

Old School Campbeltown
Options Appraisal
Final Report
August 2008



This report represents the findings of an Options Appraisal study undertaken on The Old School Campbeltown. The study was commissioned by Kintyre Amenity Trust owners of the School who worked with Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust, Argyll & Bute Council and a team of consultants comprising:

Tom Grant Architects,
Elliot and Co Structural Engineers,
TG Ross Quantity Surveyors,
Michael Davis Architectural Historian,
The District Valuer's Office, Glasgow
Jura Consultants

The appraisal was funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund and from the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.

If you would like to know more about this appraisal or the work of Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust please contact us in one of the following ways.

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Executive Summary

This report represents the findings of an Options Appraisal study undertaken on The Old School Campbeltown. The study was commissioned by the Kintyre Amenity Trust owners of the School and managed by Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust working with Argyll & Bute Council and a team of consultants comprising:

Tom Grant Architects,
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Michael Davis Architectural Historian,
The District Valuer's Office, Glasgow
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The aim of the study was to explore repair and re-use options for the Old School in Campbeltown. The appraisal was funded by Architectural Heritage Fund and through the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, administered by Argyll & Bute Council.

The Old School in Campbeltown is the last survivor of a group of buildings constructed in the mid 19th century by the Free Church as a result of the splitting of that Church from the Established Church in Scotland, the *Disruption*. The building was first used as a grammar school and then a Sunday school and later housed a number of education related functions. It has been empty since the 1980's and has fallen into an advanced state of disrepair. The School is category B listed and owned by the Kintyre Amenity Trust who operate the Campbeltown Heritage Centre in the adjacent former Free Church. The Trust acquired the building in 1997 with the intention of putting it into a use which supported and complemented the Heritage Centre but lack of resources has prevented this from happening.

In 2007, Argyll & Bute Council were awarded one of the first Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) a partnership grant scheme operated with the backing of Historic Scotland. They are now seeking to augment this scheme by

bidding for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Stage 1 approval has been given and subject to a successful stage 2 bid, the scheme is due to commence in the Spring of 2009. The Old School is a target building in the CARS and is set to be targeted by the THI also. This favourable funding position has provided an opportunity to save the Old School but it also provides complications in estimating precisely how the funding package will work because the detail of the relationship between the CARS and THI has not be finalised.

The owners of the Old School are keen to seize the opportunity offered by the area grant schemes in Campbeltown and to find a use for the building that not only puts it back into good repair but can sustain and provide revenue to support the operation of the Heritage Centre.

This appraisal has studied the history of the Old School and begun the process of putting it into its wider context. The team has considered the significance of the building as a heritage asset and its importance to local people. A preliminary assessment of the condition of the building has been undertaken and has shown it to be in an advanced state of dereliction but with repair and re-use still a practical option. Consideration has been given to planning constraints and a public consultation has been undertaken to gauge local views. An appraisal of the local area has determined the provision of services and facilities and has identified where opportunities might arise. Consultations with potential collaborators in a repair and re-use project have been undertaken and possible funding sources have been investigated.

The project will require a cocktail of funding from both large and small funders but the primary funding source here will be the Common Fund provided by the CARS and THI. Should the THI fail to materialise, then other funding sources will be needed to match the CARS contribution. It is likely however that this would be an attractive stand alone project for the HLF, particularly as it has the potential to support the Heritage Centre as well as saving the Old School itself.

A wide range of possible uses have been identified for the building and these have been narrowed down to two which the market analysis suggests that there is a demand for. These two options were:

- Residential conversion
- Hostel use – single and two storey

Each option was assessed against its likely viability in use, funding opportunities for the capital repair and development project and its ability to conserve the significance of the building and provide an income for the Heritage Centre. As a result, the single storey hostel was found to be the preferred option. This has potential to provide a much needed facility in a town where, in spite of a range of good quality accommodation, there is no hostel. This deficiency has been brought to light particularly by the initiation of the Kintyre Way, a long distance walk running the length of the Kintyre peninsula. Additional markets for the hostel include visitors to the Kintyre Music Festival, surfers and cyclists. The initial viability calculations indicate on the basis of very cautious occupancy rates, that the hostel would make a small surplus in year one, rising to a surplus of approximately £6,000 in year five. This modest income could be ploughed straight back into the Heritage Centre to support and improve services and facilities there.

Potential problems and threats to the project have been identified and an initial risk analysis was undertaken. The principle problem for the project at this stage is the situation regarding the THI. Although it seems very likely that this scheme will commence in 2009, the details have not been worked out and so providing an accurate estimate of funding is extremely difficult. The estimate given is based on research into other THI schemes and consultation with the Argyll & Bute Council CARS Officer who has discussed the project with the HLF.

Overall, this Options Appraisal has been successful and has found a potentially viable and fundable new use for the Old School. There is a need to continue the

development of this project and to explore in particular the funding of the capital works further by entering into direct discussions with the HLF. It is therefore proposed that the Kintyre Amenity Trust and Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust work together to:

- Raise funding to support the development phase
- Develop a robust business plan and funding plan for the project
- Develop the design of the single storey hostel while continuing to investigate the potential for the two storey option