

ANGUS COUNCIL**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE****2 OCTOBER 1997****SUBJECT: CONSERVATION GRANT APPLICATION****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract: This report draws to the Committee's attention, the rationale behind the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development's decision to refuse financial assistance from the Conservation Grant budget towards the re-roofing works at Kirk House Barn, Ruthven, Angus.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee concur with the decision of the Director of Planning, Transport & Economic Development NOT to offer financial assistance from the Conservation Fund towards the proposed alterations to the stone slated roof at Kirk House Barn, Ruthven, a Category C(S) listed building.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An application for Conservation Grant assistance has been submitted by the owners of the above property (who reside adjacent) towards the cost of altering the stone slated roof of this former agricultural building.
- 2.2 The barn forms part of a small picturesque, mid 19th century building group consisting of the Church (listed Category C(S)) and the Manse. Dating probably from the late 18th century and incorporating a 9th century carved stone as a door lintel, the barn is a fine example of a plain vernacular building relatively unaltered in its present form; a single storey, rubble built barn with loft, under a Carmyllie stone slated roof. The interior of the building is of no particular merit.
- 2.3 An application for conversion of the barn to residential use has recently been approved under delegated powers (Application Number 01/97/1680, 02/97/1069 refers).

3 CONSERVATION GRANT BUDGET

- 3.1 Since September 1996 the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development has had delegated powers to award Grants from the Conservation Budget towards certain works which maintain or restore the character or architectural integrity of historic buildings. The reinstatement of stone slated roofs are considered to be eligible for Grant assistance over the normal maximum of £1000 to cover the high proportionate cost of this type of work. Grants of up to £3000 have previously been awarded subject to agreed specification on the work normally on a wholly like for like basis. The reconstruction of the stone slated roof in question would have received Grant assistance from the Department's budget had the proposed works been undertaken in a manner that did not alter the technology/detailing, whilst allowing for a sensitive conversion to residential use.

4 ANALYSIS OF GRANT APPLICATION

- 4.1 Whilst a long term use for a redundant farm building is to be welcomed, change of use for domestic purposes can put pressure on the building fabric. When the property in question has listed status, every effort should be made to minimise the impact of the conversion on the historic integrity of the building. It is the duty of the Planning Authority therefore to carefully manage any changes to the building fabric. The application for Grant assistance has been considered at length as the issue of retaining a Carmyllie stone slated roof falls into line with advice from Historic Scotland and a desirability on the part of the Planning Authority to preserve a traditional local roofing material. The Grant system is however discretionary and funding of such work should be considered as an incentive to retain or replicate the exact historic detail, not to alter it.
- 4.2 In this particular instance, the main concern is over the methodology proposed to insulate the roof structure. The existing roof construction comprises simply of the stone slates pegged onto the timber battens running horizontally over the rafter beams which run diagonally from the wallhead to the ridge.
- 4.3 A number of options for insulating the roof space have been considered over the course of the applications for Listed Building Consent and Conservation Grant assistance. The method favoured by the applicant will increase the finished height of the roof structure by adding additional layers above the rafter level, ie a plasterboard ceiling, a minimum of 90mm insulation layer, an additional cross tie and finally the battens upon which the stone slates will be hung. Internally there would be little change in the appearance, the existing rafters remaining exposed; externally however the height of the roof will be increased by some 20cms (8 inches) altering the original profile of the building. The proposed method to incorporate these additional elements necessary to achieve acceptable insulation levels will compromise the original proportions of the building.
- 4.4 An alternative method to retain the external appearance of the roof was forwarded by the Conservation Officer by enclosing the insulation between the rafters and thereby minimising the impact of the insulation/conversion works on the roof structure. The applicant wishes however to pursue the first option both in relation to the application for Listed Building Consent and for Conservation Grant assistance and has submitted detailed technical information in support of his proposal. The applicant's reason for raising the roof structure is to allow the rafters to remain exposed. This could be achieved by leaving the external roof profile unaltered and fixing false rafters on the new ceiling to achieve the same effect. The key issue is which of two options should be pursued:-
- Allow the roof profile to be raised and the historical detailing to be lost so that the existing rafters can remain exposed inside the building.
 - Leave the roof profile and detailing as original and fix false rafters onto the underside of the existing rafters.

The second option would be cheaper, meet the requirements of the Building Regulations and allow the applicant to receive grant assistance. As a general rule grant is paid out in the public's interest, not the private interest as would be represented here.

5 TECHNICAL ISSUES

- 5.1 Central Government advice, as contained in the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas states that "it is never enough simply to ensure that work to the building will "traditional looking". The individual integrity of every listed building, regardless of category, must always be fully respected".
- 5.2 After due consideration therefore, the method proposed by the applicant will alter the architectural and historic integrity of the building in a manner which could have been more sensitively adapted. It is the proposed method and knock-on effect to the roof structure and the building as a whole which is considered unacceptable. A fine example of a Carmyllie stone slated roof will be reinstated in a "traditional looking" way, but the traditional methodology used will be lost.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report explains the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development's decision to refuse financial assistance of up to £3000 towards the cost of the roofing works to the property. There are therefore no financial implications for the Council apart from a continued desire to direct Grant monies towards protecting the historic built environment on the basis of the nationally agreed standards contained in the Memorandum.

7 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, and the Director of Finance and Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The applicant wishes the application for Grant assistance for the proposed roofing works be considered by the Committee having been informed by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development that the methodology proposed would render the work ineligible for Grant assistance. It is recommended that the Committee concur with the decision of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development to refuse financial assistance from the Conservation Budget, so that a precedent for similar grant applications is not created.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/KW/MR
23 September 1997

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