

**COLLIESTON & SLAINS COMMUNITY TRUST
ARCHITECTURAL PRESENTATION
MINUTES
MEETING 26 JANUARY 2007**

Presentation opened to a packed hall with over 60 people in attendance. Steve Rainey welcomed everyone to the presentation and gave the following introduction:

What We've Heard

- Community remains supportive of a new hall
- There are concerns about the scale and sustainability
- There is a general disappointment about submitted designs

Choice

- Abandon competition and start afresh
- Work with one of the remaining architects (formal consultation) to modify/develop new design to meet with majority approval

Purpose of Tonight

- Listen to each architect to help us decide

The first presentation was by the architectural practice Reiach & Hall and the second by the architectural practice of Sarah Hare. Both companies had decided not to sit in on each others presentations. After each presentation there was a question and answer session which was recorded as follows –

Reiach & Hall

Q : Do you have any idea of running costs

A : No depends on many as yet unknown factors. Zero energy adds to capital cost and had budgeted for two windmills which use a large part of the budget, but payoff in not having to buy from the grid.

Q : Lot of glass. One of the big problems is salt spray. Don't want to scrub the building all the time to keep it looking habitable. How external build weathers quite critical

A : Suggested using translucent material eg recycled or ribbed glass, but agreed this is undoubtedly an issue and is a balance between sustainability and energy costs. Big picture windows come with energy penalty

Q : Good presentation and now far better understanding of design. Worrying point raised was sustainability and separate building in case of need to sell on

A : Not suggesting it would fail. They thought if we were not getting lets we could sell off, but more importantly works from a sustainability point of view. Interested from an architectural point of view in keeping the original building

Q : Understand concept much better now, but concerned on emphasis of sky rather than views. Views are our main asset and think the hall should capitalise on them

A : Site incredibly difficult for views as it slopes upward. Based on the knowledge they had felt an opportunity for building to look at rocks at Cransdale, but all up for debate and not fixed

Q : Interested in conversation about Stromness – original building in contrast with surroundings but building ended up quite different and in empathy with surroundings. How did they go about this?

A : Lots of dialogue with community. Spent a huge amount of time deciding how the building would fit and yet be different

Q : How prepared are architects to listen to the community

A : Its our building. Had a brief look at the comments and need to look further at these. Needs to be a robust conversation

Q : What do the team consider to be the essence of Collieston in this project

A : Ambitious project. Interested in space building creates which is about community and not a games hall. The buildings say something about beyond the village.

Sarah Hare

Q : What gives best use of energy efficiency?

A : Make best use of natural daylight/ventilation; keep building compact; good insulation; low energy bulbs; ground source heat pumps; solar etc. All options that are available are up for discussion. No one single solution. Materials, maintenance of building, running costs durability should be considered.

Q : Any idea of maintenance costs?

A : So much depends on materials used but recognise is an important point. Use the best of materials and keep simple construction

Q : Why chose flat roofs?

A : Mainly because size and depth of building dictates this. Have looked at pitched roofs. Hall would require a huge roof and would produce a lot of extra mass and be less sensitive and more costly. Because its such a big building would require valley gutters. Proposed building has a 5% pitch roof which is a simple solution and budget not too big. Tried to keep within framework of budget.

Q : Steps huge?

A : Steps are an option. Design of stair could be changed to something that is liked or could combine stair with ramp which would be cheapest solution. Flexible on options

Q : Position close to the edge of the slope. Clay gets wet and slips. Nervous about disturbing layer of clay

A : We need to do site investigation – get topographical survey done, bore holes and trial pits. Plot some cross sections and analyze. Play with level of building. Don't want to move any more material on the site than have to. Site investigation is fundamental to gather information to make correct decision for the site of the building

Q : Would we still be able use this hall while building being done?

A : It is up to us to decide whether we wish to retain original building or not, but either way yes no problem.

Q : Wonder if done any build on similar exposed site?

A : No not really

Q : How do modern materials weather 20 years onward?

A : Materials proposed to use on this building will not be new.

Q : If we make building smaller then can we look at a pitched roof?

A : Have to be careful about what you want this building for

Q : Steps around Collieston are shell could steps fit in with this rather than concrete steps?

A : Yes one can re-look at things and redesign steps. Because of height difference need to be steep. Quite happy to look at different ways of designing staircase

Q : What do the team consider to be the essence of Collieston in this project?

A : Place for community to meet and maximise use of views of village and harbour

Steve Rainey then returned to discuss the way forward -

He intimated that this was a huge leap forward, both architects have merits and both have the right sort of attitude to work with.

Concerns re scalability – size of building is frightening us. We need to think about why we need all this space. Sustainability could be a burden. Pay VAT on old building.

All credit to the team that have got us so far. Ideas here we can build on.

Questions/Comment from the floor –

- One of the reasons to have accommodation remote, only persons on site in a large empty building.
- Revisit specification – scalability needs looked at.
- Sustainability and scalability need to go hand and hand.
- Do we want to make a bold statement with a top class architect or do we want an off the shelf build?

- Uncomfortable that because we are a small village building too big and too many visitors coming to the village.
- Cannot understand why some people being so inward looking
- Huge market for seminars etc
- Are we building it for a commercial venture or for the village? *Steve replied: building it as a social enterprise. Big Lottery is not interested in funding village halls. What they are interested in is what happens in them. Want to provide a service for respite care in Aberdeen and meeting place for companies.*
- These seminars would impact on village and we couldn't guarantee the future use
- Got an opportunity in Collieston to do something unique, could be a landmark to the whole NE
- Hypocritical that while community not worried about these flats, 80 to 90% of village don't want to see it grow
- Who will want to stay in these flats
- Think flats good idea and think people will come to stay in them
- Playgroup won't run if have to pay for hall so we need income to subsidise them
- Timeline for these decisions
- Business plan has direct impact on design of building. Need serious debate on business plan.
- Seems to me that we have two cracking schemes.
- Are we going to have a future with Collieston that involves business solutions? *Steve replied: don't think we have a choice. Huge question about scale but we cannot just build a new hall because we won't get funding for it. We have to have a commercial element to allow Collieston to carry on using hall. Our real problem is scale and CASCT is up for that discussion*
- What will new build look like 20 years down the line. Current building always looks like it did when built? *Steve replied: architects need to address this using materials for durability. One of the suggestions might be that we have no design that everyone is comfortable with. Rather than chose a design or scheme, chose architect that is most in sympathy with Collieston and then got down to designing the scheme. Both architects happy to have dialogue*
- Work with architects to achieve all three things: business plan, funding, design.
- Need to understand how oil companies work – do seminars offsite where they come for the day.
- Lot of the meetings rely on staying overnight and that will not happen here
- Is it true that we can start again
- People want the building more in keeping with surroundings
- Observation that on looking at other designs displayed - while original designs were more unconventional moved gradually over time to more in keeping with surroundings and shrunk in size. Two of things important to whole village. Suggest both architects used to this process
- What staffing needed? *Steve replied: don't know yet, depends on what's built*
- Is it worth looking at an off the shelf scheme? Would look like and find out how much it costs. *Steve replied: comes down to Collieston unique. Great fall back option but why not aim high*
- Perception that CASCT want to see the project go forward, from outside it can seem that steamrolling through the village rather than bringing the village with it. Absolutely crucial to have lots and lots of consultations and meetings.
- Don't think playgroup should have designated space - all space should be multi functional
- Suggest that we go and talk to clients of architects – architects partly chosen for their reputation in dealing with clients

Way Forward

Nothing to lose and everything to gain on moving forward with competition, but in a different way. Vote on architect not just design.

Structured consultation process is now required to develop the right design for the village

Communication – come and talk to us.

CASCT cannot and won't do this unless the community want to make it happen as well