

KIRRIEMUIR CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME - STEERING GROUP - 29 APRIL 2014

CARS PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Priority Projects

Glengate Hall

Work at the Glengate Hall is continuing to progress after the recent slow down. Re-roofing works have largely been completed with the remaining roofworks still to be carried out comprising the installation of a smoke vent, due to building standards regulations at the rear and the re-slating of the small porch roof on the main front elevation of the building in traditional style "fish scale" slates. The main item still to be completed is the installation of the replacement windows. The ground floor sash windows were due to be installed last week at the south elevation. These have been manufactured and finished by a local Joinery firm to a very high standard and inspected by both the Planning Officer and myself, prior to installation. The large vertical windows on the first and second floors are due to be installed in sections, within the next 2 - 3 weeks. Remedial stonework repairs around the window openings will then be completed. The approved alterations to the north elevation to create a new slapping/ enlarge the pulpit window will be carried out at that time also, as well as the final indent stones. Internally, works to convert the vacant floorspace are progressing satisfactorily in accordance with the project's other funding partner, the Scottish Governments Empty Home Loans Fund.

A site meeting was held recently with the developers, Planning and Project Officers and a representative from Tayside Swifts to discuss the possibility of re-opening the original nesting site which had been blocked up by stonework. This would appear to be the most practical option which can be carried out whilst the scaffolding is still in place. It was agreed that this would be carried out within the next few weeks prior to the return of the swifts, in addition to a new nesting box being attached under the eaves at the rear of the building.

In discussion with the developers, the orange safety netting will first be removed at upper level prior to the scaffolding being fully dismantled around the end of May.

Interim grant payments totalling £168,932.01 have been paid to date for eligible works amounting to £199,744.14 in respect of professional fees and completed building works. Further invoices totalling £20,040 have been submitted for payment and are currently being processed.

1 - 3 Roods

Planning and listed building consent applications for alterations to the building to form a retail unit at ground level and a maisonette dwelling at first floor and attic level will have been determined by the time of the Steering Group meeting. It is likely that planning conditions will be attached to the approvals. The Conservation Architect has advised that the project is reasonably well advanced as the building warrant will be submitted once the planning approvals are issued and competitive quotes are currently being sought for other professional advisors to the project. The grant application is expected to be submitted during May 2014.

Following some discussion during the course of the applications, the Conservation Architect has agreed to delete the proposed render finish to the side gable and rear elevations. The approved drawings now indicate repair works with some required indentation to the existing stonework in accordance with the details agreed within the Conservation and Design Statement submitted with the applications. Generally, the external sandstone is considered to be in reasonable condition for a building that is over 200 years old. There are areas of stonework in good condition and areas of poorer condition, the latter being determined by individual stone selection, orientation, weathering, saturation and cementitious repointing. The agreed amendments now allow the stonework element of the approved works to be grant eligible, carried out to the required conservation standard. Other external alterations proposed to the building to form 3no.dormer windows at attic level would not however be eligible for CARS grant assistance.

Warehouse/ Store, Ogilvy's Close

No progress to date on any prospective works. It is understood that the owner of the building has now engaged a Professional Advisor to progress grant repair works to the other property in his ownership but has not, to date made any decision regarding the future of the warehouse.

Former Airlie Arms, St. Malcolm's Wynd

No progress to date on any prospective works. The Project Officer has been in contact recently with the Selling Agents who have confirmed that there are currently no parties interested in the sale of the property. They have however agreed to revise the Sales Particulars to include information on the Kirriemuir CARS project and specifically the level of grant assistance which may be available for external fabric repairs. It is also stated that grant assistance will be tied to stringent conditions relating to standards of work and with a clawback provision in the event of an onward sale.

Small Grants Scheme

No new Grant applications have been submitted for consideration at this meeting.

Following on from the last grant award, the grant offer has recently been sent to the applicants for the approved project at Joshua Plumtree in Bank Street.

At The Jeweller's Workshop in Bank Street, repair works have started on the interior and grant aided external works to replace the shopfront should be commencing shortly. Grant aided works at Bookworms and Bridges have not yet commenced.

The Project Officer has recently been contacted by two Professional Agents who have been engaged by owners of properties in High Street, one of which is in multiple ownership. The next step will be to meet the Agents on site to discuss the grant eligible works and this should hopefully take place within the next few weeks.

Agents for the Bank of Scotland in Bank Street have also been in touch regarding possible grant assistance for re-coating the front elevation of the building in a lime render. Formal planning permissions will be required and should be in place before any CARS grant application can be considered.

There is still considerable interest from property owners in the Small Grants Scheme, with the Project Officer dealing with enquiries and attending site meetings on a regular basis. Although there have been relatively few grant applications to date, this is not untypical of CARS and other similar grant funded regeneration schemes at the early stages of the process in year one. More often than not, it is during years 2 and 3 that most applications are submitted. In general terms, Historic Scotland has expressed particular satisfaction that one of the Priority Projects is well underway within the first year of the grant scheme as the lead-in time for these larger projects is often considerable. Year 2 of Kirriemuir CARS should also see another Priority Project at The Roods commence.

Public Realm Works

The public consultation exercise for the proposed enhancement of the Square commenced on Monday 24 March, and is due to end on Friday 2 May 2014. Leaflets illustrating the Council's proposals and incorporating a response sheet were delivered to all business and domestic properties in the vicinity of and fronting on to the Square. In addition, leaflets are also available at the Access Office and Library where a small display has also been erected.

As part of the public consultation exercise, the proposals were also presented at a public meeting hosted by Kirriemuir Community Council on 26th March 2014.

A number of responses have been received to date, both from private individuals and also from the Kirriemuir Heritage Trust. One of the respondents has also written to the letters page of The Courier with comments on the proposals. Some of the responses do provide comment on the proposed design elements, street furniture, timeline and bus shelter etc. however, reference is made primarily to the possible siting of the proposed Bon Scott statue in the Square. It is quite clear that the respondents very much value their community space and focal point of the town centre. A more comprehensive update on the results of the public consultation exercise will be presented to members at the next Steering Group meeting at the end of May.

Other Matters

For the month of March, there were 121 visits to the Kirriemuir CARS web pages and 198 page views. (A visit is a series of page requests from a uniquely identified visitor. A page view is how many times a page is viewed within a selected time period). IT have now set up a report schedule so that this information is now received on a monthly basis. For interest, most of the visits have taken place on a Wednesday or Thursday in March and the overview of visitor origin indicates that 86% of visitors were from the UK, 7% were from Canada, 5% from the US and 2% from Europe. Further details of the analytics report can be provided on request.