



Section 02  
**WIDER AREA APPRAISALS**



## 2.1 Planning and Policy context

Full details of the legislative and planning policy context applicable to the PPIp application are provided within Chapter 4 (Legislative and Planning Policy Context) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The design approach for Lomond Banks has been informed by the following Policy and Guidance documents:

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) Local Development Plan sets out a vision and spatial strategy for the National Park area focused a place to Live, Invest, Visit and Experience. Like other National Parks in Scotland it has four key aims:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural

heritage of the area

- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

The Local Development Plan's Development Strategy Map (page 17) identifies Balloch as one of eight locations for 'Strategic Tourism Opportunities', reflecting its role as a visitor destination and gateway to the National Park. Both Woodbank and West Riverside are allocated for visitor experience within the local development plan (VE1 West Riverside and Woodbank House VE4).

LIVE in Balloch outlines a strategy for future

development and is based upon a charrette managed by the National Park together with West Dunbartonshire Council and Scottish Enterprise. During the charrette, residents took part in a codesign process which focussed on, among others, initiatives located within the proposed site.

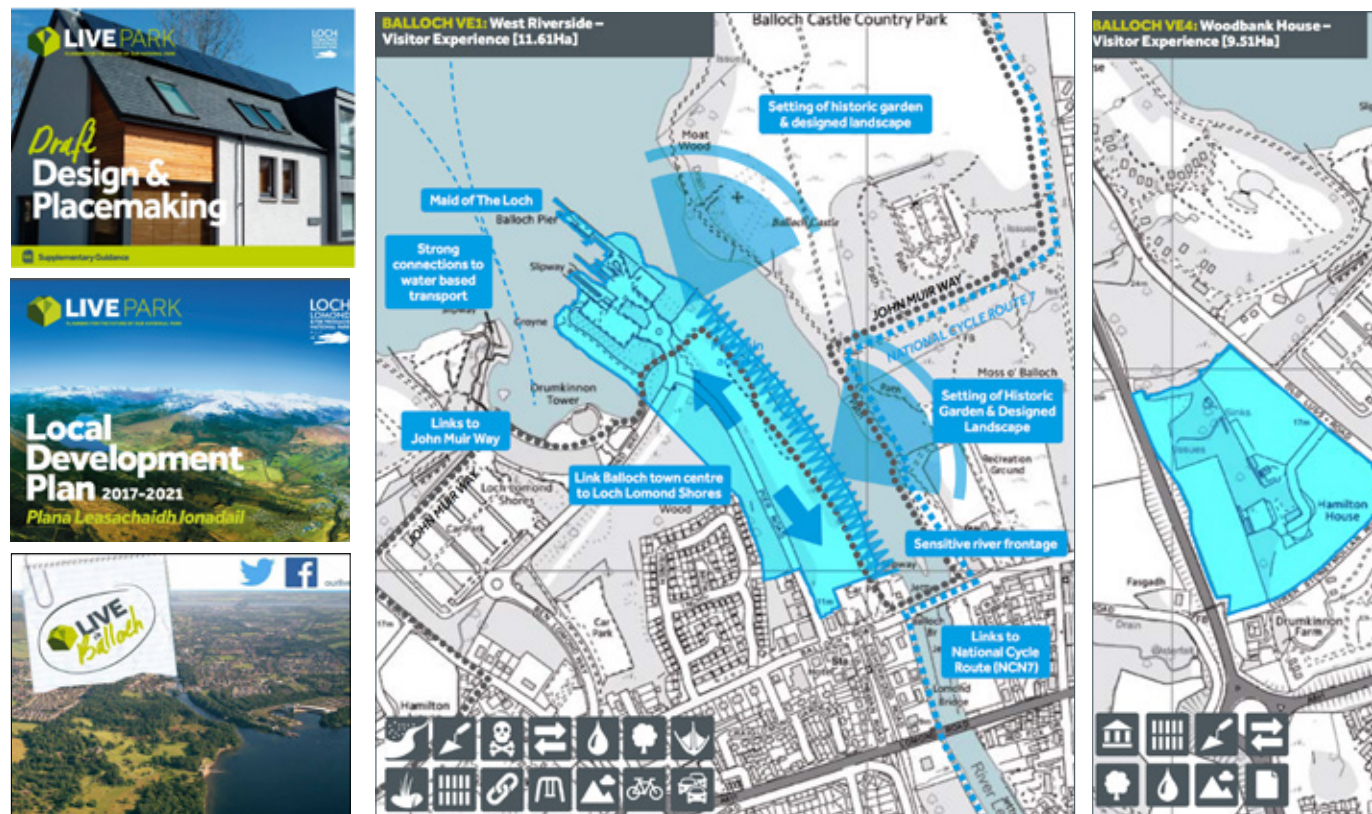
LLTNP Design and Placemaking supplementary guidance supports the delivery of the core Local Development Plan policies. It encourages high quality design solutions for the very special places which form part of the National Park.

The design approach and concepts also reference the following guidance and sources of information:

- The six qualities of successful places set out within the Scottish Planning Policy (2014)
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- Designing Streets
- Wild Park – LLTNP Biodiversity Action Plan
- PAN 61 - Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (2001)
- PAN 68 – Design Statements
- The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (SNH)
- Landscape Character Assessment (SNH)

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, CHARRETTE AND PLANNING GUIDANCE



### EXISTING BALLOCH CHARACTER

Balloch aims to be a vibrant, busy place - a Gateway to the National Park and beyond



suburban character



poor welcome at station, parking an issue



pubs and restaurants



lacks an attractive centre

### WIDER LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT: integration is a key consideration





## 2.2 Wider landscape setting

The site is positioned within a designated National Park, and close to a nationally designated National Scenic Area. Because of this, it is considered to have a valuable and special landscape setting.

It sits on a lowland area at the southern end of Loch Lomond, with rising ground on all sides of the site except directly to the north (Loch Lomond) and directly to the south (the urban settlements along the River Leven valley).

Despite its important landscape designations, Balloch's built development and infrastructure means that its immediate landscape setting does not have the highly scenic, rugged and wild qualities of the park experienced further north. Its landscape setting has already been impacted upon by a larger new development (Lomond Shores), by road infrastructure and by housing.

A landscape visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The LVIA and ZTV analysis suggests that the proposed development may be visible from areas including:

- Two isolated locations on the loch shore (Proposal Beach, within the grounds of Balloch Castle and the boathouse marina within the grounds of Cameron House estate);
- Areas of open high ground immediately to the east (Balloch Castle) and west (Upper Stoneyhollan) of Balloch; and
- Very occasional long-distance views of the development from Inchmurrin Island (4km from the site) and areas of high ground further afield – the visual impact on which would be negligible.





## WIDER LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES





### 2.3 Wider built context: Balloch

Balloch has been identified as a key settlement in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area. Its location at the foot of Loch Lomond means it has an important role as a gateway to the National Park for those travelling from the south and from central Scotland along the A82.

It is the most northerly part of the Vale of Leven conurbation (Alexandria, Renton, Bellsmyre) with a population of circa 6000 people. It has a suburban development pattern of predominantly two storey houses.

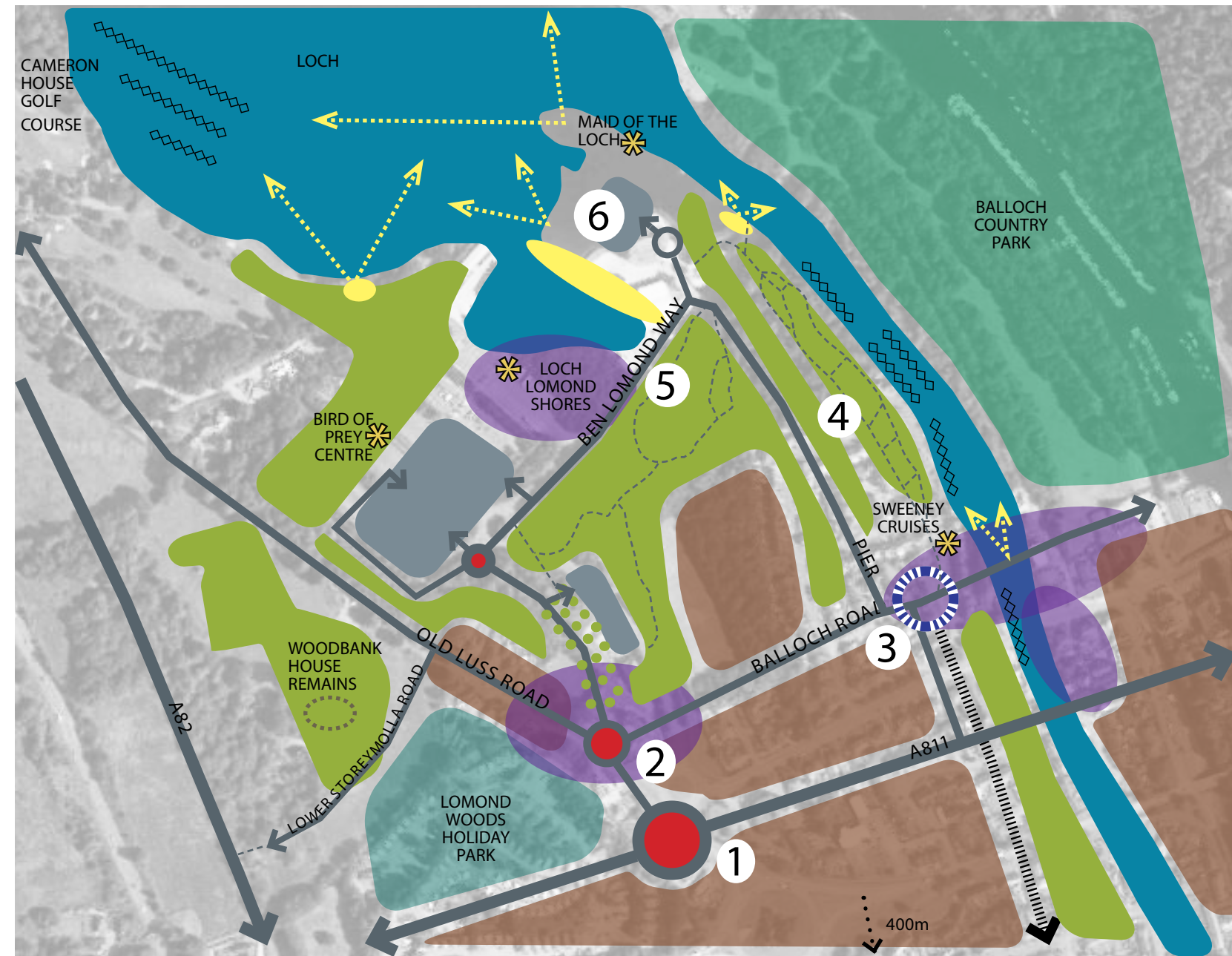
Balloch is an important tourist destination, with a number of successful visitor destinations including:

- Loch Lomond Shores: indoor, outdoor and water-based activities plus retail, restaurants and an aquarium. It has around 1.2million visitors annually and is consistently one of the best visited free tourism attractions in Scotland.
- Other pubs and restaurants within the Balloch area.
- Boating and cruises on the River Leven and Loch Lomond, including the Maid of the Loch and the Duncan Mills memorial slipway.
- The Visitor Information Centre had 54,500 visitors in 2015, up on 53,500 in 2014.
- Balloch Country Park, which has been a visitor destination since 1910.
- A range of events and festivals including Farmers Markets, the Annual Loch Lomond Food & Drink Festival (23,000 visitors 2014), the Great Scottish Swim (3000 entrants), cycle, water and land Races, Festive Lights (13,000 visitors 2014) and winter events, Outdoor Get Active Festivals, Drive In Movies, as well as smaller Art Fairs, Antique Weekends and Family Events throughout the year.

the Loch Lomond steamers, other railway infrastructure



data collected from scottish natural heritage and historic environment scotland



1 Largest roundabout displays attractive bulb planting and trees but still lacks sense of arrival into Balloch



2 Second roundabout lacks identity and signage: there is no indication of an attraction down the road



3 Village centre with few amenities to encourage visitors to stop and spend time.



4 Pierhead area lacks sense of arrival and is featureless, but there are great views across the loch.



5 Ben Lomond Way creates a barrier between Drumkinnon woods and the loch front.



6 Underutilized woodland and glades



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## 2.4 History of development in the Balloch area

Although there was some industry focused on the River Leven before the railway arrived, the Balloch settlement was very small and rural in character until the early 20th Century.

**Local Estates:** Balloch Castle Country Park was originally the seat of the Earls of Lennox. The original castle was replaced by a gothic-style mansion in 1808, with only the remains of the castle's earthworks still visible. The Park itself is now an important 18th and 19th century designed landscape. It was purchased by the Glasgow Corporation in the early 1900's, and in 1980 it became Balloch Castle Country Park.

**Railway and industry:** During the late 19th century, the arrival of the Loch Steamers and the railway heralded the beginning of Balloch as a tourist destination. Although the line terminated at Balloch Pier to service the Loch Lomond steamers, other railway infrastructure was located at the (then) Central Station. Throughout the years the railway was developed further with sheds, goods yard and a turntable and further sidings to accommodate the carriages needed for summer travellers.

The last public cruise left Balloch Pier on August 30th 1981 and Balloch Pier Station closed in 1986 with a reconfigured Balloch station opening in 1988, replacing the former Balloch Central Station. Railway sidings were converted to greenspace.

**Boating and cruises:** The last steamer in service on Loch Lomond, the 'Maid of the Loch', sits at Balloch Pier. It has been partially restored by a charity – the Loch Lomond Steamship Company – who have successfully bid for funding to relaunch it as a fully operational paddle steamer. The Balloch Steam Slipway is a 1902 heritage attraction which was constructed to pull the Maid of the Loch out of the water, rebuilt in 2006 with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

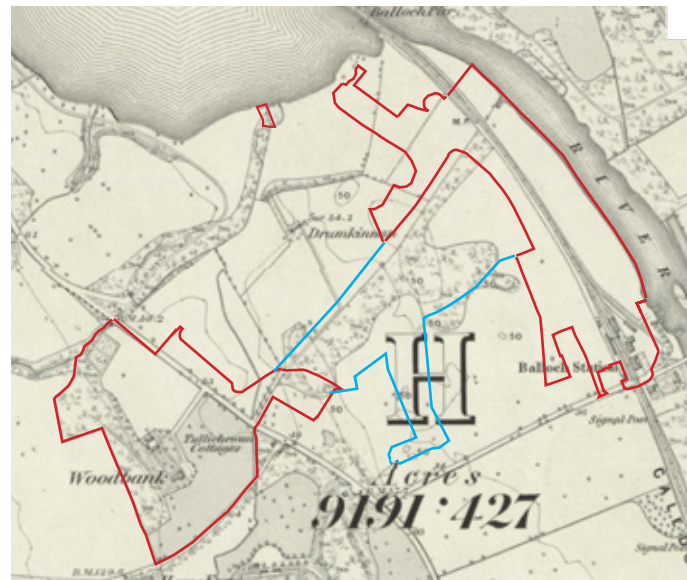
**Residential development:** There are a few older, historic (pre 1919) properties which are 'pepper-potted' throughout Balloch. Unlike many other similar sized settlements in the National Park, these properties do not sit together to enclose attractive spaces and places. Because of this there are very few places with the potential to act as a 'village square' or as a gathering point for positive community interactions.

Balloch's residential areas were mainly developed after 1950 and as a result have a low density, suburban character. These include Drumkinnon Gate, located on the site of a previous factory.

**Industry:** The British Silk Dyeing Company works opened in 1929 and continued to operate until 1980. A catastrophic fire resulted in its closure; the site was then developed for the Drumkinnon Gate housing development.

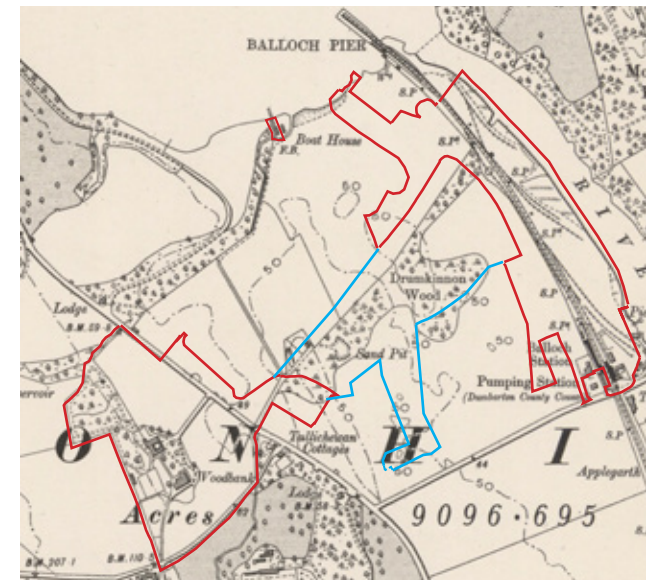
During the twentieth century a number of existing smaller sand/gravel pits at Drumkinnon Wood began to be quarried more extensively, leaving behind a flooded area which

1860



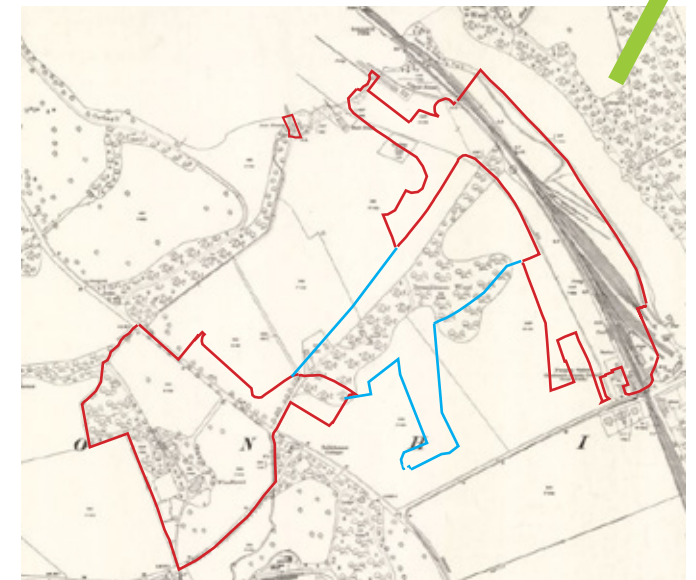
- Woodbank House
- Balloch Station and Balloch Pier
- Settlement at Drumkinnon & Drumkinnon Wood

1896



- Woodbank House
- Boathouse for Woodbank House now constructed
- Settlement at Balloch Station extended
- Gravel pit at Drumkinnon Wood

1919



- Woodbank House - more extensive ancillary buildings
- New jetties at Balloch Pier
- Railway tracks more extensive

1910s



- Steamer at Balloch Pier

1920s



- Extensive railway sidings
- Drumkinnon Wood partially re-felled?

1940s



- Loch Lomond Factory constructed



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has now been incorporated into the Loch Lomond Shores development.

A major oil pipeline between Finnart and Grangemouth was laid in the 1950's, resulting in significant areas of made ground and mounding within Drumkinnon Woods together with some woodland removal.

## Loch Lomond Shores

The Loch Lomond Shores development was opened in 2002. Its construction involved the extension of an existing, flooded gravel pit to form a new lagoon, now the setting for a contemporary visitor destination which reinforces Balloch's potential as a gateway to Loch Lomond, with development focused on the Loch and providing retail, restaurants plus a range of attractions. These initially included an IMAX cinema located in the landmark Drumkinnon Tower, which is now an

## 2.5 Future development

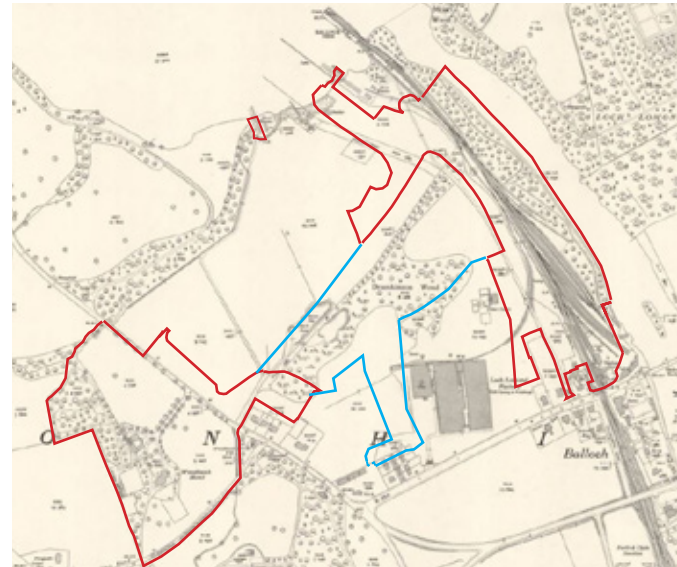
**Sustrans:** Outwith the site, a first phase of public realm improvements is currently being progressed by West Dunbartonshire Council. It includes the formalised parking bays along Balloch Road West and the creation of a Village Square. Quality materials, raised tables and traffic calming measures will create a sense of place with the potential to encourage further activity like seasonal markets and performances.

A second phase of development is proposed, which includes part of the Station Square area within the PPIp site boundary. The timescales for this area are to be confirmed, and a collaborative working approach proposed between Flamingo land, West Dunbartonshire Council, Sustrans and ScotRail. Sustrans considered it best to delay implementing these works so that all the developments in this area complement each other

**Community Watersports Hub:** Proposals have been developed for a potential community watersports hub located at the pierhead area. As yet, it has not received funding and has not yet been the subject of a planning application

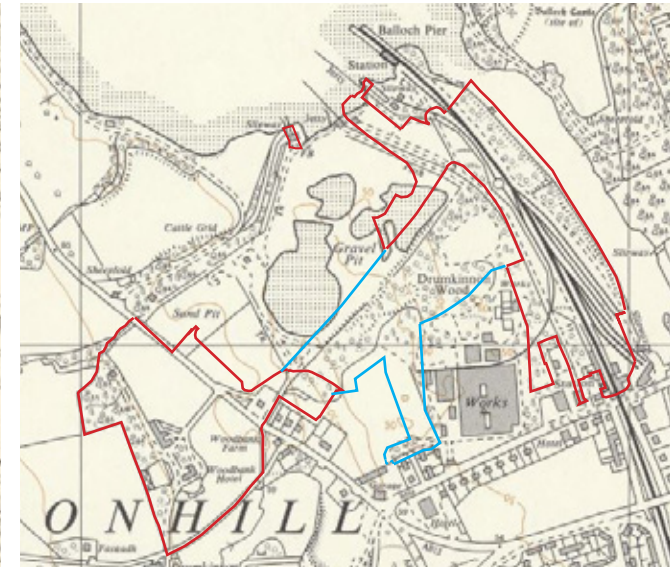
**Sweeney Cruises** submitted a Planning Application to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park which has been approved. (Ref. No: 2017/0373/DET) They consider that their existing facilities on the banks of the River Leven are no longer fit for purpose and propose to construct three new buildings (a two-storey office building, slipway enclosure/ workshop building, and a boathouse with storage level above) and to install two new pontoons and a new access road.

1936



- Woodbank House - now Woodbank Hotel
- Loch Lomond Factory (silk dying and finishing)

1965



- Extensive gravel pits and ponds at Loch Lomond Shores location
- Further development at Balloch

2017



- Loch Lomond Shores constructed
- Balloch Pier Station & railway lines now gone
- Balloch Station relocated
- Woodbank House now a ruin

1960s



- Steamer at pier
- Railway line still in use
- Holiday caravans

1980s



- Artificial lagoon at Loch Lomond Shores location
- Railway line and Balloch Pier Station replaced with greenspace

2000s



- Loch Lomond Shores constructed
- Waterside and lagoon reshaped
- New homes constructed at previous factory