceed if approval is for less than four units.”

3.1 New Road Regulations 2019

The approved application **19/0047/IC** preceded a change in the roads regulations and the new Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidelines, which was introduced shortly afterwards in April 2019 (after the submission of the application). The DMRB guidelines and Roads Safety regulations now demand that “priority junctions” (onto trunk roads) are required to be designed for new developments that comprise more than one dwelling house. These rules do not apply to a single dwelling, which

may still have direct access onto a trunk road. The requirement for a priority junction has limited the amount of developable land and this has influenced the setting out and positioning of new buildings. This is a contributing factor to our Client's financial review of the site; the feasibility, including costs for enabling works, roads and additional landscaping to achieve a serviceable arrangement (refuse vehicles etc), all which must be designed to the satisfaction of Transport Scotland and Inverclyde Roads Department in accordance with the National Roads Development Guidelines.

4.0 Location

The site is discretely located on the main Trunk road (A78), approximately 500 metres South of the main village of Inverkip, South of Kip Marina and North of the former Inverkip Powerstation site and slip road. It is a semi-rural location. To the east of the site, the hillside is populated by a woodland that separates Berfern Cottage and farm from the A78. Scotrail's Wemyss Bay to Glasgow train line is secluded from view.



"Seacroft" prior to demolition



Present day

4.1 The Site

“Seacroft” was originally one of four cottages built in the early 1930s. It is a typical example of suburban spread which was prevalent in the 1930s. It was demolished and the site cleared from 2019 to 2020. The site is currently overgrown; long grass, weeds bushes and trees.

The application site measures 0.59 acres (0.2388 ha).

The properties adjacent have the following areas:

- Little Gable (adjacent to Seacroft): 0.236 acres (0.0958ha)
- Westhaven: 0.244 acres (0.0987 ha)
- Birnham: 0.227 acres (0.0918 ha)

This makes the application site approximately 2.5 times larger than it's neighbours.

4.2 Site Boundaries

The site has four very different boundaries; large coniferous trees and a woodland to the South, which provides a buffer and defines the boundary with Wemyss Bay. A man made rock and boulder embankment forms the boundary to the sea front (West), separating the site from the River Clyde.

Immediately to the East of the site, the A78 rises upwards from North to South. The site is immediately adjacent to a shared active travel route; shared cycle and pedestrian footpath, which extends from Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay to Kip Marina.

“Westhaven” is the adjacent property located to the North, separated by an established hedge and fence. “Seacroft” and “Westhaven” historically shared a small driveway and joint junction, which, by modern standards would fail to meet the DMRB guidelines.

All properties to the West of the A78 are screened along the pavement with dense hedging, walls and fencing, from the main trunk road for two main reasons: acoustic treatment and visual separation from the road. This also offers some enhancement to

the aesthetics and living environment, but does not take away from the fact that the properties front onto the A78. The trunk road dominates the place setting.

“Birnam” is an individual property to the East which has limited useable garden to the rear and a very exposed garden to the West / adjacent to the road, which is mainly used for parking.

5.0 Site Analysis – A Semi Rural Setting

Urban Form:

“Urban form is the physical characteristics that make up built-up areas, including the shape, size, density and configuration of settlements. It can be considered at different scales: from regional, to urban, neighbourhood, 'block' and street.”*

** Urban form and infrastructure: a morphological review. Professor Katie Williams
University of the West of England, Bristol, June 2014*

Although much of this ethos can be applied to the application site, in fact it remains a semi-rural site.

5.1 The A78, Growth and Connections

Historically, Main Street, Inverkip was built as a settlement on the original A78 until the bypass was completed and opened in the early 70s, to become what we now know as the A78 trunk road, the main transport link between Greenock and Monkton.

The A78 trunk road has provided better access to Inverclyde's industries, for example, IBM was located in Spango Valley and began trading in 1954 through to the 1990s. Inverkip Powerstation which was decommissioned and fully demolished in 2013 was built in the 1970s. The A78 provided improved the infrastructure to these industries and served as a conduit to increased housing development in Wemyss Bay and the ever-expanding development of Inverkip, still ongoing. A significant portion of the greenbelt

in upper Inverkip has now been developed and a 650 dwelling development has recently been approved on the site of the former Powerstaion.

The relationship of the trunk road to the original four dwellings (Seacroft, Westhaven, Little Gable and Birnham) is insensitive, but is a consequence and necessity of growth and development.

5.2 Relationship of Existing Dwellings

The existing dwellings/cottages arguably have a poor visual connection with the sea in that they do not architecturally take advantage of the spectacular views across the Clyde, with the exception of the rear private gardens which are open to the West. This is largely due to the building techniques and technology available during this point in time (glass in particular), a necessity to provide protection from the elements and largely due to the vernacular of rural properties built around that time. All of the properties have generous gardens to the West with established shrubs and trees which largely enhance the amenity spaces. In terms of safe amenity and enjoyable living, the properties have a predominantly Westerly aspect. The East remains as a means of access, with little enjoyable amenity space. Planting and shrubbery further segregate the properties from each other, with no visual or tangible urban relationship or connection. In fact, the properties can only really be truly visually related to each other when viewed from the river or via an aerial view. There is no real street scape. The properties are largely screened and cannot be seen from the trunk road. The idea of a built urban form is arguably difficult to understand to the passer-by, either by car or as a pedestrian.



Site of “Seacroft” streetscape present day – active travel route shown.



Site of “Seacroft” streetscape prior to demolition – active travel route shown.

5.3 Daylight

Morning light to the site is compromised, especially in late autumn, winter and early spring, affected by the hills and dense woodland to the East. All of the sites receive decent quality South light and have the benefit of late afternoon / evening light to the rear gardens. This reinforces that the West / sea facing aspects of the site are of high value to the existing properties and any new development and this provides the best outlook.

5.4 Noise

The main noise interference is from the A78. The existing shrubbery and planting provide an element of sound attenuation. It is important that the planting is maintained or the distance of the development from the road is increased, where possible. Sound attenuation is being carefully considered to ensure that a high level of sound attenuation is designed within the building fabric, including specification of walls, triple glazing and general soft planting around the site, which acts a significant buffer; bushes, shrubs and external site walls.

5.5 Exposure to the Sea

The site, like it’s neighbours, is exposed to the harsh sea environment and weather that comes from the South West, typical of the West Coastal regions of Scotland. It is important that any new development takes cognisance of this, through an appropriate choice of materials, careful design and durability.

5.6 New residential development, suitability and use class

As with any development, the design of new residential buildings should respect the locality and scale of adjacent properties, but sustainable and suitable for modern living and adaptability. There is an opportunity to provide the locality with an exclusive modern model that responds to many factors; the coastal location, view, noise and orientation. The site is brownfield and has an existing Use Class 9 - Houses.

5.7 Existing habitat adjacent

A bat survey was undertaken by Nocturne Environmental Surveyors Limited on the 8th October 2019, on both the “Seacroft” cottage and assessing the coniferous woodland to the South. No bats were recorded. There is no built form currently on the site and adjacent properties are reasonably well maintained. This report was accepted as part of the granted scheme: **19/0047/IC**.

5.8 Flood Risk Assessment

Kaya Consulting Ltd. carried out an assessment and prepared a flood risk report in September 2018 for Slam Transport. This report recommends that the finished floor levels are acceptable at 6.5m above ordnance datum (AOD), which addresses concerns for protection against predicted sea levels rising in the future (predicted to rise from 4.15m to 4.62m AOD). The finished floor levels (FFL's) of proposed developments are required to be set at 300mm higher than the pathways. 'Kaya' has assessed the issue of existing drainage flow paths, including excess surface water from the A78 and through the site. The site is considered to be at low risk of flooding from Brueacre Burn, groundwater and infrastructure, according to the current report.

6.0 Design Proposal

6.1 Basis of proposal

Slam Transport wish to obtain Planning Permission for four new dwelling houses, designed to appeal to a wide market. We intend to demonstrate that the proposals are appropriate to the site, that the building design responds extraordinarily well to the complexities of the surrounding environment and that they in fact enhance the site and wider locality. It is an attractive design proposal that will enhance the architectural diversity and view from the Clyde, generating interest in the area. In Inverclyde, in particular, we have recently experienced a decline in the demand for large properties and a growth in demand for smaller but equally high quality homes within this popular locale – either for retirement, a secondary home by the sea or for smaller families. It also promotes the preferred redevelopment of a brownfield site, but is more of a niche development opportunity, in contrast to the run of the mill / expected housing development.

6.2 Design Form

There is no doubt that the proposed design departs from the typical dwelling house and it is a contrast to the historic 1930s bungalows that occupy the adjacent sites; aesthetics, scale and style of living, choice of materials and energy saving – these are all to modern standards. The locality clearly consist of separate plots, therefore the application site can be seen also as separate and the development can afford to deviate from the typical built form – the proposed development enhances the value and quality of it's neighbours. It regenerates the site in a way that it becomes a desirable place to live. Referring to the approved application 19/0047/IC, **the supporting statement also highlighted this. The following (extract taken from the design statement):**

[...] "the application proposal departs from this [1930s style bungalows] as the contemporary design proposal explains."

As Architects, we have a responsibility to produce innovative, high quality buildings that respond to the environment. Although developments should be sympathetic to their surrounding environments, there is a place for unique place making, which we firmly believe is an ideal opportunity with this site – an opportunity to respond to the setting and landscape.

6.3 Positioning of Dwellings

- 6.3.1 The site is situated at the end a row of existing detached cottages. The proposed development is set back from the trunk road to further enhance a sense of place, arrival and improve privacy, thus lessening the impact of the road on living.
- 6.3.2 The positioning of the new dwellings provides the development with an improved outlook and form – and is not a development that expectedly faces the trunk road or continues a building line that actually continues to detract the sense of place. In fact it will be an enhancement to the area and truly contributes positively to “placemaking.”
- 6.3.3 Similar to the neighbouring houses, the entrance levels to the dwellings are set lower than the road, but they distanced from the trunk road – the safety and quality of the spaces created and the living environment will be improved by creating attractive Easterly and Westerly aspects.
- 6.3.4 A minimum of 10 metre private gardens are provided to each dwelling, each with a Westerly aspect across the Clyde. Visually, gardens extend beyond the lawn areas to the boulder embankment and shore. This creates the perception of more space and thus enhances the quality of external spaces.
- 6.3.5 The buildings have been carefully dimensioned to allow four identical units to be positioned on site.
- 6.3.6 The correct parking provision will be incorporated into the design, as per Inverclyde Council Road’s department’s recommendations (also National guidelines): 2 parking spaces, measuring 3mx5.5m.
- 6.3.7 The positioning of the dwellings as shown, allows the new road infrastructure to be designed to the DMRB standards with the junction being designed to

provide 10m radii and therefore improving visibility on to the A78, complying with the requirement for 215m sightlines.

6.4 Landscaping

- 6.4.1 The site requires general clearing of scrubby trees, shrubs and long grass. The site has not been maintained in recent years and is generally overgrown.
- 6.4.2 The proposed site plan has been designed to incorporate areas of soft landscaping including a buffer zone between the dwellings and trunk road. The soft landscaping will be self-supporting and graded to ensure that the trunk road is structurally supported and the lower access levels are achieved. Areas of retaining walls may be required, subject to the final designed levels.
- 6.4.3 The proposed landscaping is intended to enhance the biodiversity, sense of place which will be of benefit to the wider locality and comprises of lawn, shrubs and hedging between each dwelling house and general edging. Common hedging will be planted along the pavement side to provide a visual and auditory buffer zone.
- 6.4.4 Permeable block paving and hardstanding areas will be designed, as part of the SUDS system.

6.5 Natural Daylight and Sunlight

The proposal considers the effect of quality daylight to the adjacent developments. Quality diffused daylight and sunlight are virtually maintained and the properties are unaffected. This is largely attributed to the scale and setting out of the development.

6.6 Active Travel Route; Cycle and Pedestrian Path

The active travel route will be improved as part of the works, with an additional buffer zone formed to further safeguard pedestrians from traffic travelling at the national speed limit. Essentially the width of the pedestrian footpath will be improved by widening, further improving the pedestrian links between Inverkip, Inverkip Marina and

Wemyss Bay. The Client understands and recognises that a section 56 agreement may be required to facilitate this. As also mentioned in our planning policy analysis document, on site cycle storage will be provided to each dwelling.

6.7 Building Design

The Proposed building typology comprises of identical 1 and ½ storey dwelling houses, with the main living spaces (comprising dining, lounge and kitchen) on the ground floor. The design is strikingly contemporary, attractive, compact and efficient. Each dwelling will be purposely angled differently to soften and break up the rigidity of the form, thus creating added interest. The master bedroom and secondary bedroom are both located on the first floor level. The master bedroom cantilevers to provide a covered patio area and infinity style uninterrupted views across the Clyde, via a fully glazed gable end. All house types have a vaulted ceiling to the 1st floor, formed in a warm roof construction. They are adaptable to a living / home working environment, and are also suitable as a single person or couples dwelling, or as a retirement home.

High quality durable materials are proposed as part of the modern design:

- Zinc / steel powder coated roofing cladding material, highly suitable for marine environments. This requires little of no maintenance.
- High quality cladding board material will be installed, highly suitable for exposed and marine environments. Some of the doors are to be fabricated using the same. To create a homogeneous / monolithic aesthetic.
- High quality, high performing triple glazed units throughout.
- Single ply roofing material below balcony areas.
- The roof balconies are strategically designed adjacent to the 1st floor accommodation, which creates a visual break and privacy between the dwellings. None of the balconies are overlooked. None of the balconies impact on the neighbouring sites. The balconies provide an idea break out space for activity, for light gardening work and for appreciating the spectacular views. With frameless balustrades, they provide a sense of infinity and uninterrupted views.

- Generally, the design comprises materials that require low maintenance and that are sustainable and durable and that have been considered to withstand the harsh marine environment.

6.8 Sustainability

6.8.1 The compact physical size of each of the dwellings encourages a living space that is cost effective.

6.8.2 Electrical heating and water heating exchange technology will be provided to each dwelling, provided by way of renewable energy sources, to be confirmed. The Client is considering the use of air source heat pumps and supplementary solar photovoltaic panels (TBC) and other technologies. An assessment will be made to ensure that at least the minimum SAP ratings are achieved. Together with high air tightness levels, the insulation specification ensures that the requirement for space heating will be minimised. The U-Values will exceed the levels specified for each building element. Triple glazing will further enhance the energy performance. It is anticipated that the development will achieve the “silver” standard outlined in Section 7.0 of the Building Standards Technical Handbook.

6.8.3 Each space will be separately zoned to allow for further control over space heating.

6.8.4 Any rainwater or surface water will be designed to soakaway from each of the properties and designed as part of the SUDS scheme.

6.8.5 Vehicle charging points will be provided to each dwelling.

6.9 Accessibility

6.9.1 All pathways will be formed as shared surfaces, with gradients formed no greater than 10%. Level barrier free access will be provided on entry and to the patio / low decking levels.

6.9.2 2 No. parking spaces per dwelling are designed to provide ease of access and are positioned adjacent to the entrances to each property.

- 6.9.3** All paths leading to the entrances will be designed to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.9.4** An enhanced apartment will be provided to the main living space, but further than this, the open plan configuration allows for flexible living, free manoeuvrability within the kitchen and a highly flexible and adaptable space.
- 6.9.5** The sanitary facility provided on the ground floor will be fully compliant with the accessibility requirements, as set out in the Building Standards Technical Handbook.
- 6.9.6** The design makes provision for a future stair lift to allow access to the 1st floor level.
- 6.9.7** Refuse collection will be improved. At present, waste collection vehicles stop on the A78 outside the entrances to “Little Gable” and “Westhaven,” which forces traffic to overtake, or to queue. The new development allows collection within the development site, therefore improving safety to workers and reduces the risk of road accidents.
- 6.9.8** Contributions and improvements to the active travel route is proposed.
- 6.9.9** A New priority junction forms part of the proposals from the site onto the A78 therefore improving safety. Notably, this is a considerable improvement on the previous arrangement to “Seacroft,” and also that of the adjacent developments. Visibility sight lines are achieved, in accordance with Transport Scotland and the requirements of the Roads Safety audit, designed in conjunction with the DMRB Guidelines.