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**Report to:** Planning Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 16th December 2015

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**Subject:** Planning Application 15/00252/FULL - Conversion Of Former School To Form 8 No. Townhouses and 5 No. Offices, Including Partial Demolition of Extension And Erection Of 12 No. Houses

Listed Building Application 15/00253/LIST - Conversion Of Former School To Form 8 No. Townhouses And 5 No. Offices, Including Partial Demolition of Extension

Former St John's Primary School, Grange Road, Alloa, Clackmannanshire

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**Report by:** Grant Baxter, Principal Planner

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of and recommendations on the development proposals for the now vacant St John's Primary School site. The proposals involve partial demolition of an extension, conversion of the original listed school building to 8No. houses and 5No. small office spaces and erection of 12No. new houses in the grounds.
- 1.2. The Planning and Listed Building applications submitted by Hillfoot Homes require to be determined by Committee as the site is owned by the Council and there have been objections to the proposals.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. Planning Application Ref: 15/00252/FULL is APPROVED subject to the following conditions:
1. For the avoidance of doubt, the following elements of the proposed development are hereby NOT approved:
    - a) Layout and configuration of houses on Plots 1-2 and 6-12.
    - b) Private access road alignment, layout, construction, associated parking and resultant shared communal space.
    - c) Concrete roof tiles on Plots 3-12.
    - d) Precise finishing details to the Grange Road frontages of Plots 1 & 2.

Before any works commence on site, revised plans and details of these elements shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Thereafter the development shall proceed in accordance with such approved details. These shall include:

- a) Re-orientation of buildings on a single axis.
- b) Enhanced quantity and quality of shared non-vehicular space.
- c) An access road construction to an adopted standard, with associated parking and landscaping.
- d) Natural slate roof cladding.
- e) Details of options for external finishes to the front facades of Plots 1 & 2.

2. Before any works commence on site, a phasing plan for the implementation of the proposed development shall have been submitted to and approved in writing, by the Council. The Phasing Plan shall include:

- a) Completion of an Environmental and Human Health Risk Assessment; site investigation and remedial works.
- b) Implementation of construction management and tree protection arrangements.
- c) Completion of the school building conversion, access road and parking.

Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with such approved Phasing Plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

3. Before any works commence on site, a Demolition and Construction Management Plan and Tree Protection Plan shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. It shall include:

- a) Details of arrangements to control construction traffic movements during the morning and afternoon periods when pupils are arriving at and leaving Redwell Primary School.
- b) Details of arrangements for liaison with Redwell Primary School during the construction phase.
- c) Construction traffic routes to and parking arrangements within the site.
- d) Measures to control noise and dust during demolition and construction.
- e) Restrictions on access to the site via Dirleton Lane.
- f) Tree protection measures.

Thereafter, all construction works shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

4. Before any works commence on site, tree protection measures shall have been erected in accordance with the details shown on a stamped approved Construction Management Plan & Tree Protection Measures Drawing, and shall be fully in accordance with BS 5837:2012. Such measures shall remain in place for the duration of the construction phase, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

5. Before any works commence on site, details of the works to the school building shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, including:

- a) Details of proposed demolition and reinstatement of exposed elements of the retained building.
- b) A schedule of alterations to the interior of the building.
- c) Details of all proposed new and replacement finishing materials including windows and doors.
- d) Details of any proposed additional openings or external alterations to the building.

Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

6. Before any works commence on site, the following details shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council :

- a) Details of all external building materials including roof cladding, external render, timber cladding and stone type and colour, and external window and door colour. All roofs within the site shall be clad in natural slate, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.
- b) Details of all forms of boundary enclosure, including walls, railing and fences. For the avoidance of doubt, all external boundaries of the site shall be enclosed by masonry walls and/or metal railings. Timber fencing shall not be used where boundaries front public roads/paths.
- c) Details of bin storage facilities for each new build house plot, and houses within the converted school.

Thereafter, the development shall proceed in accordance with such approved details.

7. Before any works commence on site, a survey, of all trees on the site, prepared by a qualified arboriculturist, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Thereafter, all tree works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

8. Before any works commence on site, a SUDs scheme for the discharge of surface water to the water environment shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Council. The scheme shall be in accordance with the SUDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Manual (C697) published by CIRIA. Thereafter, the proposed development shall be completed in accordance with such approved details.

9. Before commencement of construction works on the 15th house within the proposed development, a commuted sum of not less than £15,000 towards pitch improvements in West End park and £5,000 towards public art shall have been paid to the Council.

10. The use of proposed office spaces within the converted school shall be restricted to Class 4 "Business" of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997.

2.2 Reasons for the conditions:

1. In order to ensure the proposed development complies with the Local Development Plan and Planning Brief.
2. In the interests of local amenity and environmental quality.
3. In the interests of residential amenity and road safety.
4. In the interests of local amenity and environmental quality.
5. In order to ensure the protection of the built heritage.
6. In the interests of local amenity and environmental quality.
7. In the interests of local amenity and environmental quality.
8. In the interests of local amenity and environmental quality.
9. In order to ensure the provision of off-site community infrastructure to support the proposed development.
10. In order to ensure that the proposed office use is compatible with residential amenity.

2.3 Listed Building Application Ref: 15/00253/LIST is APPROVED subject to the following condition:

1. Before any works commence on site, details of the works to the school building shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, including:
  - a) Details of proposed demolition and reinstatement of exposed elements of the retained building.
  - b) A schedule of alterations to the interior of the building.
  - c) Details of all proposed new and replacement finishing materials including windows and doors.
  - d) Details of any proposed additional openings or external alterations to the building.

Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

2.4 Reason for the condition:

1. In order to ensure the protection of the built heritage

## 2.5 Reasons for the Decision:

1. The proposed development would involve sensitive conversion of a Category B Listed Building and re-development of a brownfield site in Alloa for residential development including a small amount of office space. The development therefore generally accords with the key provisions of the adopted LDP.
2. The site is subject of a detailed proposal in the LDP and a Development Brief. Elements of the development density and layout are such that they do not fully accord with detailed development guidelines and provisions set out in the Brief, and as such, planning conditions are proposed requiring amendments to the submitted proposals such that the overall scheme more fully accords with the adopted LDP and Development Brief.

## 2.6 Approved Plans

- Existing Basement and Mezzanine Floor Plan
- Existing Elevations
- Existing Ground Floor Plan
- Existing Upper Floor Plan
- Location Plan
- Plots 11 & 12 Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Plots 3 - 5 Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Plots 6 - 10 Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Proposed Basement and Mezzanine Floor Plan
- Proposed Front and Side Elevation
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Proposed Rear and Side Elevation
- Proposed Upper Floor Plan
- Plot 1 - Plans and Elevations
- Plot 2 - Plans and Elevations
- Link Canopies
- Plan Showing Location of Site Sections
- Retaining Wall
- Site Sections
- Streetscape
- Topographical Survey

## 3.0 Considerations

### 3.1. Background

3.2. The site is the former St John's Primary School (originally Grange School), on Grange Road, on the western side of Alloa. The school use of the site ceased in June 2014, following opening of the new Redwell School, and the building and site has been vacant since.

3.3. The site extends to 0.48Ha and contains the original 2-storey Art Nouveau red sandstone school building and later brick and render extensions to the north. The buildings are Category B Listed. The remainder of the site is laid out in tarmac, with a small group of mature trees in the southeast corner and garden

in the northwest corner. The site is mainly enclosed by low stone walls and railings, and drops in level from west to east to an extent that allows for an additional basement level of accommodation on the west side of the school building.

- 3.4. The site's principal frontage is onto Grange Road, and contains two pedestrian gates, whilst to the rear lies Dirleton Lane; a private unsurfaced lane serving the rear of houses on Dirleton Gardens. This lane provides the current vehicular access into the school site. Surrounding land uses are predominantly residential, but include a Masonic hall abutting the southwest corner and the entrances to West End Park and a church on the opposite side of Grange Road.
- 3.5. Proposals
- 3.6. The proposals comprise three main elements:
  - (i) Demolition of the gym hall and classroom extensions to the original school building.
  - (ii) Conversion of the original school building to form 8No. two and three storey houses and 5No. small office spaces.
  - (iii) Erection of 12No. two storey houses within the grounds, to the side and back of the original building.
- 3.7. These proposed developments would be served by new accesses off Grange Road; one at the southern end of the site serving a parking area for houses within the converted school; one at the northern end, serving a pair of new build houses, and a third in between, providing access to the other 10No. proposed new build houses. Parking within the site would largely be provided on a communal basis. No access is proposed from Dirleton Lane, to the west of the site, with the existing access here effectively closed off.

### **3.8. Consultations**

- 3.8.1. Roads: The new access road serving the main part of the development should be designed and constructed such that it can be adopted by the Council. Insufficient off-street parking provision is proposed to serve the proposed houses and offices. *Comments: These matters are addressed in the Planning Considerations section of this report, below.*
- 3.8.2. Scottish Water: No objections. A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted to Scottish Water. Waste water and water networks have capacity to serve the development. SUDs required to address surface water drainage.
- 3.8.3. Land Services: Tree protection measures required. Tree survey required. A developer contribution of £15,000 towards football pitch improvements in West End park should be sought. *Comments: These matters can be addressed in planning conditions.*
- 3.8.4. Environmental Health: No objections. Office use should be restricted to Class 4, in order to be compatible with adjoining houses. Hours of operation should be restricted to ensure no nuisance to residents during

demolition/construction. An Environmental and Human Health Risk assessment should be carried out for the site given that most former schools have had contamination present. Comments: *These matters can be addressed in planning conditions.*

- 3.8.5. SEPA: No objections. Standing advice only, including requirement for SUDs to provide one level of treatment to surface water run-off, space for collection, segregation and storage of waste. Comments: *The requirement for SUDs can be addressed in planning conditions.*
- 3.8.6. Historic Scotland: No objections, and welcome the conversion proposals, and agree with the rationale and approach outlined in the design statement.
- 3.8.7. Alloa Community Council: No objections, but observations and comments made on a number of points in the context of the Development Brief for the site: 1. Concern regarding proposed finishes to new build houses in the context of the listed school and adjacent stone buildings. 2. Twenty houses and 5No. offices are proposed, whilst the Brief suggests a development of 15No. houses. 3. This is a significant increase in development density, and parking provision appears inadequate, which could increase on street parking to the detriment of pedestrian safety at this safe route to school location. 4. There is inadequate high quality space between the buildings as called for in the Brief. Three accesses are proposed instead of one, as recommended in the Brief, and the southernmost will affect trees. 5. Any proposed garaging should be large enough to accommodate a normal family car. Comments: *Assessment of the proposals against the Planning Brief, covering these matters is set out in the Planning Assessment section of this report, below.*

### **3.9. Representations**

- 3.10. A total of 55 No. neighbouring proprietors were notified of the planning application. In addition, the application was advertised in the Alloa Advertiser and Edinburgh Gazette as a "Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building" on 11th November 2015. The Listed Building application was also advertised in both the Alloa Advertiser and Edinburgh Gazette on 11th November 2015.
- 3.11. In response objections/representations have been received from the following 13No. parties:
- 3.12. Derek Robertson, 32 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL  
Ms E Ramsay, 14 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL  
Mr Tristan Hopkins, 8 Smithfield Loan, Alloa, FK10 1NJ  
Mrs J Syme, 78 Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU  
Mr Douglas Cooper, 16 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL  
Mr Alan Petrie, 69 Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU  
Mrs Eileen Cooper, 16 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL  
Mrs Maureen McMaster, 18 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL  
Mrs Gillian McLaughlin, 30 Dirleton Gardens, FK10 1NL  
Ms Joyce Davidson, 10 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa, FK10 1NL

Mrs Jacquelyn Monk, 76 Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU

Miss Carola Pullan, 77 Grange Road, Alloa FK10 1LU

Mrs Margaret Gibson, Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU

3.13. On the following grounds:

(1) Over-development of the site, and number of units not in compliance with the LDP figure of 15 units, as well as including offices. Development not in accordance with the Planning Brief. *Comment: Whilst the number units shown in the LDP is indicative only, the overall layout and density of the proposed development gives rise to issues of quantity and quality of space in the development and it is proposed that planning conditions require reconfiguration of internal elements in order to comply with the terms of the Brief.*

(2) Lack of parking spaces in the site for the development. This and formation of 3No. access onto Grange Road will create on-street parking issues in Dirleton Lane & Grange Road, which is used as a drop off/pick up zone for Redwell School. Road safety risk to pedestrians. *Comment: Current car parking proposals do not fully meet the Council's normal standards, although a degree of on-street parking is likely to occur and is capable of being accommodated. School drop-off and pick up times will generally not conflict with times of peak parking demand for the proposed houses. Final car parking numbers and management arrangements will be agreed in the process of final layout amendments required by planning conditions.*

(3) Question over whether existing access into Dirleton Lane will be closed, and implications for parking and condition of Dirleton Lane. *Comment: There will be no vehicle access to the site off Dirleton Lane, and there are no proposals to alter the lane as part of this development.*

(4) Concern regarding position, height and orientation of houses, and possible loss of light and privacy to neighbouring houses. *Comment: The position, height, orientation and design of proposed houses would not result in a detrimental loss of privacy or amenity for adjacent residents. Proposed new houses would sit between 20m and 27m from the rear elevations of houses on Dirleton Lane. A minimum window to window distance of 18m is normally considered acceptable and the proposals would achieve and exceed this, and there are no significant changes in level proposed in the site.*

(5) Concern about house finishes, including lack of stone finishes to Grange Road frontage houses and use of timber cladding and concrete tiles in curtilage of the listed building. *Comment: The proposed render to front elevation of houses facing Grange Road is not considered to an inappropriate finish in this location, provided colour and texture are suitable and final details of this will be required by conditions. In the curtilage of the listed building and wider context of the site it is considered that all roofs in the development should be clad in natural slates.*

(6) Concern regarding control of surface water run-off and possible effect on existing drainage systems and neighbouring houses. *Comment: SUDs will be required to serve the new development. This will require to ensure surface water run-off rates are reduced, taking account of the current situation.*



(7) Objection to proposed office use in a residential area. *Comment: The proposed office accommodation allows for preservation of important historic fabric of the listed building, and a condition can be used to ensure it is of a type of use that is compatible with adjoining houses.*

(8) Construction management should ensure no loss of amenity to neighbours, and question on which road construction traffic will use. *Comment: This will be reflected in planning conditions.*

(9) Surrounding properties don't have glazing bars. *Comment: This is not a matter of particular significance in the wider context of the proposals.*

(10) Question over retaining wall design, and spaces under extended walls. *Comment: Additional details of this will be required in planning conditions.*

### **3.14. Planning Assessment**

3.15. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan, adopted August 2015 (LDP) comprises the development plan. The planning policy position is therefore up to date.

3.16. The site is identified as Housing Proposal H11 in the adopted LDP with an indicative capacity of 15No. units. Development requirements include conversion of the original school, demolition of the extension and sympathetic new build development, all in accordance with a Development Brief. Key policy considerations from the LDP are as follows.

- Policy SC2 - Affordable Housing
- Policy SC5 - Layout and Design Principles
- Policy SC6 - Additional Design Information
- Policy SC9 - Developer Contributions
- Policy SC12 - Development Proposals - Access and Transport Requirements
- Policy SC20 - Water and Drainage Infrastructure and Capacity
- Policy EA22 - Listed Buildings

3.17. Taking account of these policy considerations a Planning Brief has been prepared for the site, and which sets out key design principles for development of the site, and these provide a framework for assessment of the proposals:

#### **3.18. 1. Sensitive conversion of the original Art Nouveau school building**

3.19. The proposals for conversion, as set out in the plans and described in the submitted Design Statement, are well considered and will achieve sensitive conversion, with minimal change to the exterior of the building, and preservation of the key internal design features; principally the main atrium

space and ornate detailing in smaller rooms in the north and south portions of the building.

- 3.20. The proposed design approach, including demolition of the later extensions is supported by Historic Scotland.

**3.21. 2. Development of high quality new build housing development**

- 3.22. The layout and general scale and massing of proposed new build houses would not detrimentally affect the setting of the listed school building. All new buildings are of simple two storey pitched roof design and located to the north and west of the school building, with no buildings proposed to the south, as stipulated by the Brief.

- 3.23. The exact positioning and orientation of proposed houses does however appear somewhat random in the wider context of surrounding developments and whilst the Brief envisaged houses generally in line with adjacent houses, the current proposals show groups of buildings orientated at differing angles, however there is scope to amend this to better accord with the Brief. It is proposed that any decision should condition final details of alignment of Plots 1 & 2 and 6-12, in order to better reflect and integrate with surrounding houses.

**3.24. 3. Formation of high quality shared space serving conversion and new build developments**

- 3.25. The proposed development density and layout/configuration of houses has compromised the scope for a high quality internal shared space as called for by the Brief. This space will serve largely as parking and manoeuvring space.

- 3.26. The re-alignment and potential reduction in number of houses, would also achieve an enhancement in the quality of space between buildings within the site, and the proposed planning condition can therefore seek to more fully achieve this objective of the brief.

**3.27. 4. Design and materials of new build element to compliment Listed Building**

- 3.28. The external design of houses is fairly simple, and would generally appear sub-ordinate to the main building. Whilst render is proposed on two houses facing Grange Road, subject to final agreement on texture and colour, this need not be an inappropriate material in this location. An entirely stone frontage to new build houses facing Grange Road may be too strong a material finish in the context of the listed building. Roofs of houses other than these two are proposed to be concrete tiles, however in the curtilage of the listed building, and wider context of natural slate roofs surrounding the site, it is considered that natural slates should be used throughout the site, which will provide a uniformity to all the buildings.

**3.29. Vehicle and pedestrian access**

- 3.30. The proposed closure of access from Dirleton Lane and replacement access arrangements off Grange Road accord with the principles of the Development Brief. The Roads Service agree with this principle, but recommend that a public road serves all houses. This is our normal policy standard and is

repeated in the Brief. There are no exceptional circumstances to allow a lesser standard and planning conditions have been framed accordingly.

- 3.31. This part of Grange Road is a designated drop-off and pick-up area for Redwell School, and whilst this brings traffic into the area for short periods at the beginning and end of the school day, this is obviously a location that has been subject to school traffic in the past, when St John's School was open. Grange Road is wide at this point, and adequate on-street parking space would appear to remain available if these additional accesses were formed.
- 3.32. Current car parking proposals fall short of the Council's normal standards, however, final details of car parking numbers will be agreed in the process of final layout amendments required by proposed planning conditions, as will details of the allocation and management of parking spaces.
- 3.33. The proposed development contains a small provision of office spaces. It is also that office use times will generally be when resident parking demand is lower. It is expected that planning conditions will require details of arrangements for shared parking for office and houses.

#### **3.34. SUDs, landscaping and open space**

- 3.35. The Brief notes that one level of treatment of surface water will require to be provided in the site, and the applicant currently proposes that this will be via use of porous road surfacing. Final details of this are still to be submitted and approved, and will require to take account of construction requirements for any sections of adoptable road. Given the site is currently almost entirely laid out in hard standing, the proposed new development should result in a reduction in surface water run-off rates towards Dirleton Lane.

#### **3.36. Other Matters**

- 3.36.1 Developer Contributions - The proposals were considered by the Council's Developer Contributions Group, and it was agreed that contributions towards pitch improvements at West End Park, and public art would be required, with any other matters such as education provision addressed by the Council via capital receipt for the site. The group agreed that the applicant's proposal to offer homes for sale under the Help to Buy Scheme, and the abnormal costs associated with developing this site, meant that no additional affordable housing requirements were necessary.
- 3.36.2 Trees - The proposals would result in the loss of 1No. tree in the area south of the main building, in order to accommodate access into a proposed parking area. A survey of this group of trees will be required by conditions, however, the loss of one tree would not appear to affect the overall amenity of this group of trees.
- 3.36.3 Office use - The proposed use of small parts of the school building for office space allows for retention of the original fabric in these particular parts of the building which contain the main elements of internal architectural detailing, which may not have been capable of incorporation into houses under the building regulations. These office spaces are small scale, and provided their use is restricted to Class 4 by condition, should be compatible with adjoining houses.

3.37. Sustainability Implications

3.38. The proposals involve sensitive re-use of a vacant listed building and re-development of a brownfield site.

**4.0 Resource Implications**

4.1. *Financial Details*

4.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

4.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

4.4. *Staffing*

**5.0 Exempt Reports**

5.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

**7.0 Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

The Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan, August 2015

**8.0 Equalities Impact**

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?  
Yes  No

**9.0 Legality**

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

**10.0 Appendices**

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

**11.0 Background Papers**

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

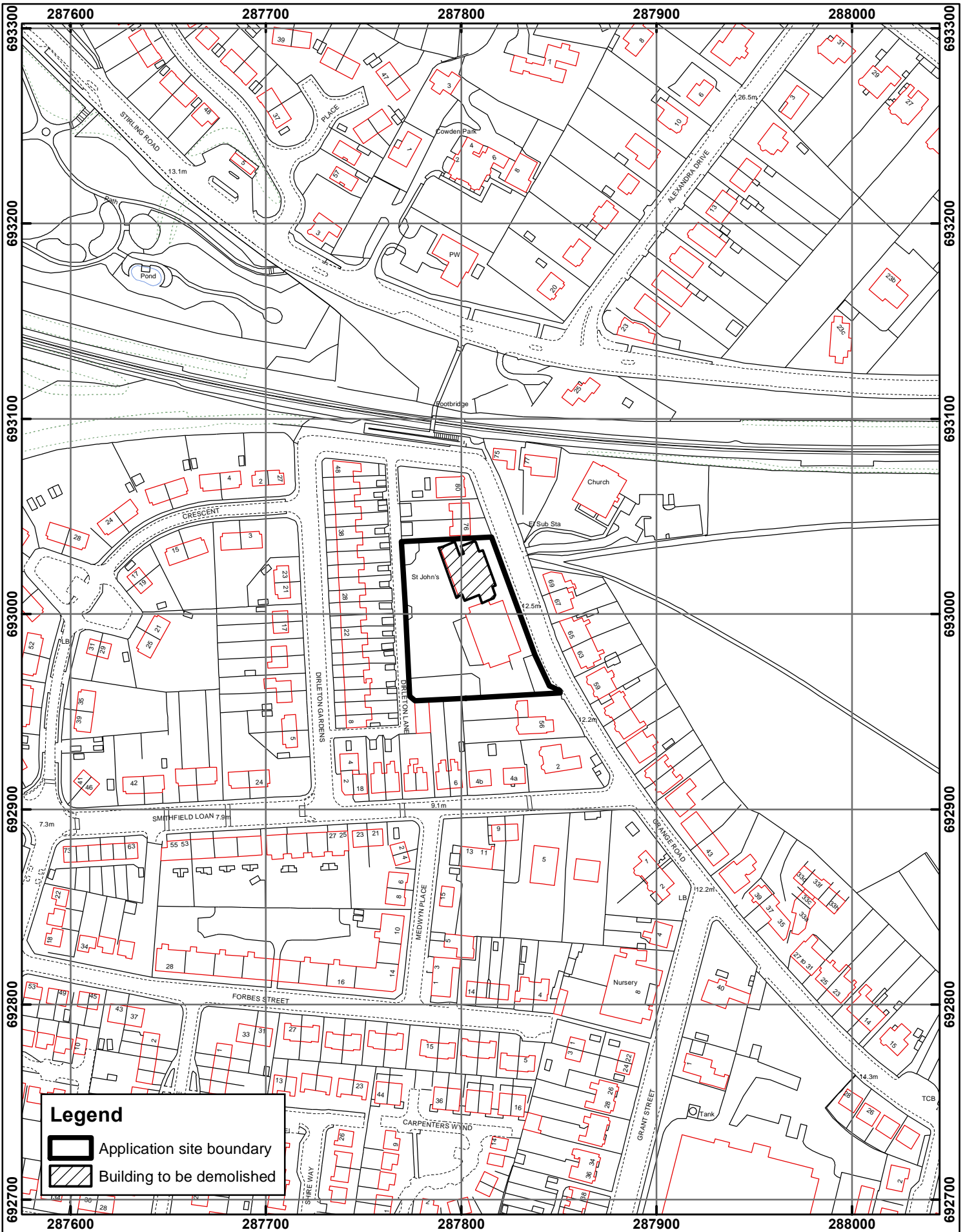
**Author(s)**

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Grant Baxter	Principal Planner	2615



**Approved by**

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Julie Hamilton	Development Services Manager	
Gordon McNeil	Head of Development and Environment Services	






**Legend**

-  Application site boundary
-  Building to be demolished

N  
  
 Date:  
 03-Dec-2015

**15/00252/FULL – St Johns Primary School, Grange Road, Alloa  
 Conversion Of Former School To Form 8 Townhouses and 5 Offices,  
 Including Partial Demolition, And Erection Of 12 Houses.**

**Ward: Clackmannanshire South**  
 0 25 50 75 100  
  
 Meters

**OS Grid Ref: NS 87 92**  
**Scale: 1:2,500**

 **Clackmannanshire Council**  
[www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk)  
 Development & Environment  
 Kilnraigs  
 Greenside Street  
 Alloa  
 FK10 1EB  
 Tel: 01259 450 000  
[planning@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:planning@clacks.gov.uk)

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