

Ref:
AB1

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
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OFFICIAL USE

23/11/09.

Date Received

NOTICE OF REVIEW

Notice of Request for Review under Section 43(a)8
of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and
Country Planning (Schemes of Delegation and Local Review Procedures
(Scotland) Regulations 2008

Important – Please read the notes on how to complete this form and use
Block Capitals. Further information is available on the Council's Website.
You should, if you wish, seek advice from a Professional Advisor on how to
complete this form.

(1) APPLICANT FOR REVIEW

Name SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE

Address TIPPERLINN ROAD
EDINBURGH

Postcode EH10 5UU

Tel. No. /

Email /

(2) AGENT (if any)

Name MISS IRAM MOHAMMED

Address ATKINS LTD
200 BROOMIELAW
GLASGOW

Postcode G14RU

Tel. No. 0141 220 2291

Email iram.mohammed@atkinsglobal.com

(3) Do you wish correspondence to be sent to you or your agent

(4) (a) Reference Number of Planning Application 09/00790/DET

(b) Date of Submission 2/06/2009

(c) Date of Decision Notice (if applicable) 10/08/2009

(5) Address of Appeal Property

VICTORIA INFIRMARY
93 EAST KING STREET,
HELENSBURGH, G84 7BU

(6) Description of Proposal

ERECTION OF NEW BUILD
AMBULANCE STATION

(7)

Please set out the detailed reasons for requesting the review:-

PLEASE REFER TO 'GROUNDS OF REVIEW REPORT'
DOCUMENT.

If insufficient space please continue on a separate page. Is this is
attached? (Please tick to confirm)

(8) Please indicate which of the following procedures you would prefer:-

- (a) Dealt with by written submission
- (b) Dealt with by Local Hearing
- (c) Dealt with by written submission and site inspection
- (d) Dealt with by local hearing and site inspection

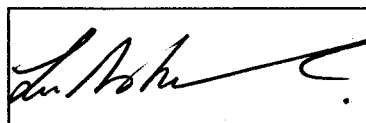
(9) Please list in the schedule all documentation submitted as part of the application for review ensuring that each document corresponds to the numbering in the sections below:-

Schedule of documents submitted with Notice of Review (**Note 3 copies of each of the documents referred to in the schedule below must be attached**):

No.	Detail
1	PLANNING APPLICATION FORM (SUBMITTED 2/6/2009)
2	EXISTING LOCATION PLAN (A/P/EX/011 Rev 1)
3	PROPOSED SITE PLAN (A/P/00/010 Rev 1)
4	PROPOSED LOCATION PLAN (A/P/00/011 Rev 1)
5	NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION PLAN (A/P/00/012 Rev 2)
6	EXISTING & PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN (A/P/00/001 Rev 1)
7	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS (AE 00) 002 Rev 1)
8	FOUNDATIONS OF REVIEW REPORT
9	
10	

If insufficient space please continue on a separate page. Is this is attached? (Please tick to confirm)

Submitted by
(Please Sign)



Dated 23/11/2009

ON BEHALF OF ATKINS LTD

Important Notes for Guidance

1. All matters which the applicant intends to raise in the review must be set out in or accompany this Notice of Review
2. All documents, materials and evidence which the applicant intends to rely on in the Review must accompany the Notice of Review **UNLESS** further information is required under Regulation 15 or by authority of the Hearing Session Rules.
3. Guidance on the procedures can be found on the Council's website – www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/
4. If in doubt how to proceed please contact 01546 604331 or email localreviewprocess@argyll-bute.gov.uk
5. Once completed this form can be either emailed to localreviewprocess@argyll-bute.gov.uk or returned by post to *Committee Services (Local Review Board), Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT*
6. You will receive an acknowledgement of this form, usually by electronic mail (if applicable), within 14 days of the receipt of your form and supporting documentation.

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form please contact Committee Services on 01546 604331 or email localreviewprocess@argyll-bute.gov.uk

For official use only

Date form issued

Issued by (please sign)

Helen Sturgh



PLEASE SEND YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO THE AREA OFFICE CLOSEST TO THE LOCATION OF YOUR PROJECT.

For Official Use Only:	
Reference No.	
Date of Receipt	
Fee Paid	Date of Receipt
Valid Date	

MAINSTREAM PLANNING APPLICATION FORM

The undernoted applicant hereby makes application for express planning consent for the development described on this form and on the accompanying plans.

This form should not be used for applications for Mineral Consent, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, Advertisement Consent, Certificates of Lawfulness or Prior Notification as separate application forms are available for these.

Note: There is a simpler 'Householder' application form for domestic extensions, garages, LPG Tanks etc.

Important: Please check whether you also require a building warrant, or permission under any other enactment in addition to planning permission.

1(a) Applicant (IN BLOCK CAPITALS) Full Name <u>SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE</u> Address <u>TIPPERLINN ROAD</u> <u>EDINBURGH</u> Post Code <u>EH10 5UU</u> Tel. No. _____	1(b) Agent (see note 1) Full Name <u>ATKINS DESIGN & ENGINEERING</u> Address <u>200 BROOMIELAW</u> <u>GLASGOW</u> Post Code <u>G1 4RU</u> Tel. No. <u>0141 220 2000</u>
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2. Description of Proposed Development (see note 2) ERECTION OF NEW BUILD AMBULANCE STATION

3. Site Address (see note 3) VICTORIA INFIRMARY, 93 EAST KING STREET, G84 7RU

4. Application Type (tick one box only)(see note 4)

(a) Outline Permission <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Application to Waive/Vary Conditions <input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Approval of Reserved Matters <input type="checkbox"/>	(e) Change of Use of Land / Buildings <input type="checkbox"/>
Ref. No. of Outline Permission	(f) Application for Temporary Consent <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Detailed Permission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(g) Renewal of a previous Temporary Consent <input type="checkbox"/>
	Date of expiry of Original Consent

5. Use of Building(s)/Site (see note 5)

Existing GARDEN AREA Proposed AMBULANCE STATION

6. Site / Floor Area of Development (Complete as appropriate)(see note 6)

(a) Proposed site area of the development 0.1215 ha / _____ acres

(b) Proposed external floor space of building(s) 1st Floor 193 sq.m / 2nd Floor _____ sq.m / 3rd Floor _____ sq.m

7. Demolition (see note 7)

Will any buildings or Structures be demolished in connection with the proposed development? YES NO

If YES, the building/structures should be clearly identified on the submitted plans.

8. Operational Need or Special Circumstances (tick appropriate boxes)(see note 8)

(a) Is any claim of agricultural / forestry operational need being made? YES NO
If YES, Form D/Agric should be submitted.

(b) Is any other claim of operational need or special circumstances being made? YES NO
If YES, please give details in a covering letter or statement.

9. Registered Croft (tick appropriate box)(see note 9)

Does the Application Site form part of a Registered Croft YES NO

10. Licensed Premises (tick appropriate boxes)(see note 10)

(a) Are the existing premises used for the sale or consumption of alcohol under a licence granted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 ? YES NO

If YES, specify type of licence presently held.....

(b) Is it intended that the existing and/or proposed premises be used for the sale or consumption of alcohol under a licence granted in terms of the Licensing (Scot.) Act 1972 ? YES NO

If YES, specify type of licence to be applied for.....

11. Access Arrangements (see note 11)

No Change New vehicular access
 Existing vehicular access to be used
 Existing vehicular access to be altered/improved
 Separate pedestrian access proposed

12. Parking Arrangements (see note 12)

No Change
 Number of existing on-site parking places 33
 Number of additional on-site parking places 17
 Only off-site parking available

13. Drainage Arrangements (tick one box only)(see note 13)

Not Applicable Connection to existing public sewer
 Connection to existing private sewer/septic tank Single septic tank proposed
 Two or more septic tanks proposed Other type of private system (specify on plans)
 Please specify type of outfall for septic tank(s).....

14. Water Supply Arrangements (tick one box only)(see note 14)

Not Applicable Connection to existing public main Proposed connection to public main
 Existing private supply to be used Proposed private supply
 Please identify proposed private water supply source, pipes and any storage arrangements on the SITE PLAN

15. Building Materials (Complete as appropriate)(see note 15)

Outside Walls: Material BRICK CLIP CLADDING Colour LAGUNA (7459AL)
 Roof Covering: Material PLASTISOL INSULATED PANEL Colour ANTHRACITE GREY
 Windows: Material TIMBER Movement TOP HUNG Colour WHITE

16. Are any trees / shrubs to be cleared from the site ? (see note 16)

Not Applicable YES NO If YES show details of felling / landscaping / replanting on Site Plan.

17. Are proposed buildings within 8m of overhead powerline ? (see note 17)

Not Applicable YES NO If YES, has the Electricity Board been consulted ? YES NO

18. This question should be completed for all COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL Applications (see note 18)

- (a) Not applicable
- (b) Nature of proposed uses, operations and processes.....
- (c) The arrangement for the disposal of waste materials.....
- (d) Provision for loading and unloading vehicles.....
- (e) Estimates of vehicle type and movements per day Existing..... Proposed.....
- (f) Gross floor space Existing..... sq.m Proposed..... sq.m
- (g) Number of employees Existing..... Additional.....

19. Estimates of : (see note 19)

(a) Development Costs £ 300,000.00

(b) Start Date 01/09/09

(c) Completion Date 06/11/09

THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED IN EVERY CASE (see note 20)

Certificates Under Article 9 Of The Town & Country Planning
(General Development Procedure)(Scotland) Order 1992

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT : (Tick Certificates 1, 2 or 3 as appropriate OR Certificate 4.)

<p>Certificate 1 - Where neighbouring land is in domestic use The requisite notices, together with a plan showing the location of the proposed development, has been given to all those who require to be notified in accordance with Article 9 (1), (2)(b) and 5(a)(ii) of the above Order.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Certificate 2 - Where neighbouring land/property is in non-domestic use The requisite notices, together with a plan showing the location of the proposed development has been given to all those who require to be notified in accordance with Article 9 (1), 2(a) and 5(a)(i)(aa) of the above Order.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Certificate 3 - Vacant Land It is not possible to carry out notification in accordance with Article 9(1) to (3), 9(5)(c) of the above Order since there are no persons situated on the neighbouring land to which notification could be sent as referred to in Article 9(4)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

OR

<p>Certificate 4 - No notification is required No notification is required in accordance with Article 9(1) to (3) of the above Order since there are no parties holding a notifiable interest in neighbouring land/property.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Those Notified in terms of Article 9 are: (Please attach a separate sheet if there is insufficient space below)

Owner, Occupier or Lessee (see (a) below)	Address	Date Notified
<p>Please see attached sheet.</p>		

IMPORTANT :

An accompanying plan titled "NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION PLAN" must accompany each application to the Council which clearly identifies all those parties who have a notifiable interest in neighbouring land, except in the case where no notification is required. (see note 24(D)).

- (a) In the case of NON-DOMESTIC LAND/PROPERTY insert the actual name of the owner, occupier or lessee if available from the valuation role or alternatively, if unavailable insert "The Owner", "The Occupier" and "Lessee" for each notifiable address (see note 21(B)).

In the case of DOMESTIC PROPERTY insert only "The Owner" and "The Occupier" for each notifiable address. Do not insert the individuals name.

THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED IN EVERY CASE (see note 21)

Ownership Certificates Under Article 8 Of The Town & Country Planning
(General Development Procedure)(Scotland) Order 1992

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT 21 DAYS BEFORE THE DATE OF THE APPLICATION: (Tick one box only)

Certificate 1 The applicant OWNS all of the land involved in the application site (see (a) Below).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate 2 The applicant DOES NOT OWN all the land involved in the application site, but has given a copy of the requisite NOTICE NO.1 to the owner(s) (see (a) below) of any part of the application site, who are listed below.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Certificate 3 The applicant OWNS all of the land involved in the application site (see (a) below). However, part or all of the Site constitutes or forms part of an AGRICULTURAL HOLDING (see (b) below) and the applicant has sent a copy of the requisite NOTICE NO.1 to the AGRICULTURAL TENANT(S) who are listed below.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate 4 The applicant DOES NOT OWN all the land involved in the application site, but has given a copy of the requisite NOTICE NO.1 to the owner(s) (see (a) below) of any part of the application site, who are listed below. Part or all of the site ALSO constitutes or forms part of an AGRICULTURAL HOLDING (see (b) below) and the applicant has sent a copy of the requisite NOTICE NO.1 to the AGRICULTURAL TENANT(S) who are listed below.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Those Notified in terms of Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992 are:

Name of Owner	Address	Date Notified
NHS HIGHLAND	JOHN DEWAR BUILDING, INVERNESS BUSINESS & RETAIL PARK HIGHLANDER WAY, INVERNESS, IV2 7GE	01/06/09

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that I, the applicant/applicant's agent, have given correct and complete information and given the requisite notices to all parties who have a notifiable interest in terms of Article 8 and Article 9 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure)(Scotland) Order 1992.

SIGNED J. Stewart, for & on behalf of
ATKINS DESIGN & ENGINEERING DATE 01/06/2009

PERSONAL INFORMATION

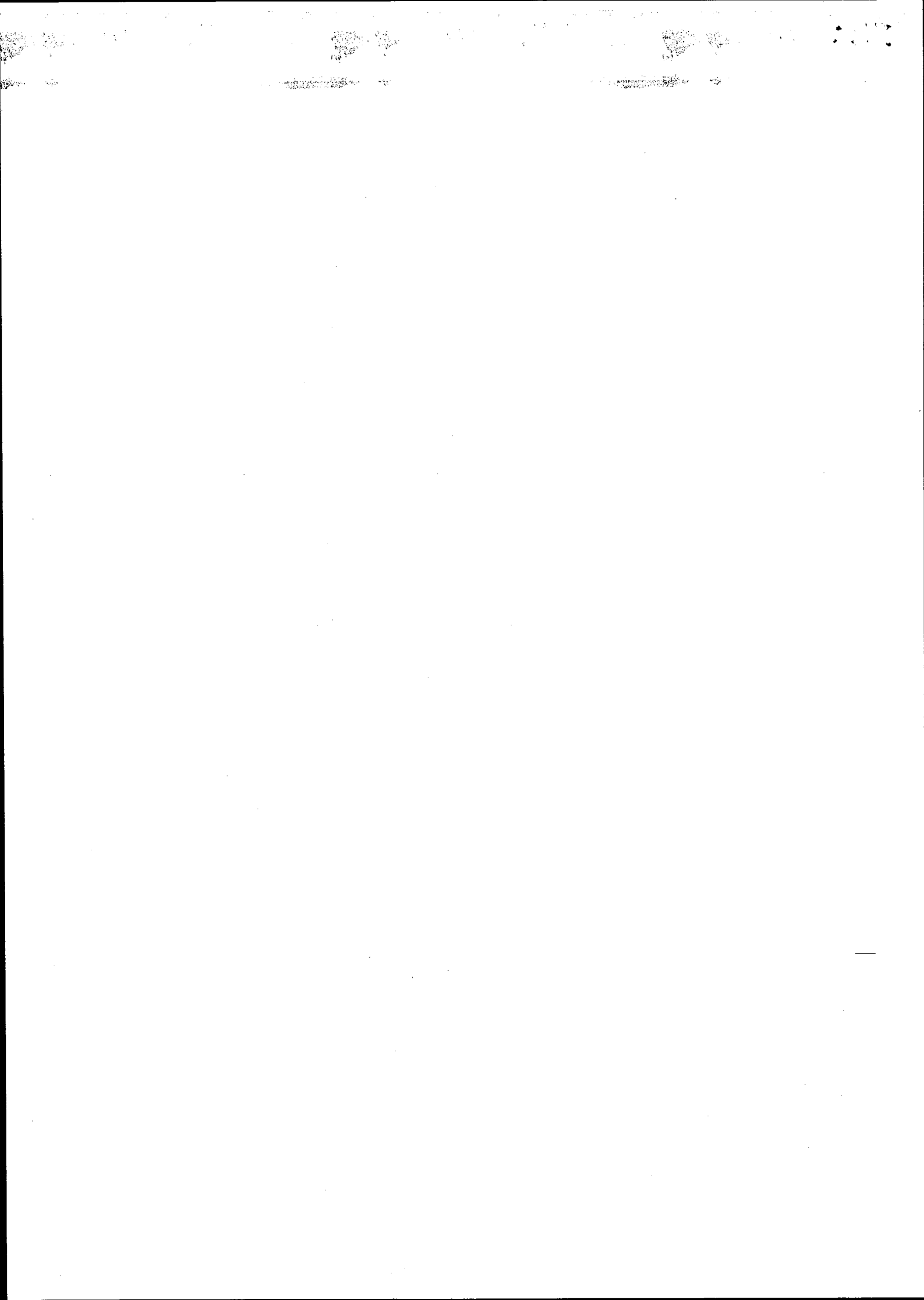
Please note that any information included in the application form, including your name, address and phone number is public information in terms of the Freedom of Information Act and will be copied and made available to any member of the public on request and will be published on the Council's Website.

If you do not wish the information within Section 1(a) to be made available you should use a professional agent for your application. Please note, all other information in the application and any other supporting information will be made available to any member of the public, on request, and published on the Council's Website.

Warning :

If any person issues any certificate which purports to comply with the requirements of Article 8 and Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure)(Scotland) Order 1992 which contains a statement which he knows to be false or misleading in a material particular, or recklessly issues a certificate which purports to comply with those requirements and which contains a statement which is false or misleading in a material particular, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

- (a) In terms of Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure)(Scotland) Order 1992, an owner is defined as any person who in respect of any part of the land is the proprietor of the dominium utile or is the lessee under a lease thereof of which not less than 7 years remains unexpired.
- (b) In the Agricultural Holdings Act 1949, the expression 'Agricultural Holding' means the aggregate of the agricultural land comprised in a lease, not being a lease under which the said land is let to the tenant during his continuance in any office, appointment or employment held under the landlord.



Grounds for Review

*Proposed Development of an
Ambulance Station at Victoria
Infirmary, Helensburgh*

Scottish Ambulance Service

ATKINS

Proposed Development of an Ambulance Station at Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh

Scottish Ambulance Service

Grounds for Review

23 November 2009

Notice

This report was produced by *Atkins Ltd* for *Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)* for the specific purpose for *Grounds for Review for the erection of an ambulance station at Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh*.

This report may not be used by any person other than The SAS without SAS's express permission. In any event, Atkins accepts no liability for any costs, liabilities or losses arising as a result of the use of or reliance upon the contents of this report by any person other than *The SAS*.

Document History

JOB NUMBER: 5084539			DOCUMENT REF: Document1			
Revision	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
3	Final	IM	IM	CMacD	CMacD	23/11/09
2	Client Draft	IM	CMacD	DO/JS	CMacD	20/11/09
1	Internal Draft	IM	CMacD	CMacD	JD	19/11/09
0	Internal Draft	IM	CMacD	CMacD		18/11/09
Revision	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date

Plan Design Enable

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- 6.2: Out Patient Department (OPD) building.
- 6.3: Jeanie Deans Unit building.
- 6.4: Hospital access road to the west of the existing garden area.

List of Tables

- 3.1: Alternative Sites for the Ambulance Station.

Appendices

Appendix A: Location Options Plan

Appendix B: Letters of Support

1. Introduction

This Grounds for Review is submitted to Argyll & Bute Council Committee Services (Local Review Board) on behalf of the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), in respect of Argyll & Bute Council's decision to refuse a detailed planning application for the erection of an ambulance station at Victoria Infirmary, 93 East Kings Street, Helensburgh.

Under The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and The Town and Country Planning (Schemes of Delegation and Local Review Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, Atkins have submitted a 'Notice of Review' Argyll & Bute Council Committee Services on 23 November 2009.

This report is structured under the following headings:

- **Application Background**, provides a description of the proposed development and a brief history of the application;
- **Planning Policy Context**, outlines the relevant planning policy within the development plan related to the proposed development;
- **Alternative Site Options**, describes the alternative sites which have been considered for the development and why they are unsuitable;
- **Material Considerations**, outlines the relevant Health Care guidance documents;
- **Grounds for Review**, provides a breakdown of why the development should be approved; and,
- **Conclusion**.

2. Application Background

2.1 Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the erection of a new build ambulance station and associated car parking at Victoria Infirmary in Helensburgh. The development site (known as 'the Site') is 0.12ha and forms part of an existing garden space in front of the main Victoria Infirmary building. Please refer to the Proposed Location Plan (Drawing No. A/P/00/011 Rev1), which forms part of the appeal submission, and provides a detailed layout of the development proposals.

2.2 Need for the Development

The need for an ambulance station has come about due to:

- The need to improve the current situation which sees emergency vehicles on a regular basis being blocked in by parked cars. The proposed location of the new ambulance station would play a key role in speeding up ambulance response times as well as provide additional accommodation for SAS to carry out infection control duties on site in Helensburgh, negating the need for a round trip to Vale of Leven or Paisley; and,
- The current ambulance station building does not suitably accommodate the eleven existing staff, and no potential to increase staff numbers by an additional six, which are required in order to meet response requirements. The lack of ability to accommodate any expansion not only compromises the quality of ambulance service in the area, but also means that future initiatives by the NHS Trust for the local community are also compromised.

2.3 Planning History

On 19 January 2009 Atkins Ltd contacted the Council's Planning Department to discuss the requirements for the planning application and the merits of the development, prior to submission of the planning application.

The Council replied in writing on 5 February 2009 advising SAS of its concerns regarding the siting of the proposed building within such close proximity to the front elevation of Victoria Infirmary, which is a Category B listed building. They advised that planning permission was unlikely to be granted unless SAS could demonstrate that the setting of the listed building would not be adversely affected. The Council provided no guidance as to a suitable alternative which would help mitigate their aforementioned concerns.

A detailed planning application was submitted by Atkins Ltd on behalf of SAS on 2 June 2009 to Argyll and Bute Council (Application Reference Number: 09/00790/DET). Neither SAS nor Atkins contacted the planners following the submission of the planning application. The planning application was accompanied by:

- Planning application forms, signed and dated 2 June 2009
- Existing Location Plan (Drawing Number: A/P/EX/011 Rev1)
- Proposed Location Plan (Drawing Number: A/P/00/011 Rev1)
- Neighbour Notification Plan (Drawing Number: A/P/00/012 Rev2)
- Proposed Site Plan (Drawing Number: A/P/00/010 Rev1)
- Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Drawing Number: AP(00)001 Rev1)

- Proposed Elevations (Drawing Number: AE(00)002 Rev1)

The planning application was refused by the Council on 10 August 2009 for the reasons set out in the refusal notice. In essence, the application was refused for the following reasons:

- The introduction of the proposed building and consequent loss of space and its impact upon the setting of the front of the Category B listed building; and,
- The incompatibility of the proposed building's design (in terms of shape, pitch of roof, and external finishes and cladding) and associated car and ambulance parking area in relation to the listed building.

It is noted that Argyll and Bute Council has not raised any in-principle objection to the proposal at the site, merely it considers the siting and design to be inappropriate given the proximity of the listed building.

3. Alternative Site Options

On 2 September 2009 Atkins, SAS and NHS Highland met on-site with the Planning Officials to discuss the four alternative sites within the hospital grounds, which had been considered prior to the submission of the planning application, and which were eliminated for the reasons identified in Table 3.1 below.

Location Options (Drawing No. AP(SK)101 Rev1), which forms part of Appendix A of this report, details the location of the alternative sites.

Table 3.1: Alternative Sites for the Ambulance Station

Site	Description	Reasons for unsuitableness
A	Located west of the front access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction in space as it only allows one of the eight vehicle parking spaces required; • Restriction in space for a full ambulance turning circle; • Close proximity to the site boundary creating privacy issues with adjacent land; and, • No parking for infection control purposes.
B	Located south of the existing management base. The site is currently used as car parking for the hospital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Highland would lose seven valuable car parking spaces; • Requires the felling of at least two mature trees; • The geometry of the site means that there would be no ambulance parking for infection control immediately adjacent to ambulance station; and, • Access / egress would still be an issue with vehicles parking along the road/pavement beside the existing garden, still restricting the movement of emergency vehicles. This would be contrary to HBN 44.
C	Located to the north east of the existing OPD building, and forms part of the hospital ground's flat grassland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Highland would lose eight car parking spaces; • Access/egress will be a problem as it is at the moment; • No parking for infection control; • Required proximity between vehicles and station cannot be attained; and, • Conflicts with future expansion plans of NHS Highland.
D	Located to the south of the existing Jeanie Deans Unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No parking for infection control; • NHS Highland would lose ten car parking spaces; • Four mature trees will require felling; and, • Proposed building would block the natural light of Jeanie Deans Unit building.

The chosen site for the proposed building and associated parking, which is supported by NHS Highland, was considered to be the most appropriate location for the SAS in terms of:

- Fulfilling the requirements of Health Building Note 44 and Scottish Health Facilities Note 30 (see Section 5.1 and 5.2 of this report);
- Future plans for expansion of services at Victoria Infirmary by NHS Highland; and,
- Would have the least impact in terms of loss of mature trees.

4. Planning Policy Context

This section considers the plans and policies which are relevant to the consideration of the development. The approved Argyll & Bute Structure Plan (2002) and the adopted Argyll & Bute Local Plan (2009) make up the statutory development plan relevant to the proposed development.

4.1 Argyll & Bute Structure Plan (2002)

The Structure Plan represents the strategic element of the development plan and its purpose is to give broad strategic land use planning guidance until 2012.

Helensburgh is identified within the Structure Plan as a 'Main Town'. Policy **STRAT DC 1 (Development with the Settlements)** states that encouragement shall be given to developments within the Main Towns which serve a wide community interest. Policy **STRAT DC 9 (Historic Environment and Development Control)**, provides protection, conservation, enhancement and positive management of the historic environment, including resistance of development that damages or undermines the historic, architecture or cultural qualities of the historic environment.

4.2 Argyll & Bute Local Plan (Adopted Aug 2009)

Argyll & Bute Local Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Argyll & Bute Structure Plan 2002. The Local Plan recognises the diversity of Argyll and Bute and the key underlying issues as being:

- An ageing population.
- The need for a significant investment in public services infrastructure, particularly for community facilities such as modern health care facilities.
- The need to reduce and ameliorate the effects of peripherality due to the creeping centralisation of services by facilitating and encouraging the expansion of local facilities throughout Argyll and Bute.

Page 77 of the Local Plan states that:

"The Council will continue to campaign to retain adequate health facilities throughout Argyll and Bute".

Relevant planning policies to the proposed development are outlined below.

Policy **LP ENV 1 (Development Impact on the General Environment)** states that in all development control zones, the Council will assess applications for planning permission for their impact on the natural, human and built environment, and will resist development proposals which do not take the following into considerations (inter alia):

- The development is of a form, location and scale consistent with Structure Plan Policy STRAT DC 1;
- The location and nature of the proposed development, including land use, layout, design, external appearance, density, landscaping, open space, safety hazards;
- The relationship to the road and public transport network, means of access, particularly access for emergency services, parking provision, and likely scale and type of traffic generation;
- The availability of infrastructure and relationship to existing community facilities;

- Current Government guidance, other policies in the Argyll and Bute Structure and Local Plan, particularly those relating to the proposed type of development; and,
- Listed buildings.

Policy **LP ENV 13a (Development Impact on Listed Buildings)** outlines that development affecting a listed building or its setting shall preserve the building or its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Where development would affect a heritage asset or its setting the developer will be expected to satisfactorily demonstrate that the impact of the development upon that asset has been assessed and that measures will be taken to preserve and enhance the special interest of the asset.

Policy **LP ENV 19 (Development Setting, Layout and Design)** requires developers and their agents to produce and execute a high standard of appropriate design in accordance with the design principles set out in the Local Plan.

Policy **LP COM 1 (Community Facility Development)** states that there is a presumption in favour of new or improved community facilities provided:

- The development is of a form, location and scale consistent with policy STRAT DC 1
- They respect the landscape/ townscape character and amenity of the surrounding area; and,
- The proposal is consistent with other policies contained in the Structure and Local Plan.

4.3 Argyll and Bute Local Plan (Adopted Aug 2009): Appendix A

Appendix A provides further guidance on matters of sustainable siting and design, and covers topics such as, positioning on site, energy efficiency and building materials. Appendix A also provides guidance on development in relation to listed buildings. When undertaking any proposals, building lines, character, form, materials and detailing must all be compatible with the existing building (s) or area subject to special protection.

4.4 Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Guide (Adopted Sept 2006)

The design guidance has been split into four documents, of which the one relevant to this development is 'Topic 3 Working with Argyll and Bute's Built Heritage'.

The aim of 'Topic 3' is to ensure that Argyll and Bute's distinctive identity is maintained and that future development is in sympathy with, and enhances, its surroundings. Some of the points raised in the 'Action Checklist' to consider when working with historic buildings, include: built setting; retention of character; and, pattern for the development.

5. Material Considerations

5.1 Health Building Note 44 Accommodation for Ambulance Services (1994)

The Health Building Note (HBN) series provides advice on the briefing and design implications of the Department of Health policy. These Notes are prepared in consultation with representatives of the NHS and appropriate bodies.

HBN 44 focuses on ambulance service accommodation requirements for ambulance stations, communications centres and workshops. HBN 44 clearly states that the NHS Act 1997 places a duty on the Secretary of State to provide ambulance services capable of meeting all reasonable requirements. This includes:

“Any person may request the services of an ambulance, usually by making a ‘999’ call, for accidents or sudden illness anywhere. An ambulance must be dispatched immediately in response to such a call” (Page 4, Section 2.1).

To meet this requirement, ambulance services are expected to achieve certain standards of performance particularly in responding to emergency calls. These will influence the scale and siting of the resources devoted to this task. In order to achieve this requirement, site selection should be influenced by:

- A close working relationship between ambulance staff and the staff of hospital departments, including developing new ambulance stations in hospital grounds, as site sharing could enable advantage to be taken of certain common services;
- If the station is within hospital grounds, independent access to the public road network is highly desirable and is essential when a rapid response emergency vehicle is one of the fleet;
- A site with a one-way system is preferable as it ensures free and unrestricted movement of vehicles, and traffic flow can be controlled to give precedence to designed emergency vehicles;
- The site should have adequate access through the public road network to the area it serves; and,
- Adequate car parking facilities for staff working on a shift basis, who are unable to use public transport.

Many factors must be considered when planning the size of each station. The size of the station will depend not only on the number of vehicles to be based there (both immediately and in the long term to cope with planned NHS developments), but also whether vehicle maintenance and repair facilities are to be included and whether the communications centre and/or administrative headquarters are to be provided on site.

5.2 Scottish Health Facilities Note 30 Infection Control (2007)

Scottish Health Facilities Note (SHFN) 30 provides guidance on the planning and execution of the construction of healthcare facilities. It aims to ensure that the prevention and control of infection issues are identified, analysed and planned for at the earliest stage of a project. The document provides information on the prevention and control of infection, and on the prevention of cross-infection and cross contamination in healthcare facilities.

SHFN 30 also discusses the importance of decontamination of reusable medical devices, includes emergency vehicles. The effective decontamination of medical devices is essential in reducing the

risks to patients from healthcare associated infection. At each stage in the decontamination process, consideration should be given to location, facilities, equipment, management and policies/procedures. If decontamination is to be undertaken in a safe and effective manner which reduces risk and contributes to a reduction in healthcare associated infection, then it must be carried out in a suitable environment.

When designing clinical accommodation, consideration should be given to providing adequate and appropriate storage for centrally provided sterile supplies. If sterile supplies are stored inappropriately, then sterility can be compromised and contamination can occur.

5.3 Community Support

Appendix B of this report provides the full letters of support and the newspaper article, which are summarised below.

Helensburgh and Lomond Councillor

On 2 August 2009, an email was sent to Argyll and Bute Council Planning Department by Helensburgh and Lomond Councillor Mr George Freeman, supporting the need for this important development. Mr Freeman highlighted from his discussions with SAS officers, that due to the number of parked vehicles along the access road there are often difficulties in getting ambulances out of Victoria Infirmary to attend emergency calls, and as such SAS are failing to meet statutory call out targets.

"It is clear that by having the station to the front of the site, time, and indeed lives can be saved in attending to emergency calls throughout the area".

Mr Freeman noted that should the application be rejected, there was a clear possibility another site would have to be found out with Helensburgh. He added, that given other health services are located on this hospital site, SAS would consider it to be the ideal location for a new ambulance station, and as such, the Council should be doing all it can to ensure that the ambulance is retained in Helensburgh, especially as it has the largest population of any town/community within Argyll & Bute.

It was also noted that there is clear support for the proposal from officers within NHS Highland, who had highlighted the potential severe detriment to the communities with the Helensburgh and Lomond area, if an alternative location to the proposed site had to be found.

Mr Freeman noted the Planning Officer's comments on Council policies and Historic Scotland's guidance relating to listed buildings. Mr Freeman's view was:

"Victoria Infirmary is category B listed, it is a poor quality building and the introduction of the proposed ambulance station would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed building. Indeed, the importance of this proposed ambulance station, with the reduced response times that this will bring about, cannot be over emphasised and I would hope that this would outweigh any minimal impact that the proposal would have on a the listed building".

Helensburgh Advertiser

After the refusal of the planning application The Helensburgh Advertiser published an article on 13 August 2009, in which Mr Freeman expressed his serious concern over the planning officer's decision.

"I worry that the SAS may withdraw from the town completely, leaving no ambulance cover in the area".

Mr Freeman had hoped that the approval of the application would have helped to reduce ambulance response times, given that the SAS is not meeting response time targets within the Peninsula area. His views were echoed by Jackie Baillie MSP within the same article.

Lomond LHCC Patients Group

Since the refusal of the planning application SAS has received a number of letters of support for the proposed ambulance station. One such letter is from Mr David Bruce, who is the Convener for the Lomond LHCC Patients Group. Mr Bruce outlined the group's astonishment to hear that under the present arrangement there had been several instances of ambulances being blocked in by parked vehicles, when responding to a 999 call, which resulted in a crucial loss of time. Furthermore, he expressed concern over the validity of refusing planning permission for such vital community infrastructure.

"I understand the reluctance of planners to breach their own guidelines over the siting of the building, which they feel will compromise the view from the street of the listed Victoria Infirmary, but argued that in this instance the health and indeed the lives of people should take precedence".

Mr Bruce continued that the benefits of establishing the new ambulance station are clear, as it would:

- Allow for the siting of additional ambulances in Helensburgh and thus obviate the need for a vehicle to have to be taken to the Vale of Leven Hospital for decontamination, with the risk of it being out of the area when it might be urgently needed; and,
- Assist in integrating the Service with the other agencies on the Victoria Infirmary site.

Finally, Mr Bruce stressed the wider importance of this matter in relation to the changes in emergency cover at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

"With an increasing number of urgent cases having to be transferred to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley, it is essential that the immediate provision in the Helensburgh area is of the highest quality and that response times are the very minimal achievable. As such, Lomond LHCC Patients Group strongly support of the scheme as proposed by SAS".

6. Grounds for Review

In refusing the planning application, Argyll and Bute Council cited two main reasons for refusal, which are summarised in Section 2.3 of this report and detailed in the Council’s decision notice.

The Appellants, SAS, refute these reasons for refusal on the grounds set out below.

6.1 Setting of the Listed Building

Victoria Infirmary is a Category B listed building designed by William Lieper, dating back to 1895. It has a two story central section with single storey wings on either side. The two storey central section has bellcapped bays and an asymmetrically set doorway.

Over the years, the integrity of the infirmary has been considerably compromised by the erection of various inappropriate extensions, which do not reflect the character of the listed building (Figure 6.1). One could argue that the 1960s and 70s styles of the adjacent, and free standing hospital buildings, including the Out Patient Department (OPD) Building (Figure 6.2), which lies 10 metres to the east and the Jeanie Deans Unit (Figure 6.3) situated 15 metres to the south of the listed building, have further compromised the integrity of the listed building itself and its setting.

Figure 6.1: Extensions to the rear of the listed Victoria Infirmary building



Figure 6.2: OPD building to the left of this picture, and shown in relation to the Victoria Infirmary building and its rear extensions.

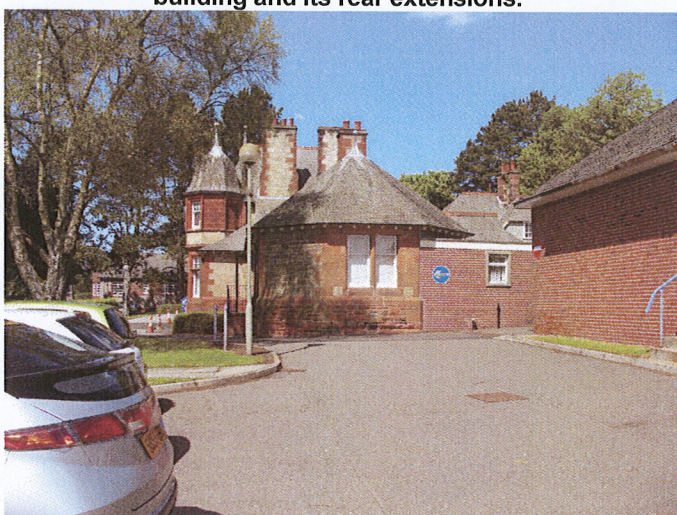


Figure 6.3: Front entrance of the Jeanie Deans Unit building to the south east of the Victoria Infirmary building



The quality of the listed building and its setting as it now stands is therefore questionable, especially against the important need for the proposed ambulance station. The community benefit and value to human life which would be provided by the new station should outweigh any potential minimal impact on the setting of the listed building.

The Council has stated that the principal viewpoint of the listed building is on entering the site from the main access road, and that the garden area to the front creates a sense of open space which gives open views of the listed building.

It should be noted that the topography of the hospital grounds is such that the listed building sits at a significant height from the garden area. The proposed ambulance building has been designed with a shallow pitch roof, in order to reduce as far as reasonably practicable, the potential impact on the wider views of the listed building from the main access road. The proposed landscaping of the ambulance building will further mitigate concerns regarding the impact on the setting of the listed building.

The existing garden area was created on an informal basis by previous patients. As a matter of goodwill, NHS Highland has proposed that the garden would be relocated to another part of the hospital grounds, therefore entirely mitigating the loss of this space. Its removal and re-location elsewhere in the hospital grounds was not in itself a matter for concern to the Council when refusing the application. It must be concluded therefore that the existing garden area itself has no intrinsic historic value, and therefore its loss would not compromise the setting of the listed building.

The Council go on to criticise the footprint of the proposed ambulance station building, and state that the scale of the building will disrupt the viewpoint of the listed building.

The purpose of erecting an ambulance station on the site, is to accommodate the necessary, and indeed vital, facilities required for undertaking infection control within Victoria Infirmary. This is an issue SAS are unfortunately unable to compromise on, as one of the prime reasons for the proposed development is to ensure that there is constant ambulance cover within the Helensburgh area, which at present is not the case.

6.2 Design and Materials

Part of the reason for refusal states "*its finishes are modern including a grey panelled roof and brick cladding*". It is disputed that the use of brickwork for the external walls constitutes a 'modern material'. The brick cladding for the walls are believed to be an appropriate material for a building of this type in this location, and are a reflection of nearby buildings. The O.P.D building adjacent to

Victoria Infirmary has brick facing, as indeed does the extension onto the eastern gable end of the listed building.

The proposed shallow pitched roof is considered most appropriate in order to achieve the lowest possible building height, and therefore minimise its potential visual impact, and maintain existing views to the front elevation of the adjacent listed building. Any other use of roofing materials, such as traditional tile, would necessitate an increase in the building's overall height.

Notwithstanding the above, SAS always stated its willingness for compromise on the issue of a materials palette to be agreed with the Council, prior to commencement of the development. SAS would be agreeable to a condition to that effect attached to an approval notice. It seems unreasonable that the planning application should have been refused on the grounds of an inappropriate materials palette, which could easily have been agreed with SAS prior to the determination of the application and subsequently dealt with by condition.

6.3 Accordance with Planning Policy

In the Appendix to the Council's refusal notice, the Planning Officer considers the proposal to be contrary to Policies **STRAT DC1** and **STRAT DC9** of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan, Policies **LP ENV1**, **LP ENV13a** and **LP ENV19** and Appendix A of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan Adopted 2009 and the Council's Design Guide.

SAS fully acknowledges the requirements of the planning policies relating to the design, scale and setting of a development within the vicinity of a listed building. However, the design and siting of the proposed facility has been carefully considered to minimise the perceived impact and therefore SAS does not agree that the proposal is contrary to the development plan in relation to these policies.

In SAS's view, the Council's commitment to the provision of health facilities, as stated in the Local Plan on page 77, coupled with the statutory requirement under the NHS Act 1997, should have been afforded greater weight by the Council in reaching its decision. A major concern for SAS is that no consideration has apparently been given by the Council to Policy **LP COM 1 (Community Facility Development)**. The aim of this policy is to encourage the provision of new public and private services, facilities or infrastructure that helps to support and enhance a community and helps to retain the local population.

The Local Plan recognises the **need for a significant investment in public services infrastructure** within Argyll and Bute and the **need to reduce and ameliorate the effects of peripherality**. The Local Plan goes one step further and outlines that the Council will continue to campaign to retain adequate health facilities throughout Argyll and Bute. However, within the Planning Officer's delegated decision report, the development has not been assessed or any acknowledgement given to Policy **LP COM 1** or the statement that the Council will campaign for the provision of health facilities. This lack of assessment or acknowledgement of this policy raises concerns on how fairly the development has been assessed against all of the relevant policies within the Argyll and Bute development plan.

6.4 Provision of Local Health Care Facilities

Improved Ambulance Response Times

Ambulance vehicles are being blocked in by parked cars along the hospital access road, running through the hospital grounds, which is having a severe detrimental effect on their response times. Figure 6.4 shows the current situation with parked cars along the hospital access road.

Figure 6.4: Hospital access road to the west of the existing garden area

In order to achieve the expected standards of performance in responding to emergency calls, the NHS Act 1997, HBN 44 and SHFN 30 outline requirements to be considered when assessing the suitability of the site for new ambulance station. The NHS Act 1997 places a statutory duty on ambulance services to achieve certain standards of performance particularly in responding to emergency calls. It is acknowledged within the Act that this requirement will inevitably influence the scale and siting of the resources devoted to this task.

The Council's Planning Department consulted the Road's Department before the determination of application. Officers of the Roads Department raised no objection to the proposals. It was confirmed that the various activities carried out within the grounds of the Victoria Infirmary placed a high demand on the existing car parking provision, and as such the proposals would assist in improving the current situation.

The proposed location of the new ambulance station would play a key role in speeding up ambulance response times as well as provide additional accommodation for SAS to carry out infection control duties on site in Helensburgh. Consequently, the refusal of the application severely limits ambulances in the Argyll & Bute area being able to accord to with national and statutory requirements.

On-site Infection Control

One of the key reasons for the erection of a new ambulance station is to allow for on-site infection control of the ambulance vehicles which at present involves a two hour round trip for each vehicle to the Vale of Leven Hospital. During this response time, there is no ambulance cover in the Helensburgh area and should a 999 call be made and an ambulance be required, one would have to be dispatched from Paisley, which can take up to 35 minutes to reach the Helensburgh area.

The development of an ambulance station, and more importantly its retention within the hospital grounds would take advantage of certain common services and the building of a close working relationship between ambulance staff and the staff of hospital departments.

The proposed site will ensure free and unrestricted movement of emergency vehicles through the provision of adequate car parking facilities. Parking is also required for on-site staff, who work on a shift basis, and in most cases will be unable to use public transport during night shifts

The above considerations should have been viewed as material considerations by the Council when assessing the planning application. An improvement to the current situation at Helensburgh will allow SAS to meet statutory emergency response time targets, improve the existing situation with regards to parking and cater for infection control on site rather than off-site at Vale of Leven.

The overall community benefit of the development in the proposed location is unparalleled, as the additional time saved, could potentially make a difference when trying to save a human life.

6.5 Community Support

Since the submission of the planning application and its subsequent refusal, there has been ongoing community support for this important and life saving development. Section 5.3 and Appendix B of this report details the level of support for the development by The Helensburgh and Lomond Councillor, The Convenor of the Lomond LHCC Patients Group and an article in the Helensburgh Advertiser. These points are all valid material considerations, and should be taken into account when assessing the proposed development.

7. Conclusions

The proposed ambulance station within the grounds of the Victoria Infirmary in Helensburgh is absolutely critical to the wellbeing and indeed the lives of the Helensburgh community and its surrounding area.

It is recognised that due consideration should to be given to the impact the proposal would have upon the listed building. However, It is not agreed that this impact is unacceptable. The Council has not raised any in-principle objection to the development, yet it accepts that the proposed building has an impact upon the setting of the adjacent listed building. In order to mitigate these issues, the scale, precise siting and overall profile (i.e. a shallow pitched building) have all been carefully considered and are intended to keep any perceived impacts to a minimum, and be in keeping with the site and surroundings.

Should the proposed external finishes being considered acceptable, SAS are willing to accept any reasonably worded condition that requires agreement of the materials pallet prior to commencement of the development.

Planning Policy **LP COM 1** (Community Facility Development), clearly states that the Council will encourage the provision of new public and private services, facilities or infrastructure that help to support and enhance a community and help to retain the local population. The refusal of this application is therefore contrary to this policy and supporting text within in the adopted Local Plan. It is considered unacceptable that the Council failed to assess the proposed development in line with this policy and the statement made on page 77 of the Local Plan which states:

“...the Council will continue to campaign to retain adequate health facilities throughout Argyll and Bute”.

It is requested that the full merits of this application are re-considered in the light of all relevant planning policies and other material considerations. In any event, given the very special circumstances of this case, greater weight, and indeed priority, should be given to the benefits that this proposal would bring, in terms of addressing health needs in the area, as opposed to the perceived impact upon the setting of the listed building.

The existing constraints of the site and operational requirements of the ambulance station and associated car park have dictated the proposed location within the hospital grounds. In particular, it is a clinical requirement that the ambulance station is sited close to the hospital building. In accordance with the NHS Act 1997, HBN 44 and SHFN 30, the proposed ambulance station will ensure that infection control can be undertaken at Victoria Infirmary, eliminating the need for ambulance vehicles to be taken out of service by travelling to the Vale of Leven. This will vastly improve traffic flow to give precedence to emergency vehicles, which is paramount in helping the SAS achieve statutory emergency call out response targets and help to save lives. These issues are material considerations to this application and we urge the Local Review Board to give serious weight to these when reviewing these Ground of Review.

The community support for this development is unquestionable, with Mr George Freeman, Jackie Baillie MSP and Mr David Bruce all publicly voicing their concerns on the decision of Argyll and Bute Council's planning department to refuse this critical development. The need for the ambulance station is clear and *“that by having the station to the front of the site, time, and indeed lives can be saved in attending to emergency calls throughout the area” (Mr George Freeman, 2 Aug 2009).*

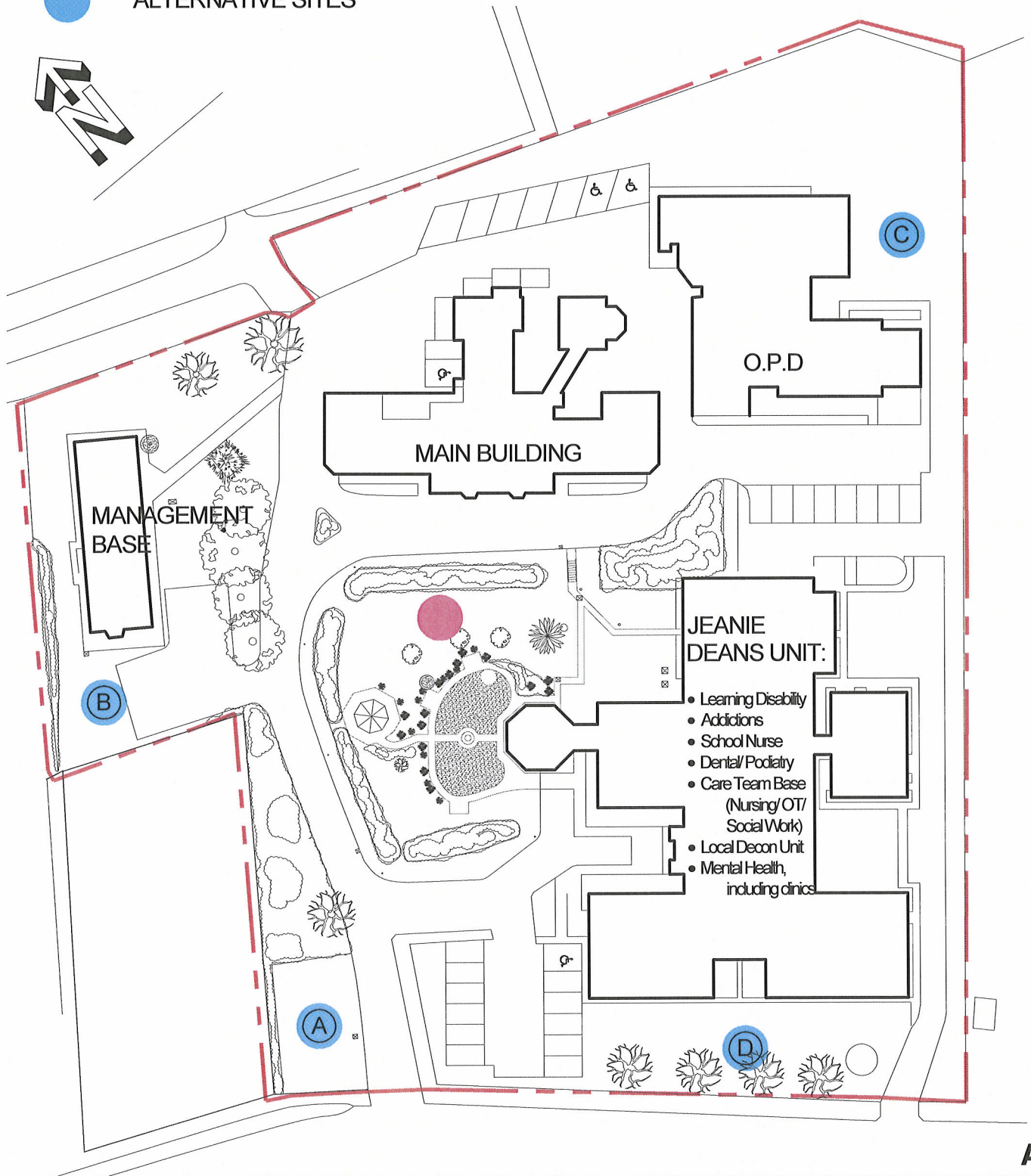
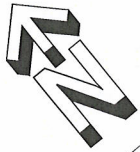
The need to retain ambulance services within the Helensburgh area cannot be stressed enough. Should the Council's decision to refuse the application be upheld, there is a clear possibility that a site for the proposed ambulance station will have to be found out with Helensburgh, as there are no viable alternative sites within the hospital grounds. This would be to the detriment of the residents of the area. The Local Review Board is requested to re-consider this case and grant planning permission for the proposed development.

Appendix A: Alternative Site Option Plan

0 10m 20m 40m

● PROPOSED SITE

● ALTERNATIVE SITES



A4

Design & Engineering Solutions
200 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G1 4RU

www.atkinglobal.com
Tel: 0141 220 2000 Fax: 0141 220 2001

Project
**HELENSBURGH AMBULANCE SERVICE
NEWBUILD, 93 EAST KING STREET**

Title
LOCATION OPTIONS - KEY

Scale	Drawn JS	Chk'd GK	Auth DOR
1:750	Date 01.05.09	Date 01.05.09	Date 01.05.09

Drawing Number	Rev
5084539	AP(SK)101 01

Job Dept. Sub Unique No.

Appendix B: Letters of Support

1. Helensburgh and Lomond Councillor
2. Helensburgh Advertiser Article
3. Lomond LHCC Patients Group

From: Freeman, George
Sent: 02 August 2009 19:13
To: Gilmour, Angus
Cc: Young, Howard; Glen, Stephanie; McKay, Neil; David Ross - NHS Highland; Anne Helstrip - NHS Highland; Harper George; Dance, Vivien; Kelly, Daniel; Kinniburgh, David; Morton, Ellen; Mulvaney, Gary; Nisbet, Andrew; Petrie, William; Reay, Al; Robb, James (Councillor)
Subject: SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE - PLANNING APPLICATION 09/00790/DET - ERECTION OF HELENSBURGH AMBULANCE STATION
Importance: High

Gus,

Please see attached correspondence relating to the above planning application submitted to the Council by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) for the erection of an ambulance station on the Victoria Infirmary site at 93 East King Street, Helensburgh. Now that I am not directly involved in the planning process, I believe that I am now free to give an opinion on individual planning applications and consider it essential that I give my views on this important application.

I have been aware of this proposal for some time now and can confirm, now that I have viewed the planning application, that I fully support this proposal. One of the main reasons for this application is that there is currently no purpose built ambulance station in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area. The ambulance is currently parked beside the old Victoria Infirmary building at the top of this site. I am aware from discussions with the officials from the SAS that there are often difficulties in getting the ambulance out of the site to attend emergency calls in the Helensburgh and Lomond area and that the SAS is failing to meet the targets that have been set for attending such calls. Stats are available to confirm the current situation. It is clear from the discussions that I have had that by having the station to the front of the site, time can be saved in attending to emergency calls throughout the area. As you will appreciate, in such emergency situations, time is of the essence.

Unfortunately, if this application is rejected, then there is a clear possibility that a site for the proposed ambulance station will have to be found outwith the town. Although this ambulance was originally based in Garelochhead before being moved to Helensburgh a few years ago and I have continued to argue for an ambulance to be located within the Lomond North Ward, I do not want to promote the transfer of the ambulance from Helensburgh to the

Lomond North Ward. Having said that, if I did, this would be an ideal opportunity to do so as I have no doubt that there are a number of sites that would be suitable for the proposed ambulance station. My view is that the Council should be doing all that it can to ensure that the ambulance is retained in Helensburgh which has the largest population of any town / community within Argyll & Bute. Given the other health services on this site, I would consider this to be the ideal location.

I note Ms Glen's comments on Council policies and Historic Scotland's guidance etc relating to listed buildings. As you are aware, these policies / this guidance have been in place for a number of years and nothing will have changed with the introduction of the new Argyll & Bute Local Plan. There is currently a modern building on this site to the front of the listed building. My own view is that although the old building is Category B listed, it is a poor quality building and the introduction of the proposed ambulance station would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed building. The importance of the proposed ambulance station, with the reduced response times that this will bring about, cannot be over emphasised and I would hope that this would outweigh any minimal impact that the proposal would have on the listed building.

I would ask that my support for this application is formally recorded. You will note from the email correspondence below that there is also clear support for this proposal from officers within NHS Highland who have highlighted the potential severe detriment to the communities within the Helensburgh & Lomond area if an alternative site outwith the area has to be found. I have copied this email to other Members within the Helensburgh & Lomond area so that they are aware of the situation and can comment on this application if they so wish and are not restricted by being members of the committee that will eventually determine this application.

Your early comments would be welcome along with an approximate timescale for determining this planning application.

Regards,

George Freeman

Councillor George S Freeman JP
Ward 9 - Lomond North
Chairman - Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee
Housing & Communities Spokesperson
Argyll & Bute Council

helensburghadvertiser

Published: Thursday, 13th August, 2009 8:03am

Anger over ambulance depot refusal

THE future of the ambulance service in Helensburgh was dealt a body blow this week when planning permission for the new depot was refused.

The application, dealt with by planning officers under their delegated powers, was to build the new facility in the grounds of the Victoria Infirmary.

But because the infirmary building is historically listed, the council's conservation officer expressed concerns about the project and the application was thrown out.

Now Helensburgh and Lomond Councillor George Freeman - who has long championed a new depot - says he is furious.

He had hoped that approval of the application would have helped to reduce response times for his constituents on the Rosneath Peninsula.

But his real fear is that the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) might now withdraw the from the town completely, leaving the highest concentrated population area in Argyll and Bute with no ambulance cover at all.

He said: "For Helensburgh to not have an ambulance based in the town is totally unacceptable.

"I would have serious concerns if planning policy is seen to be more important than an essential community service which can be a lifeline for people.

"I have many serious concerns about this decision.

"I don't think it should ever have been dealt with under delegated powers and should not have been refused."

He added that the existing service - which operates out of a makeshift base at the infirmary - was not meeting its targets on response times and he wanted to see a new depot with proper facilities for staff and undercover shelter for the ambulances.

His view is echoed by Jackie Baillie MSP, who said: "I would hope that people will be able to work together to come up with a solution and I would encourage the ambulance service and the council to work together to find a solution.

"I consider this to be a most unfortunate decision.

Grounds of Review

"Given that the ambulance service is clearly not meeting its response times targets, particularly in respect of the Peninsula area, they must come up with a solution even if heads have to be knocked together to find it."

Councillor Freeman said that the SAS now has two options in the face of the refusal.

It can submit an appeal in which case the application will go before the council's planning review group, or to look for another site for the depot, which could be problematic in Helensburgh.

In his letter of support for the application, Councillor Freeman, had told the council officers: "The SAS is failing its targets for attending emergency calls in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

"By having a purpose built station at the front of the site, time can be saved in attending these calls.

"If this site is rejected a site may need to be found outwith the town and given the other health services on this site, I consider this to be an ideal location.

"My view is that the proposed building, although Category B listed, is a poor quality building and the introduction of the proposed ambulance station would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed building.

"The importance of this ambulance station cannot be over emphasised and this should outweigh any minimal impact that the proposal would have on the listed building.

"This application also has support from NHS Highland who have highlighted the potential severe detriment to the community if an alternative site outwith the area has to be found."

Two residents of nearby Granville Street had objected to the application on the grounds of road safety.

The report detailing the refusal said: "The main building of the Victoria Infirmary is a late 19th Century, William Leiper, T-plan traditional sandstone hospital.

"The proposal is to site the ambulance station some 20 metres directly in front of the principal elevation of this listed building.

"A building of this massing, scale and design would obscure its views from the main entrance, unacceptably affecting the setting of the listed building. Notwithstanding the fundamental problem of the erection of any building in this location, the proposed design of the building is also incompatible with the site."

The report also adds: "[The] style of building with associated car and ambulance parking in front of the principle elevation of this Category B listed building would be visually intrusive, visually discordant and would unacceptably detract from its setting."

LOMOND LHCC PATIENTS GROUP

Rosebank
150 West Princes Street
Helensburgh G84 8BH
November 5 2009

The Chief Executive
Scottish Ambulance Service
National Headquarters
Tipperlinn Road
EDINBURGH EH10 5UU

Dear Madam,

Ambulance Base, Helensburgh

At its meeting on October 20 2009, the Patient Group learned of the problems of the proposed re-siting of the ambulance base at the Victoria Infirmary in East King Street in Helensburgh.


Members were astonished to hear that under the present arrangements there had been instances of the ambulance being blocked in by vehicles when required to respond to a 999 call and that there had even been reluctance on the part of individuals to move their cars, resulting in a crucial loss of time. That such a situation should occur is appalling and clearly unacceptable and unsustainable.

We were almost equally amazed to learn that the obstacle to there being a new custom-built base for the ambulance and crews is not financial but the technicality of a planning permission for the proposed site. We can understand the reluctance of planners to breach their own guidelines over the siting of a building that will compromise the view from the street of a listed Victorian building but we would argue that in this instance the health, indeed the lives, of our fellow citizens should take precedence.

The benefits of establishing the new base are clear. It would allow for the siting of additional ambulances in Helensburgh and thus obviate the need for a vehicle to have to be taken to the Vale of Leven Hospital for decontamination, with the concomitant risk of it being out of the area when it might be urgently needed; and it would assist in integrating the Service with the other agencies on the Victoria Infirmary site.

Finally, we would stress the wider importance of this matter in relation to the changes in emergency cover at the Vale of Leven Hospital. With an increasing number of urgent cases having to be transferred to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley, it is utterly essential that the immediate provision in our area is of the highest quality and that response times are the very minimal achievable. We are therefore strongly in support of the scheme as proposed by the Service.

Yours sincerely,


David Bruce
Convenor

Copies: Minister for Health; and Jackie Baillie MSP