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**Report to:** **Planning Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** **7th February 2013**

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**Subject:** **Alteration, Extension and Partial Change of Use of Indoor Sport Centre (Class 11) to Library (Class 10), with Associated External Works, including Access Ramp - Amended Proposals to Planning Permission Ref No 12/00021/FULL at Speirs Centre, Alloa (Ref No 12/00278/FULL)**

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**Report by:** **Keith Johnstone, Principal Planner**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present a summary of our assessment of an application for planning permission to amend some of the previously approved design details to alter, extend and partially change the use of the Speirs Centre to accommodate a library with ancillary facilities. The report considers the relevant planning policies in the Development Plan, consultation comments and a representation from a neighbouring proprietor.
- 1.2. The assessment has concluded that the proposal changes to the approved design would be acceptable as they would not result in any significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of this listed building and they would make a positive contribution both to the facilities available within Alloa Town Centre and to the townscape of this part of the town. There are no material considerations which would outweigh the Development Plan support for the proposal and justify withholding permission.
- 1.3. As the Council is the applicant and owns the site, the application cannot be determined by appointed officers under the scheme of delegation. In relation to the associated application for listed building consent, this will be a decision for Historic Scotland.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the application is APPROVED, subject to the following conditions;
  1. The alterations and extension to the building hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and other details submitted and approved as part of this planning permission, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council, as planning authority.

2. Before any works start on site to alter the exterior of the building, the following details shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, as planning authority;

(a) samples of the materials to be used on the external elevations of the extension on the eastern end of the building which replaced the former boiler room and Turkish bath area. The specification for this part of the building annotated on the drawings is not approved.

(b) a specification of the materials and finishes to be used to form and delineate the external pedestrianised area to the east of the building; the proposed arrangements to review the proposed design and provision of a pedestrian link from the new entrance to pedestrian routes within the adjacent carpark; and the timing for completion of these works.

(c) details of the arrangements to store waste associated with the building and to relocate the existing recycling bins adjacent to the building.

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

3. The cycle parking racks and spaces and alterations to the existing carpark area to accommodate the pedestrian priority area to the east of the building, as annotated on the approved drawings, shall be completed prior to the commencement of use of the building as a library.

4. Before construction works start on site, a Traffic and Construction Management Plan shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, as planning authority. The plan shall set out the proposed measures to manage and minimise the impact of the works on the surrounding area, including neighbouring residents, businesses and the safe operation of the public car park adjacent to the site. Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved plan.

#### Reasons for Conditions

1. To ensure the works comply with the terms of the planning permission.

2. To consider these details yet to be submitted, in the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and the amenity of the surrounding area and in the interests of road and pedestrian safety.

3. To ensure that the building is adequately served by cycle parking.

4. To consider these details yet to be submitted in the interests of the amenity of the area and road safety.

## **2.2 Reasons for Decision**

1. The proposed development would accord with the objectives of the Clackmannanshire Local Plan.

2. The proposed amended design would not adversely affect the character or special interests of this listed building and would enhance and

help sustain the beneficial use of the building. Historic Scotland has advised that it has no objection to the revised design.

3. The development would provide improved and accessible facilities for the community and would have a positive impact on the strategies to regenerate Alloa Town Centre.

4. The issues raised by the objector would not justify withholding planning permission. The removal of the existing car parking spaces in front of the new entrance was approved as part of the original planning permission and the principle remains acceptable. The proposed changes can be satisfactorily addressed and managed as part of the wider town centre parking strategy.

5. There are no other material considerations that would justify withholding permission.

## 2.3 Plans Relating to the Decision

- L(PL)001 - Location Plan
- L(PL)002 - Site Plan
- L(PL)005 - Landscaping Plan
- L(PL)10 - Existing with Downtakings - Basement Floor
- L(PL)11 - Existing with Downtakings - Ground Floor
- L(PL)12 - Existing with Downtakings - First Floor
- L(PL)13 - Existing with Downtakings - Second Floor
- L(PL)14 - Existing with Downtakings - Roof Plan
- L(PL)15 - Existing with Downtakings - East Elevation
- L(PL)16 - Existing with Downtakings - West Elevation
- L(PL)17 - Existing with Downtakings - North Elevation
- L(PL)18 - Existing with Downtakings - South Elevation
- L(PL)19 - Existing with Downtakings - Section AA & CC
- L(PL)20 - Existing with Downtakings - Section BB
- L(PL)110 - Proposed Basement Plan
- L(PL)111 - Proposed Ground Floor
- L(PL)112 - Proposed First Floor
- L(PL)113 - Proposed Second Floor
- L(PL)114 - Proposed Roof Plan
- L(PL)115 - Proposed East Elevation
- L(PL)116 - Proposed West Elevation
- L(PL)117 - Proposed North Elevation
- L(PL)118 - Proposed South Elevation
- L(PL)119 - Proposed Section AA

### 3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The site comprises the Spiers Centre in Alloa Town Centre, a Category A listed building.
- 3.2. Planning permission and listed building consent was granted in March 2012 to alter, extend and change the use of part of the building to a library with ancillary facilities and for associated external works to the car park. Since that decision, an alternative design for the eastern end of the building has been devised to provide accommodation where the former boiler house and Turkish baths were located. The main elements comprise;
- the removal of the boiler house building (excluding the chimney) and its replacement with an extension with accommodation on two floors which would provide a reception area and library accommodation. The proposed facilities and uses in the remainder of the building remain unchanged.
  - the above extension would comprise a modern design incorporating full height glazing on the elevation facing the car park with elements of cladding and glazing on the north and south facing elevations.
  - the retention of the main customer entrance on the south facing elevation which would be accessed by a ramp and stairs.
  - the retention of an area of open space next to the east elevation of the building to create pedestrian priority close to the building entrance.
- 3.3 A separate application for listed building consent for the proposed amended design has been submitted to Scottish Ministers, who will determine this application since the Council is the applicant.

### 4.0 Consultations

- 4.1. Roads and Transportation advise that;
- the revised plans no longer show a dedicated pedestrian link from the entrance to the nearest public footway at the roundabout. Comment - *the link has not been shown since the potential re-development of the adjacent former Coop site may alter the current main pedestrian desire lines. A condition has been attached which would require proposals to be brought forward for approval.*
  - the amended layout would not encroach as far on the existing carpark. Consequently, there would be sufficient space to retain the parking spaces opposite the east elevation of the extension while maintaining access to the carparking spaces to the north of the site. Comment - *the previous approved layout included the removal of 17 spaces in the car park to accommodate the area of open space and to remove the existing visual clutter created by the recycling bins and*

*parked cars so that the proposed feature facade could be clearly viewed and create an attractive frontage to the development from King Street and the approach from the railway station. It is considered that this approach should be maintained. Roads previously advised that the loss of these spaces would not be significant in the context of the town centre parking strategy, given the recent car park improvements at Marshall which created 90 additional spaces. Given this approach has previously been approved, it is considered that there are no material changes in circumstances which would justify reversing this decision as part of the existing application.*

- 4.2. Waste Management advise that it would be possible to relocate the existing recycling bins to an alternative location within the car park further back from King Street. Comment - *this advice was provided in response to the objection submitted by a neighbour on the application which is discussed in Section 5.0 below.*
- 4.3. Historic Scotland has raised no objection to the proposals and support the creation of a feature facade on this elevation given its prominence to the new road layout and railway station.

## **5.0 Representations**

- 5.1. A total of 59 neighbouring properties were notified of the application and the application was advertised in the local press for neighbour notification reasons. The undernoted neighbour has submitted comments on the application;

- Mr W M White, Scott and White Building Design Ltd, 49 Primrose Street, Alloa.

The neighbour, while broadly in support of the development, has submitted the following comments;

(a) objection to the proposed re-location of the recycling bins to a site within the carpark next to King Street as shown on the drawings. This would create an adverse visual impact from King Street and increase the vehicular travel distance to the bins. Comment : *The Council's Waste Management Unit has advised that a less prominent location could be found within the car park area closer to the former Co-op buildings. This would address the neighbour's concern. The details of the exact siting could be submitted and approved using a planning condition.*

(b) The development appears to have already commenced and an access ramp has been installed in Primrose Street. Comment: *The access ramp is required while the library is temporarily located within the western end of the building and will be removed once the new entrance has been completed. The planning permission for the project was approved in March 2012 thereby allowing preparatory works to commence.*

(c) The development would appear to encroach on existing parking spaces which are necessary to accommodate the regeneration of the town centre. Comment: *This issue has been discussed in paragraph 4.1 above. The loss*

*of the spaces would not have a significant impact in the context of the Alloa Town Centre parking strategy. The proposed development in itself would have a positive impact on the regeneration of the town centre.*

(d) The layout could create a bottleneck between the main car park and access to the car park to the north of the Speirs Centre. Comment: *The development would maintain an adequate two way vehicular access to this area of car parking and buildings.*

(e) The proposed number of spaces in the public car park would be reduced as a result of the development. However, when a previous proposal which included development in the carpark which was approved several years ago, the Council insisted that the developer provide compensatory spaces within or next to the Ring Road carpark as part of the development. The developer could not achieve this and the project was abandoned. Comment: *The permission was granted in 1995 and since that time Development Plan policy has changed to allow for the provision of commuted sums to enable the Council to provide public parking elsewhere to serve the town centre. The Roads Service has confirmed that the proposed changes to the car park numbers would not be significant in the context of the town centre parking strategy. The Council has recently provided an additional 90 compensatory spaces to serve the town centre at Marshall.*

## **6.0 Planning Considerations**

6.1 The application requires to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The planning authority is also required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

6.2 The most relevant Development Plan policies related to the application are considered to be:

- Policy EN6 (Listed Buildings) - the Policy states that when determining applications, the Council will seek to ensure that the preservation of any listed building and its setting. Comment: *The proposed revised design for the extension would affect the part of the building which has been previously rebuilt as a result of a fire and the replacement of this part of the building would not adversely affect the character of the building, a view shared by Historic Scotland. The proposed massing, design, layout and appearance of the extension would create an enhanced new frontage to King Street which would complement the character of the original building. The proposal complies with this Policy.*
- Policy EN11 (Enhancing Environmental Quality) - the Policy seeks to ensure new development contributes positively to its immediate environment. Comment: *The proposed changes to the design of the building would also complement the character of the building and provide a high quality façade to King Street which is an important feature of the project. Although the external landscaping would be reduced, the design and environmental enhancement of this area could*

*be reviewed as part of any redevelopment proposals on the former Co-op site.*

- Policy INF4 (Development Standards) - the Policy states that development should comply with the Council's Development Roads Guidelines and Specification. Comment: *The application seeks permission to amend the building design and the proposal raises no significant transportation issues. The final design of the alterations to the car park will be regulated by a planning condition and the details agreed in consultation with Roads. The development would accord with this Policy.*
- Policy INF5 (Access for the Less Mobile) - the Policy requires new buildings that are accessible to the public to include convenient barrier free access. Comment: *The revised design does not alter the previously approved standard of accessibility to the building which will significantly enhance the existing standard of provision. The development would accord with this Policy.*

6.3 The proposed development would comply with the Development Plan.

## **7.0 Other Material Considerations**

7.1 The advice from consultees has been considered in Section 4.0 above and we are satisfied that the comments can be satisfactorily addressed and would not justify withholding permission.

7.2 The representation from a neighbour has been considered in Section 5.0 above. We consider that the issues raised can be satisfactorily addressed or would not justify withholding permission.

7.3 The revised design would make a positive contribution to the proposals to create a modern community facility which better meets the needs of the community, help sustains the use of a listed landmark building and contributes to the strategy to regenerate Alloa Town Centre.

## **8.0 Sustainability Implications**

8.1 The proposal would maximise the use of an existing underused building within an accessible location and help adapt the listed building in a sympathetic manner.

## **9.0 Resource Implications**

9.1 Financial Details

9.2 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 ☒

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

Yes ☐

## 10.0 Exempt Reports

10.1 Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

## 11.0 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are safer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerable people and families are supported	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

None

## 12.0 Equalities Impact

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

## 13.0 Legality

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

## 14.0 Appendices

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

None

## 15.0 Background Papers

15.1 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)

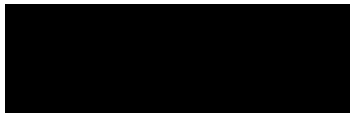
Yes ☒ (please list the documents below) No ☐

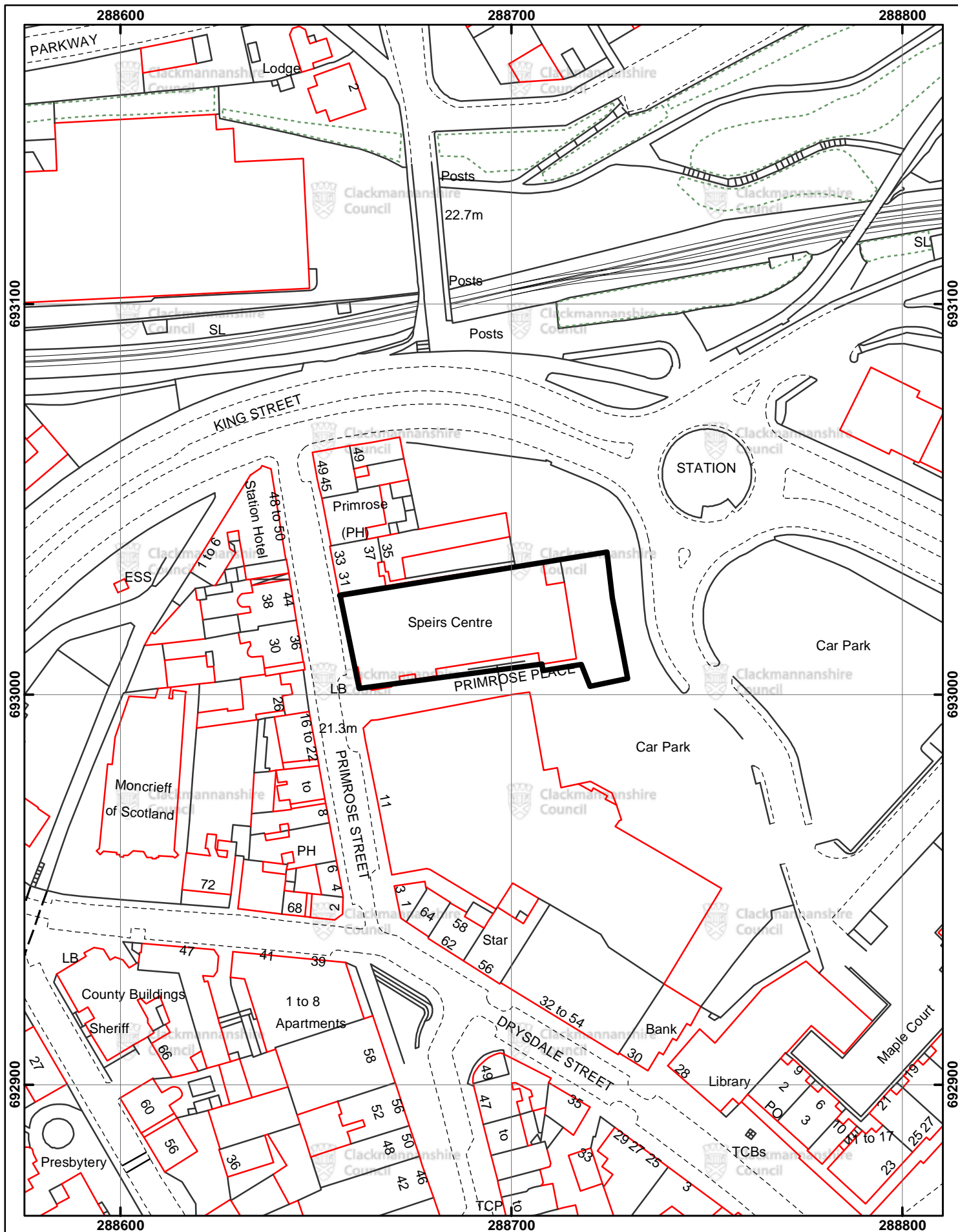
1. Clackmannanshire Local Plan
2. Planning Application ref Nos 12/00021/FULL and 12/00022/LIST
3. Outline permission ref C/95/097 and C/95/097/01


**Author(s)**

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Keith Johnstone	Principal Planner	2614

**Approved by**

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Julie Hamilton	Development Services Manager	
John Gillespie	Head of Community and Regulatory	






Date:  
24-Jan-2013

**12/00278/FULL & 12/00279/LIST - Speirs Centre, Primrose Street, Alloa  
Alteration, Extension and Partial Change of Use of Indoor Sport Centre  
to Library, with Associated External Works, including Access Ramp**

**Ward: Clackmannanshire South**

**OS Grid Ref: NS 88 93 SE**

**Scale: 1:1,250**



**Clackmannanshire Council**  
www.clacksweb.org.uk  
Services to Communities  
Kilnraigs  
Greenside Street  
Alloa  
FK10 1EB  
Tel: 01259 450 000 Fax: 01259 727 452  
development\_services@clacks.gov.uk

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