



COLLIESTON & SLAINS COMMUNITY TRUST

3rd Public Architectural Workshop

10 September 2008

Present for all or part of the meeting:

Steve Rainey, Fiona Chaplain, Susan Somner, Andrew Couper, Elizabeth Hay, Trish Robinson, Craig Leuchars, Peter Somner, Janice Saville, Viv Easton, David Huxtable, Vicky McNiff, Trish Cowie, Ewan Cowie, Ian Bell, Roger Berl, Ninke Attema, Mike Wallace, Gill Moir, Lucy Ingram, Sally Sheehan, Hazel Turner, John Robertson, David Argo, Trish Davidson, Niki Tait, Julie Swan, Abby Stott, Elaine Adam, Bibi Rainey, Rob Nash, Peter Robinson, Kevin Lawson, Sheena Junor, Roddy Junor, Lewis Cowie, Netta Cowie, Mike Earlam Sian Earlam, Lesley Stewart, John Hitchcock, Pete Smith, Nic Abbot, Lesley Silcock, Fiona Littlejohn, Ken Littlejohn, John Easton, Cameron Stewart, Andy Harper, Charles Esson, Fraser Coxon, John Allan, Ruth Leuchars, Gail Proctor, Mick Sheehan, Councillor Isobel Davidson

Aberdeenshire Council - Reid Hutchison

Reiach & Hall – Neil Gillespie, Carol Macbain, Laura Kinnaird

Apologies: Shirley Beattie, Councillor Rob Merson, Neil Ironside, Alan White

Meeting was facilitated by Andrew Couper

Introduction and outline of objects for workshop by Andrew Couper

Andrew welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Reiach & Hall our architects and Reid Hutchison from Aberdeenshire Council. He asked that questions intended for the Business Plan meeting be written on post-it notes and that any questions this evening be restricted to the design concept to maximise the opportunity to ask questions of the architects. He asked that we think about compromise with the designs and consider what 'we can live with'.

At that point Mick Sheehan interrupted the meeting to say he thought this was not for Collieston and we should go back to the original mandate. He then gave 4 letters to the Secretary and left the meeting.

Sally Sheehan then said she wished to make a statement –

In her opinion, the design we are looking at tonight is not that important if the community are not 100% behind it, even though funders may give money towards it. She stated that CASCT worked very hard with great commitment and dedication, however she wants them to accept there is a real division in the community. She stated that the project had gone away from what was envisaged in the first place and that the community were obviously not all going to be in support of it all the time and CASCT required to further engage the community.

Andrew Couper asked her what ideas she had to do this.

Sally Sheehan replied that a real open consultation process and not unnecessary workshops, where people were inhibited to stand and speak.

Andrew asked her what more CASCT could do.

Sheena Junor - CASCT could listen and that without a business plan how could they know how to sustain it.

Andrew Couper - the next two meetings will be to present the business plan and that if it did not get through the scrutiny of the community then it will not get through the Big Lottery.

Sally Sheehan - independent consultation which is democratic e.g. individual interviews, which she accepted were a lot of work and did not expect CASCT to do this.

Niki Tait - concerned about £2.4 million capital cost.

Rob Nash - commented on the need for a business plan.

Pete Smith – capital cost does not matter.

Ewan Cowie – relook at mandate, frightened of scale, do we want a hall full stop?

Trish Davidson – voted for a hall for community, didn't anticipate creating a social enterprise and worried about sustainability.

Andrew Couper – CASCT will take all these comments onboard.

Steve Rainey stated that he understood all the views expressed. No one on the CASCT committee wants to push a project through that the community doesn't want. This is the 17th public event to date and every ballot has produced a significant majority. The original mandate was 'to demolish and rebuild'. We can't extend and refurbish because we could not make it sustainable. What we now have is the best of both worlds with the current proposal keeping the current buildings and converting them for sustainability. This project will affect future generations for 100 years, so if we need to go back to the community we are willing to do this. The majority of the community support the project.

Andrew Couper – asked meeting for ideas on consultation.

Ewan Cowie – why can't we go into partnership with Aberdeenshire Council with the community paying for its extension and refurbishment and the Council owning and running it? Would like to see in writing that the Council will no longer support the hall.

Councillor Isobel Davidson – Council unlikely to close the hall down. It would be difficult to go into a partnership where they own the hall and the community pay to extend and refurbish it.

Ninke Attema – would like further consultation to see if the community still agree with project.

Rob Nash – concerned re size of hall and sustainability.

Lesley Stewart asked Councillor Isobel Davidson how if the current hall remained would it meet playgroup regulations.

Councillor Isobel Davidson - the last Care Commission report didn't highlight any issues on the hall. She also reported that this year the Council had money available for infrastructure improvements.

Elizabeth Hay – Need to clarify what we are talking about when we discuss the 'building'. There is the hall and the house which is surplus to Council requirements and is with the Council Estate.

Update by Steve Rainey on key steps taken since last architectural workshop

- Initial Feedback - Planning & Roads Departments
 - Proposed location and building on Rivie is acceptable in principle

- Retention and conversion of existing hall and schoolhouse to provide accommodation is acceptable in principle
- Proposed access to the new and existing buildings is acceptable in principle
- Dimensional Survey of existing buildings
 - Grant of £1504 from Communities Scotland
 - Survey conducted by NB Surveys Ltd (same company that surveyed Rivie and pier) on 15 & 16 April 2008
 - Purpose to provide floor plans, elevations, sections and levels to allow Reiach & Hall to develop a proposal for converting to accommodation units
- Concluded bargain on Rivie Purchase
 - Status – we **almost** own the Rivie
 - Still awaiting signed Title Deeds from estate's lawyers
 - Concluded bargain on 27 May 2008; both parties legally bound
 - Delay at request of our lawyer to redraft title deeds with no mention of warrandice and provide a separate back letter that does mention warrandice – may help us obtain indemnity from the Keeper of the Land Register
 - Expect to complete **any** day now
- Outline Proposal to Big Lottery successful
- Further Reiach & Hall work
- Funding Applications
 - Outline Proposal to Big Lottery Fund Investing in Communities Programme was successful; must submit full application by deadline of 4 January 2009
 - As part of this submission, we need to have planning permission
 - According to RIAS guidelines, we have completed Stage A/B (Appraisal) of design cycle; need to progress through Stage C (Outline Proposals) to end Stage D (Detailed Proposals)
 - Need to pay professional fees for architectural design team to do this work
 - RIAS guidelines indicate that up to 35% of total professional fees can be charged for developing Detailed Proposals
 - Based on a build cost of £1,266,410, total professional fees are estimated to be £232,26 of which 35% or £81,290 is payable on completion of Stages C & D
 - We have submitted 4 funding applications to date:

ACAF	£10,000	Awarded
Leader	up to £43,000	Awarded
Big Lottery Investing in Ideas	£10,000	Pending (by 20 October)
HBOS Foundation	£10,000	Pending (by 31 October)
CASCT and further local fundraising	£10,000	

Steve Rainey – all the work that Reiach & Hall have done so far has been for free.

Trish Davidson – is build cost just for the hall?

Steve Rainey – No, it includes costs for the new hall and the conversion of existing buildings and all fees

Ninke Attema – Can the plans be changed after the funding is in place?

Steve Rainey – not significantly after submission of plans on 4th

Neil Gillespie – slight negotiation possible

Reid Hutchison – the (ACAF) award is done on the basis of helping groups move projects forward, to meet conditions in terms of timeline etc. and to give flexibility to take it forward.

Cameron Stewart – proposal for the Big Lottery has to be in by 4th January and has to have detailed planning permission submitted and approved - the planning process is very tight.
Steve Rainey – This is a real issue and the development officer appointed by the Big Lottery to assist us with our application will hold our application pending the arrival of the planning permission. Limited time as the final Big Lottery project meeting is in May 2009.

Councillor Isobel Davidson highlighted dates of planning meetings.
Steve Rainey – we already have the dates of these meetings

Netta Cowie – If the Big Lottery say 'No' then is the money used to get the application submitted lost?

Reid Hutchison – cannot fund in anticipation of acceptance. There is no potential liability.

Neil Gillespie – the design and business plan go hand in glove, both have to be done together. If the business plan changes then the brief will change, but we are quite capable of changing direction.

Update from Reiach & Hall

The meeting then moved on to the presentation from the architects from Reiach & Hall. They had models and plans on display. Neil Gillespie explained the design of the proposed new building. He explained their concept, the scale and site on the Rivie.

- The current hall is only the size of a classroom. The brief for the new hall is to hold 150 people with nursery provision for 30 children.
- They felt strongly that the current building should be retained, even though it was too small for a hall.
- They had a very good meeting with the transport and planners this afternoon who were very excited by the project and will do everything to move it forward if it is our decision to do so.
- They felt the relationship between the two buildings was very important and the third element is the space between them.
- Two storey building to cope with the levels of the Rivie
- Look at using traditional materials in a contemporary way
- They will use building shape and volume to ventilate stale air
- He explained the layout of the two floors of the building

Rob Nash – is there a separate service entrance?

Neil Gillespie – no, this is a small building and this would add hugely to the cost and size

Ninke Attema – is price tag associated with using renewables?

Neil Gillespie – we have to be clever in how the building is sited. Part of the next stage is to find out if ground source heat pump makes financial sense. This would be easy to implement and funding is available.

Roger Berl – is there an external door for storage?

Neil Gillespie – yes there is

Ewan Cowie – queried Neil Gillespie about use of steel framework?

Neil Gillespie – Did not say this, not at this point yet, but if used would not be exposed.

Cameron Stewart – how do we estimate the cost of the building when we don't know what materials will be used?

Neil Gillespie – Quantity surveyor will give benchmark against other buildings. Cost per square metre. Planners are very comfortable with the direction and architects past work.

Ninke Attema – Can the big hall be subdivided?

Neil Gillespie – to get through planning the critical things are scale, volume and cladding. If we decide to subdivide the hall this won't affect planning but will affect other things later on.

Ian Bell – observed that the layout proposed could be made smaller or bigger by using a marquee on the patio area. Lot to be commended on their proposal.

Neil Gillespie then moved on to talk about the proposal for the current buildings, which compose a classroom and a house. The brief is to provide two flats able to cater for disabled people. He then talked through his plans for this and talked of building extensions. There was a possibility of a little studio flat in the roof area.

Roger Berl – is the gable space over the existing hall available for storage?

Neil Gillespie – No not, really practical as to gain access would compromise the accommodation downstairs.

Neil Gillespie then went onto explain the RIBA/RIAS procedure. The design is cut up into a series of stages in which each stage must meet the approval of the client. Stages A and B cover feasibility and we are slightly ahead of RIBA plan of work. They are at the stage when they need other consultants onboard to develop the scheme sufficiently to get the costs. The next stage is to take these drawings and get the rest of the design team up to the same level to sign off stage C. Ground conditions really have to be confirmed so there are no surprises.

They talked to the planners today about what they are expecting. They need to consult with other bodies .ie. SNH, SEPA etc. and this process has already started.

Ian Bell – which stage do we have to get to for planning submission?

Neil Gillespie – theoretically end of stage D but more commonly at stage C+. Planning includes both external and internal designs but actual detail of internal can be adjusted.

They are comfortable with the deadline for the planning committee but they need the engineers onboard to do this. It will be enormously challenging to get this in by 4th November.

After the presentation and questions to the architects a break was taken and everyone invited to come up to look at the models and drawings and to chat with the architects.

Next Stage

After the break Steve Rainey presented the next steps -

- Complete Rivie purchase
- Options Appraisal
- Needs, Outcomes & Measures
- Market Research – Volunteers please sign up (see Vicky)
 - Accommodation
 - Hall
 - Meeting Room
 - Staff Costs
- Finalise Business Plan

- Business Plan Workshops
- Community Ballot (?)
- Finalise Full Application to Big Lottery

Pete Smith – can we afford this?

Steve Rainey – Big Lottery outline proposal had some costs in it – approx. 1.8million. However our project officer informed us we will not be held to this number, so not necessarily constrained to keep to this..

Cameron Stewart – Currently the Council owns the buildings. Would there be a way the community could share ownership with the Council?

Steve Rainey – the current buildings will be transferred to the community at zero cost providing certain conditions are met. Value is approximately £250,000, which counts as matched funding. This is both an asset and a liability.

Reid Hutchison – The Council can no longer sign leases for 10 years etc. with a group. External funders will not fund leased halls.

Steve Rainey – Growing heart in the community is what we have to deliver as an outcome of the Big Lottery Application.

Pete Smith – are there ways they will check that we have met the objectives?

Steve Rainey – yes, via the business plan and against our stated outcomes. We need people to do market research then we can finalise the business plan. Two business plan workshops – same event, but held twice to give people best opportunity to participate. Probably hold about the end of October.

We do need the majority of the community behind us to proceed. Democracy has been a hallmark of our journey so far and all external bodies we have consulted outside the community consider this so.

Pete Smith – Given that there are some people who feel they need more consultation there should be a final ballot either at the end or now to get the mandate renewed and then move forward. Although not everyone will ever agree, if there is another successful ballot everyone will have the good grace to accept it.

Vicky McNiff – people need to make an informed decision and therefore need to do the market research and business plan workshops before a ballot takes place.

Bibi Rainey – people tonight feel that they cannot envisage the size of the building. Laura Kinnaird advised that the area could be staked out and the grass cut so people could go and see this.

Steve Rainey – Andy Harper has offered to run his tractor and mower over the Rivie as long as we remove the ragwort and maintain it.

Gail Proctor – need informal open meetings.

Pete Smith – He thinks the proposed building elegant and beautiful but didn't feel he could get totally behind it until we had another mandate.

Craig Leuchars – spoke to people tonight who voiced their opinions and concerns. They said they didn't think another ballot was the way to go. So, how do we consult, we need to know what they want.

Nic Abbot – please register that some people will object no matter what you chose to do. They will not believe another ballot.

Abby Stott – you will have a hard fight for support for a shop now and in the future

Ian Bell – People are concerned about sustainability and don't have confidence in it. We need to convince people the project is sustainable. We should not have a ballot until this is understood.

John Hitchcock – need to have a genuine understanding of the impact on the community before a ballot, even though he likes the designs. Need to go to the community with all the facts and then make a judgement.

Ewan Cowie – wants to see some material on the business plan before the business plan meetings.
Steve Rainey – has a 1-page overview and is happy to share this.

Ken Littlejohn – People put off by risks and timescales. They are not used to making decisions quickly and we need to overcome this.

Ian Bell – Need a risk management strategy.
Andrew Couper – this comes back to the business plan.

Roddy Junor – Do we not have to do the business plan before we do the design.
Neil Gillespie – they are one and the same thing. They are interlinked and can't be separated.

Craig Leuchars – On talking to people tonight there are concerns re building costs, but people like the designs and how Reiach & Hall have responded.

Roddy Junor – agrees people like what they see but concerns re sustainability

Summary & Close

Andrew Couper thanked everyone for coming tonight. All views are appreciated. Thanked Neil Gillespie and team from Reiach & Hall for coming up and presenting their designs and answering questions.

There is clearly a need for further consultation.

Steve Rainey thanked Andrew for facilitating the meeting.

Minutes by: Fiona Chaplain