

Project Brief

Document Overview

This project brief outlines the proposal to re-establish the historical Ropewalk that existed between Port Glasgow train station and the current site of Lidl's.

This document includes the objectives, scope and desired outcomes of the project and what the proposed solutions might look like.

Project Background

Port Glasgow has a rich industrial heritage and has retained many historical buildings which illustrate this. The Gourock Ropeworks building is one such iconic building which stands at the eastern entry to Port Glasgow.

The Gourock Ropeworks from Cove Road in Gourock acquired the Port Glasgow Rope and Duck Company in 1797 taking on the formers name.

The duck referred to in the firm's name related to a heavy fabric with a variety of uses including for ships sails. The Port Glasgow Rope & Duck Company operated from 1736.

The building we know as the Ropeworks building is the only one remaining from what was a substantial operation. This building actually started life as a sugar refinery and was later acquired and repurposed by the Ropeworks in 1886 as it expanded.

The vast majority of the original Ropeworks operations were carried out to the south of the railway line that serves Port Glasgow. Extensive factory units, shops and mills extended from Robert Street at the foot of the Clune Brae right up to the road bridge above Port Glasgow Station at Craig Ard.

The Ropeworks was a major employer in Port Glasgow and actively recruited females providing good working conditions and wages.

Gourock Ropeworks Co Ltd became part of Bridon Ropes Limited in 1970 and ceased production at the Port Glasgow site in 1976. When the works closed in the mid 1970s the machinery was collected by Glasgow museums, this was initially stored at the Transport Museum before being moved to the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine in the 1980s where it still resides.

The Gourock Ropeworks Co Ltd was the largest business of its kind in the world for many years.

A Ropewalk building extending to 500 meters to stretch and weave ropes and the accompanying mill buildings were demolished and much of the area now stands vacant and abandoned. The site is now partially (Circa 5%) occupied by a Lidl retail store and carpark, however recent investigations of the site show many features remain such as:

- Asphalt roadway which ran parallel to the Ropewalk.
- Original slate flagstone floor of the old factory.

- 100s of metres of air raid shelters which has been dug out of the hillside at Bouverie (some of the longest surviving purpose build air raid shelters in europe)
- An old Quarry which would have been used to build many of the early buildings within Port Glasgow.

So much of Port Glasgow and Inverclyde's history are now fenced off and left abandoned under bushes and brambles it is high time this area is brought back into the public's consciousness and back into use for a forward-looking Port Glasgow.

Project Objectives / Outcomes

The main objective of the proposal is to bring the Gourock Ropewalk back into use as a wheel/walking route.

This would link Port Glasgow train station and the town centre with Lidl and the lower east end of Port Glasgow. The current connectivity by foot to Lidl involves climbing to Bouverie and then down via Newark Place or following the arc of the busy A8 out via Blackstone roundabout. The Gourock Ropewalk would also bring opportunities for active travel.

Opening this areas vast heritage would bring scope for future development as a heritage and cultural centre, in terms of being able to tell the story of the Lower Clyde from herring fishing, sugar trading, ship building, the blitz, etc... In terms of economic regeneration and the future, the Ropework site is ground zero.

The Ropeworks proposal would bring the following outcomes and opportunities:

- Create an active travel route between Port Glasgow town centre and lower east Port Glasgow.
- Creates opportunities for growing spaces to include orchard planting the length of the ropewalk with fruit trees, bushes, and flowering trees.
- Investigate the use of the quarry adjacent to the ropewalk as a climbing wall.
- Investigate the air raid shelters with a view to restoring them and making them safe to be explored via guided tours.
- Develop proposals to develop this substantial land into a heritage centre telling the story of Port Glasgow and the Lower Clyde.