

BRIEF NOTES OF MEETING

“Use it or lose it: reusing Scotland’s historic buildings”

At Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 4 on Wednesday 4 February 2015 at 5.30pm

Our Ref: EM SC R10-Use it or lose it Briefing Note 2015-02-04

PRESENT

Nick Allan	Nick Allan Associates
Nicola Barclay	Scottish Futures Trust
Sarah Barron	Sarah Barron Landscape Architecture
Neil Baxter	RIAS
Kate Byrne	
Steven Cochran	Michael Laird Architects
Jocelyn Cunliffe	Gray, Marshall & Associates
Graeme Dey MSP	Scottish Parliament
David Fleming	Stonehaven Town Partnership
Patricia Ferguson MSP	Scottish Parliament
Dugald Forbes	Schools for the Future
John Gerrard	Church Building Renewal Trust
Cliff Hague	BEFS
Gary Henney	Kingsbarns Distillery
John Lawson	City of Edinburgh Council
Euan Leitch	BEFS
Gillian Lockyer	Studio 42 Design Ltd
Kirsty Macari	Angus Council
Mike MacKenzie MSP	Scottish Parliament
John McKinney	
Dr Robert McWilliam	Panel for Historic Engineering Works
Kelly Mirren	COSLA
Paul Morsley	Iglu
Eugene Mullan	RIAS
Kirsty Murray	PAS (Planning Aid Scotland)
Mark Palmer	Max Fordham
Dara Parsons	Historic Scotland
John Pelan	Scottish Civic Trust
Peter Riddoch	Peter Riddoch Architect
Steven Robb	Historic Scotland
Alistair Scott	Smith Scott Mullan Associates
Dr James Simpson	Simpson & Brown Architects
Drew Smith MSP	Scottish Parliament
Clare Sorenson	RCAHMS
Paul Sweeney	Springburn Winter Gardens Trust

David Thompson	DPT Urban Design
David Tinto	Smith Scott Mullan Associates
David Orr	Urbanist Group
Jean Urguhart MSP	Scottish Parliament
Diane Watters	RCAHMS
David Wood	PAS (Planning Aid Scotland)
Luke Wormald	Scottish Government
Pat Lally	RIAS

APOLOGIES

Keith Baker	Glasgow Caledonia University
Sarah Boyack MSP	Scottish Parliament
Hugh Edgar	RICS
Linda Fabiani MSP	Scottish Parliament
Annabelle Goldie MSP	Scottish Parliament
Colin Hamilton	Max Fordham
Jack Hugh	
Rebecca Hughes	
Nile Istephan	Eildon
Debbie Mays	The Heritage Place
Eila McQueen	Archaeology Scotland
Flick Monk	CSPP
Alison Morris	City of Edinburgh Council
Richard Simpson MSP	Scottish Parliament
Richard Slipper	GVA James Barr
Steven Tolson	RICS

1.0 WELCOME

Drew Smith MSP welcomed all present to the meeting.

2.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING THEME

Euan Leitch – Built Environment Forum Scotland.

Euan introduced the theme of the meeting by stating that ‘use it or lose it’ is a permanent issue. Buildings will always need to be reused. This can be difficult and pose management issues.

Buildings, which may or may not be listed, of local/national importance are not necessarily being cared for. In their reuse we need to consider revenue options as well as the needs and wants of the community. Sustainability is a key focus in their reuse.

Euan highlighted that this topic was discussed at a Cross Party Group Meeting **15 December 2005** with the following key points highlighted at that time

- Zero rate VAT on refurbishment projects.

- Fiscal incentives, eg. tax credits for rehabilitation of existing buildings.
- Opportunity to sell air rights above a building in order to raise funds for refurbishment.
- Encouraging a wider range of clients to engage with the sustainability agenda.
- Reduce the complexity of funding for sustainable design initiatives.
- Require demolition consent for all buildings, not just those of historic interest.
- Buildings to have “eco-labelling” system.
- Introduce an insurance policy which will cover client and constructional professionals for the additional risks involved in designing, constructing innovative, sustainable construction approaches.
- Requirement for design of current buildings for loose fit in the future.
- Establish a method of measuring value of a building which incorporates aspects such as embodied energy and benefit to urban setting.
- Establish a “one stop shop” for planning/listed building/Historic Scotland, in order to reduce the complexity of this process.

Euan noted that while some of these issues have been addressed many of the others are still relevant.

3.0 INVESTMENT FOR TRANSFORMATION: CREATING COMMERCIALY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Presentation by Gary Henney, Project Manager – Kingsbarns Distillery

Gary started his career as a Surveyor for construction contracting businesses, he gained experience across a broad range of projects including the construction of the new Upper Forth Bridge crossing at Kincardine; the Olympic White Water facility; and the largest BMW garage in Europe.

He joined Wemyss Properties three years ago. Tasked now with taking projects from project conception to site completion and handover, this role focuses on commercial viability; design; standards and delivery. Through this role he was seconded to undertake the design and construction of a new visitor centre and distillery on the site of an existing listed farm steading just outside of Kingsbarns in Fife.

Presentation Summary: Gary has been working on the Kingsbarns Distillery project for the last 2-3 years and he began by discussing the building’s history. The building is an 18th century farm complex. Built like a fort for protection and extended/adapted many times throughout the centuries before becoming obsolete in the 1960s.

- The building was deemed unsuitable for residential development so it was recommended for commercial or industrial use.
- A gap was identified in the market through the golfing industry for a Distillery in the Fife area. Various organisations were approached for guidance and support for potential sites for the project. The project would take advantage of the golfing tourism and travel markets as well as exportation.
- The Kingsbarns Distillery project was awarded the ‘Food Processing’ grant which allowed

the project to commence in the summer of 2012. Due to the grant being time bound the works had to begin immediately which was very challenging.

- Lots of negotiations were required with the relevant bodies (such as Historic Scotland) to change the building to suit the Distillery's needs. Much of the building had to be taken away to create the space required.

Lessons learned on the Kingsbarns Distillery project:

- All parties involved need to work towards the time restrictions. Local authorities did not have the same time restrictions as the grant imposed on the project and stalled works, creates barriers and a lack of cohesion.
- The key challenge was making the project commercially sustainable, from a private perspective the project increased tourism, employment and consumer expenditure
- Long term view on the project is reflected in the 175 year lease. Long term view is essential. This was a legacy project and as such construction was sympathetic and contained as much reuse of materials as possible.

4.0 HOW COLLABORATIVE REGENERATION SAVED THE GLENGATE HALL

Presentation by Kirsty Macari, Senior Planning Officer – Angus Council

Kirsty graduated in 2001 with a BSc(Hons) in Town & Regional Planning and undertook further study to complete a Pg Dip in Urban Design. She has been employed by Angus Council since 2005 and has recently been appointed as Senior Planning Officer. In her current role she leads officers covering a variety of specialisms including landscape, access, conservation, biodiversity and sustainability, dealing with strategy, policy and project delivery. Kirsty is a steering group member of the Local Authority Urban Design Forum.

Presentation Summary: Glengate Hall became vacant in 2004 and had fallen into disrepair. It was built in 1846 and is category C listed. The owner of the building had planning permission to turn the building into a residential property but was unable to secure the finance to do so.

The council's planning department were producing a CARS submission for the Kirriemuir area whilst the strategic housing department were trying to source projects for more affordable housing in the area. The building became a priority project in 2012 and contact was made with the owner. CARS was submitted August 2012 and funding secured in January 2013.

- There was an issue with funding where the housing department had to complete within 12 months whereas the CARS funding had 5 years. The planning process was made as smooth as possible, this was helped as the local authority were project managing. The project completed December 2013.
- The council made use of media sources to eradicate the negative stigma which was existent in the area at the time. They used Twitter, Facebook, the Council's website, the Angus Matters magazine etc to keep the project in the public realm. The owner was very hands on and they were able to hold open days for the local public to visit the building and ask questions.
- Owner wanted to create homes for people and so introduced a 10 year rent freeze but did impose certain standards, for example, 2-bed flats leased to 2 people and 1-bed flats to

singles.

Lessons learned on the Glengate Hall project:

- By being open and involving the public in the journey they became part of the project. The project helped change the community perspective.
- An open dialogue, both positive and negative, is vital in meetings – which should include all stakeholders. This is needed to create solutions to problems for everyone; all about communication.
- Need to manage the risks well, such as funding constraints, timing constraint and conflicting timelines. When planning these projects we must be thinking of 10 years and beyond to ensure the building's life in their new use is sustainable.
- The flow of communication has kept going after completion of the project – follow ups with tenants and the owner has taken on the role of landlord.

5.0 LOCATING THE FUTURE – CREATING AND RECREATING ASSETS

Presentation by Dugald Forbes, Learning and Teaching Adviser– Schools for the Future

Dugald Forbes retired from his post as Rector of Kirkcudbright Academy 16 months ago. His time there was distinguished by major curricular innovation and success detailed in a major research programme sponsored by the Scottish Government and carried out by Glasgow University.

Dugald is currently working as Learning and Teaching Advisor in the Schools for the Future Team in Dumfries and Galloway and, in particular, is leading those aspects in the development of Dumfries Learning town. He has also been working with Architecture and Design Scotland on Guidance for Outdoor Learning and taking advantage of existing facilities and accommodation.

Presentation Summary: The project is striving towards planning and delivering education on a whole town basis where all young people benefit equally and schools, colleges and universities work together. The concept is about creating an educational hub for Dumfries and to provide a seamless curriculum.

- The partnership was created in response to the state of the schools in the town. Dumfries symbolizes the state of our school buildings across Scotland.
- Sometimes it is considered easier to start from scratch but the project wants to retain the best of the old. Project will comprise of two phases, first phase intended for completion in 2018. Dumfries Learning Town objectives:
- To use the best of the old and new. Some buildings are no longer viable, either financially or in state of repair– or both- so new buildings are also planned for construction.
- The project wants to build on tradition, not to demolish it. The intention is to create buildings which can adapt to the changes required by future generations.
- The word 'refurbishment' causes problems in its connotations as it does not represent the full works intended. The project wants to create a revised philosophy of teaching and learning. How do we envision education in the future?
- Although we cannot predict the future we must look forward with long term vision.

- Understanding between users and designers is crucial for the success of this project.

6.0 DISCUSSION ON THE TOPIC AND KEY POINTS

There was significant discussion on the subject involving a number of people from various professional backgrounds. The following are the key points which arose amongst attendees:

KEY POINTS

- Funding often time sensitive and not all parties working at the same speed.
- Lack of cohesion within local authorities and between local authority and Scottish Government.
- Lack of continuity in local authority staff can be an impediment to project progress.
- Procurement process sometimes a disincentive to local business and materials.
- Reuse is profitable but on a longer timescale, and therefore needs a committed developer/investor/owner.
- Early collaboration and communication should prevent later complexity.
- Open communication key to community support.
- Compromise required from all parties: intelligent retention required.
- Re-use may require a local authority to be more open to risk.
- Designer must deliver for user needs.
- Mothballing for the right use is an appropriate approach.
- Re-use may not be the easiest or cheapest option but often the best option for wider community and social benefits.

7.0 Close of meeting

Drew thanked all of the speakers and everyone for their involvement and attendance.