

Kilmacolm Civic Trust

New Planning Procedures

The Executive Committee has continued to meet during the summer and early autumn. An important aspect of the Committee's work is the examination of every Planning Application arising in Kilmacolm and Quarrier's Village. Since August 3rd there has been a change to the procedures relating to the Scottish Planning System which is administered locally by Inverclyde District Council. The objective of the new system is to reduce the time taken to process large scale applications, especially those of national importance. The changes are procedural and there is currently no material change to the requirement to obtain permission for development of land, buildings etc.

Three categories of development have been defined: national, major and local and the procedures to be followed depend upon the category into which the proposed development falls. Almost all domestic developments will be classified as "local". Most of these will be determined by planning officers with the right of review by a Local Review Body consisting of councillors. Neighbour notification will now be undertaken by the Council who will send notification to all addresses within 20 metres of the boundary of the application site. If the owner is not the occupant of the neighbouring property it is the duty of the occupier to inform the owner of the notice. The council may also post notices in the Greenock Telegraph (usually on a Friday). Another significant change is the introduction of electronic planning systems. Planning applications may be made online and, once a valid application has been registered, application forms, all submitted plans and all documentation will be available to view online at <http://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk>. Public libraries provide free internet access for the viewing of planning applications but, as a consequence of the new arrangements, paper copies will no longer be supplied to the libraries. The information will also be available to view at Cathcart House, 6 Cathcart Square, Greenock. Objections may be made in writing or online, but they will not be published other than in the report which will accompany each decision and the source will not be identifiable.

Information about procedures for national and major applications can be found under *Planning and the Environment* at www.inverclyde.gov.uk.

Duchal House and Estate

The Committee has expended much time and effort in the consideration of the proposals by the Maclay family to (1) repair and maintain Duchal House and associated buildings and (2) develop two sites on their estate by the building of houses. (The development plan is available at Kilmacolm Public Library.) These are "major" applications in terms of the new procedures and application has been made for permission to build on land zoned as greenbelt. The applications have been submitted as *Enabling Development*, whereby funds realised by the housing development will be applied entirely to the repair and maintenance of Duchal House (grade A listed) and associated buildings (grade B listed). *Enabling Development* is development that is contrary to established planning policy - national or local - but which is occasionally permitted because it brings public benefits that have been demonstrated clearly to outweigh the harm that would be caused.

The Committee has written to the Council supporting proposals to restore Duchal House but expressing strong reservations about the case for the Enabling Development and also, therefore, for the two housing developments.