

Opportunities for the Old School, Ballater and other housing options

Old School site, Ballater on site there are

the school house itself which is a 2 bedroom house,
the existing school building which is falling into disrepair and
the grounds (which are suitable for new affordable housing – 7 units according to
the Princes Foundation report).

The issues are: Aberdeenshire Council is moving the property/site out of the Education remit to the Property Section.

Economic recession – funding is tight so Aberdeenshire council is reluctant to do any type of development especially costly renovation of a listed building

Feasibility study (2005) now out of date.

Possible Ways forward:

- 1) Sell site and buildings to developer (don't really want to do this)
- 2) Use grounds for housing, convert the school building to offices (CNPA?) and training centre
- 3) Convert into School to two-storey building; use as in 2) but use extra space generated to provide additional housing units
- 4) Requirement to bring all parties together Aberdeenshire Council, CNPA, School committee/BRD (need to arrange meeting of senior officials)
- 5) Need to see if CNPA want to lease the converted building long term?
- 6) Need to brief new development officer to try and secure ideas/ funding for a way forward or if it is a non starter
- 7) Marcus Humphrey – Aberdeenshire Councillor and CNPA Board member – keep informed along with other Board members
- 8) Identify potential users for a mixed use site.
- 9) Get high level approval for the plan.

10) Identify funding mechanisms to allow implementation of the plan.

Gordon Riddler view is that the CNPA and AC (maybe with BRD in attendance) call a meeting to discuss the future of the site at a strategic level so that BRD can focus on a realistic plan for the future – site purchase, affordable housing on part of the site or all of it – what is the position re. bulldozing down a listed building etc. If a firm plan for the future of the site can come out of this it should be possible to market it to the community. It would be great to have a training centre here based on the old school but that is ever receding – so going for the site for affordable housing would make a lot of sense as long as we can structure a deal to do that – that said, if we are looking at planning gain through a developer there may be other priorities in Ballater than the old school site.

Suggested action is to get an agreement about what can be done (sale of site, development of site and what for (combination of social housing and community training centre, whatever). It is essential that both CNPA and AC are involved

Other housing options to look into in Ballater and surrounding area

1. Emma Binns, Janelle Clark , Don McKee and I attended a meeting with Scottish Rural Property and Business Association members at Kincardine O'Neil along with Neil Clapperton of Grampian Housing Association – who gave a presentation on unsubsidised housing which suggested Housing Associations and landowners as partners. This seemed to go down well with the landowners present and Emma and I would like to pursue some type of housing project with a willing landowner. We have to go back to the landowners following this presentation but maybe able to get some form of affordable housing for sale out of this option.
2. Gillian at BRD brought to my attention that 6 families in Ballater would be interested in self build to move from their existing homes to bigger houses. I think we should be trying to do something about this as well by looking at sites with landowners or maybe even on H1
3. I have contacted Scotia to see what their plans are now H1 is still in the local plan following the discussion on modifications.