

LOCAL REVIEW BODY REFERENCE 09/0002/LRB

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 09/00790/DET – ERECTION OF AMBULANCE STATION

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

HEARING STATEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GEORGE FREEMAN TO LOCAL REVIEW BODY

BACKGROUND. The above Planning Application has been submitted in an attempt to address at least four separate problem areas relating to the current service provided by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) from the Victoria Infirmary site in Helensburgh to the residents of the Helensburgh & Lomond (H&L) Area. These are:

- a. **FACILITIES.** Currently there is no purpose built ambulance station within the H&L Area. The ambulance is normally parked in the open to the rear of the old Victoria Infirmary building, alongside make-do staff facilities that are dated and also totally inadequate. Because the ambulance is parked in the open all the year round, this can cause problems, particularly during the winter months, with frost, ice and snow etc which can all cause delays for ambulance staff responding to emergency calls throughout the H&L Area. Also, the current facility will not be able to accommodate the additional number of staff required to provide the increased level of service agreed by the Scottish Government.
- b. **DECONTAMINATION AND AVAILABILITY.** There are currently no decontamination facilities for ambulances at the current location. As a result, ambulances will require to be taken out of service after calls so that they can be driven to the SAS facility at the Vale of Leven Hospital in West Dunbartonshire for decontamination. This can add up to an additional 1 hour down time for ambulances after calls so as to enable decontamination to take place. This will increase substantially the time when ambulances will not be available to respond to emergency calls throughout the H&L Area. Even if a back-up ambulance is provided to cover for the removal of vehicles for decontamination, the additional travel time for two vehicles between Helensburgh and Alexandria and Alexandria and Helensburgh will increase the down-time for ambulances substantially.
- c. **RESPONSE TIMES.** It has clearly been established that currently the Scottish Ambulance Service is failing to achieve the required national response times throughout the H&L Area. This problem is being exacerbated as a result of ambulances having great difficulty in responding to emergency calls due to difficulties in exiting the Victoria Infirmary site when responding to such calls. The site is severely congested by cars/vehicles etc parked around the site. Apart from NHS vehicles/staff vehicles, there is also the added problem of vehicles belonging to members of the public attending out-patient clinics etc parking on the site. This is causing additional delays and is extending ambulance response times that are already unacceptable, even further. Extended response times are clearly increasing the risks for those seriously ill patients awaiting ambulance/paramedic services. Council officers have confirmed that "The proposal will assist to improve the current situation".
- d. **SERVICES.** The SAS operational requirements require the number of ambulance vehicles based in the H&L Area to be increased. Currently the plans are for four vehicles, including a fast response vehicle to operate from the Victoria Infirmary site. This will not be possible unless the proposed new facility is approved. These additional services are also essential in delivering the Scottish

Government's policy relating to the Vale of Leven Hospital (Vision for the Vale) which was approved by Nicola Sturgeon, Health Secretary, in July 2009 and which is to ensure that "**vital health services stay at the Vale of Leven Hospital**" and that "**key local services, which would have been lost under previous proposals, will now be safeguarded and improved**". Failure to approve this application will put the Scottish Government's stated policy relating to local health services at serious risk. This has been made clear in letters from Bill Brackenridge, who was appointed as Chairman of the Vale of Leven Hospital Monitoring Group by Nicole Sturgeon, Health Secretary, and also in a separate letter from Derek Leslie, General Manager of Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP), NHS Highland (copies attached).

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

The reasons given by Planning Officers for the refusal of the application relate almost specifically to the comments provided by the Council's Conservation Officer and are detailed as follows:

The proposed ambulance station would be located 20 metres in front of the principle elevation of the Victoria Infirmary. This is a Category B listed building designed by William Lieper, dating back to 1895. It has a two storey central section with single storey wings on either side. The two storey central section has bellcapped bays and an asymmetrically set doorway.

The principle viewpoint of this hospital building is the view on entering the site from the main access road. On entering the hospital grounds there is a large garden area in the centre of the site with the listed building set towards the back. This layout creates a sense of open space which gives open views of the listed building and is vitally important for the building's setting. Any building erected in front of this building, no matter how small, would have an undesirable affect on this listed building's setting. The proposed ambulance station, with a footprint of 192 square metres is a sizable building. It would be 18.5 metres in length and would completely disrupt the main view to this key central section of the building, with only part of the western wing and upper section remaining visible. This loss of open space would take away the open aspects of the main approach to the listed building, severely and unacceptably detracting from its setting.

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. It is a functional building, rectangular in shape with a shallow pitched roof. Its finishes are modern, including a grey panelled roof and brick cladding. The introduction of this 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.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies STRAT DC 1 and STRAT DC 9 of the Argyll & Bute Structure Plan, Policies LP ENV 1, LP ENV 13a and LP ENV 10 and Appendix A of the Argyll & Bute Local Plan Adopted August 2009 and the Council's Design Guide. These require, inter alia, that in relation to any works affecting listed buildings or their settings, special attention is paid to siting and design in order that the buildings character and setting are not eroded. Furthermore, the proposal would fail to accord with criteria contained within Historic Scotland's Technical Guidance Notes relating to development within the curtilage of listed buildings that may affect their setting. This states that the listed building's principal elevations should remain entirely visible from all main viewpoints and that they should always be the main focus of the setting.

COMMENTS. There are serious concerns with regards to the comments provided by the Council's Conservation Officer relating to this application and how he assessed the impact that the application would have on the listed building. These concerns relate to the following:

- a. Within the Note of Further Information (NFI), the Council's Development Manager confirms at Para. 4 that **"A detailed report was not submitted by the Conservation Officer during determination of the application, however, reasons for refusal were provided"**. An amplified report was only provided as part of the NFI, 6 months after the application had been refused. This major application was therefore assessed and refused without the Conservation Officer having provided the Planning Officer with a detailed report / assessment.
- b. At Para. 4 of the NFI, the Development Manager states that **"reasons for refusal were provided"**. These reasons were contained within an email dated 30 July 2009 (copy attached) from the Conservation Officer to the Planning Officer (S Glen) in which he stated that one of the **"Suggested Reasons"** for refusal was that **"The site is situated within the Helensburgh designated Conservation Area"**. This is wrong. The site is not within a Conservation Area. Also, the reasons for refusal given by the Conservation Officer in his email dated 31 July 2009 were provided without the Conservation Officer having visited the site.
- c. In the amplified report contained within the NFI, the Conservation Officer states that ***"In a designated conservation area, the planning authority must ensure that development proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. In my opinion, this proposal satisfies neither of these important criteria"***. This statement is totally inappropriate with regards to this application as the proposed development is **NOT** within a designated conservation area as is confirmed earlier in his report (see f. below) and therefore, the comment should not have been made.
- d. When the Area Team Leader Development Management (ATLDM) Howard Young was asked to confirm when the Conservation Officer visited the site to assess this application, he confirmed that **the Conservation Officer had not visited the site to consider this application**. He informed me that the Conservation Officer was familiar with the site from a previous visit to assess another application. When asked to confirm which application he was referring to and when the visit had taken place, he informed me that the application was 09/01367/LIB and that the visit had taken place on 19 August 2009 (copy of email dated 23 February 2010 attached). **Unfortunately this was 9 days after the application had been refused.**
- e. In his amplified report, the Conservation Officer states that: ***"Whilst the building itself is not located within one of Helensburgh's two outstanding conservation areas, the immediate surrounding area exhibits many of the characteristics that defines Helensburgh as a garden city with formal areas of open space adjacent to polite, architecturally significant villas set within generous, well-treed gardens served by generously spaced roads lined by grass verges and planted with specimen trees"***. Helensburgh is not a city and is not considered locally as a "garden city" or even a garden town. **The immediate surrounding area is not as described by the Conservation Officer**. It has ex local authority housing to both the front and rear of the site. To the east of the site are ex local authority houses followed by an overgrown vacant site and then blocks of four story high ex local authority flats (see photographs attached).
- f. The Conservation Officer states within his amplified report that: ***"Virtually all of the town's component buildings, public and private, are of architectural quality and the architects themselves are often of national repute and are certainly of Scottish significance"***. This is certainly not the case and anyone who knows Helensburgh would never make such an ill-informed statement.

- g. The Conservation Officer further states in his amplified report that *“an appreciation of the listed buildings principle facade remains largely unaffected from East King Street”*. It is considered that this statement is not accurate as the view of the building from most of East King Street has been lost by previous developments within the site and by trees on and adjacent to the site which all help to block the view of the front of the listed building. The buildings principle elevations are no longer visible from most viewpoints. It is clear that in the past, no special attention was paid to siting and design of other buildings now on the site in order that the listed buildings character and setting were not eroded. It is clear that the buildings character and its setting were eroded long ago by earlier developments prior to the current proposal. It is considered that the current layout does not create a sense of open space and certainly does not give open views of the listed building. On the contrary, it is considered that the site is cluttered with very little open space. The only location where a reasonable view of the listed building can be obtained is directly in front of the building on East King Street and even at this location, much of the lower level of the building is hidden by trees, hedges and other vegetation (see photographs attached)

Taking the above points into consideration, it is clear that the Conservation Officer did not submit a detailed report on this application. He did not visit the site prior to submitting his email dated 30 July 2009 to the Planning Officer giving reasons for refusal. He therefore did not assess the impact of this application on the listed building prior to the decision to refuse the application having been taken. He only visited the site to assess a separate application 9 days after this application had been refused. Given the statements he has made about the site, about the surrounding area and about Helensburgh in general, it is clear that he has very limited knowledge (if any) with regards to the town’s architecture and the architecture of the surrounding area.

The conservation Officer does confirm that the site has already been developed *“much to the detriment”* of the listed building. He also confirms that the site has already been *“significantly compromised”* as a result of the encroachment that has already occurred by other developments within the site. It is considered that the listed building is already degraded. There are already a number of other modern buildings around the site which have long detracted from the listed building and its setting. The building’s principal elevations are no longer entirely visible from all main viewpoints. It is clear that in the past, no special attention was paid to siting and design of other buildings now on the site in order that the listed building’s character and setting were not eroded. It is considered that the building’s character and its setting were eroded long ago by earlier developments prior to the current proposal. It is stated that the principle viewpoint of this hospital building is the view on entering the site from the main access road. It is considered that there is no principle view of the building on entering the site from the main road. The building is in very poor condition and, as a result of health and safety considerations, the upper floors are not accessible and have not been used for a number of years. It is considered that the current layout does not create a sense of open space and does not give open views of the listed building. On the contrary, it is considered that the site is cluttered with very little open space.

Given that all the other buildings on the site are of a modern design and mainly brick clad, it is considered that the design of the proposed building would not be incompatible with the general layout of the site. All other modern buildings on the site are functional and mainly rectangular in shape with modern finishes. As a result, the proposed new building would not be out of place in this setting. It would not be visually intrusive, visually discordant and would not detract from an already degraded listed building.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS. The Council’s Development Manager confirms in the NFI that: *“The range of considerations that might be considered material in planning terms is, in practice, very wide and falls to be determined in the context of each individual case”*. He also confirm that as is specified in Planning Circular 4/2009, *“It is for the decision maker, now the Local Review Body (LRB) in this case, to assess both the*

weight to be attached to each material consideration and whether individually or together they are sufficient to outweigh the provisions of the Development Plan". It is therefore down to the three members of the LRB alone to determine what the range of material considerations are in this case and the weight to be attached to each one.

It is considered that a number of material considerations were not taken into account by Planning Officers and insufficient weight was given to those that were when the decision was taken to refuse the application as follows:

- a. **HEALTH.** The Development Manager confirms in the NFI that "health" was considered to be a "minor" material consideration. Given the importance of this application to health services within the Helensburgh & Lomond Area, it's clear link to delivering the Scottish Government's policy on the Vale of Leven Hospital, it's link to the Scottish Ambulance Service achieving Government set response times, it's link to the priorities identified in the Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee's Area Plan etc, it is considered that **health should be a major material consideration** that is sufficient to outweigh the provisions of the Development Plan.
- b. **GOVERNMENT POLICY.** It has been confirmed in the NFI that Scottish Executive / Government policy is a material consideration when assessing a planning application. There is no reference to Government policy with regards to the Vale of Leven Hospital having been taken into account by Planning Officers when assessing this application.
- c. **COMMUNITY PLANS.** The NFI confirms that Community Plans are a material consideration when assessing a planning application yet there is no reference to the "**need to enhance local health care provision**", identified as a priority within the Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee's Area Plan, having been taken into account by Planning Officers when assessing this application.
- d. **LEGITIMATE PUBLIC CONCERN.** It is confirmed by the Development Manager within the NFI that "legitimate public concern" is a material consideration. There is no reference to Planning Officers taking into account the legitimate public concern that has been highlighted within the media on a number of occasions relating to this application (see example attached in front page headline in Helensburgh Advertiser).
- e. **THE NEEDS OF AN AREA.** Government planning information highlights that the needs of an area are a legitimate material consideration. It cannot be argued that Helensburgh does not need an appropriate ambulance service. There is no information available to confirm that Planning Officers took the needs of the Helensburgh & Lomond Area into consideration when considering this application.

ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS / SITES. The Development Manager states that in assessing the hospital and its grounds, it was considered that there were alternative locations within the site. The site visit with Planning Officers, the Developer and NHS officials to consider alternative sites within the complex did not take place until 2 September 2009, at which stage the application had already been refused on 10 August 2009. An amended decision notice was issued on 31 August 2009 as the first notice failed to comply with the current planning regulations. Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) officials confirmed that the alternative sites considered "*were all far too small and in one case, further into the site than the existing location, and none of them addressed the ambulance parking and decontamination requirements*". Helensburgh Community Council has confirmed that although they support the principle of a new ambulance station on the site, they are opposed to the current application and have suggest that there are other locations within the site that could accommodate the proposed development. Although the LRB can only consider the application in front of them, it has been made clear that none of the other locations within the site will provide the space to address all the issues that have been highlighted. Details relating to each of the four alternative sites that were considered and the reasons why they are unsuitable are listed on Page 24 of

the papers that were considered at the first meeting of the Local Review Body at Kilmory on 20 January 2010. See copy attached.

CONSEQUENCES OF REFUSAL OF THE APPLICATION.

If the decision to refuse the application is upheld, there is a real possibility that Helensburgh, and possibly the wider Helensburgh and Lomond Area, could lose its ambulance service. Apart from the improved response times that would be achieved as a result of the proposed new station, one of the reasons for locating the building at this location is that the site at the Victoria Infirmary is owned by NHS Highland (Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP)). Apart from integrating health services on the one site, economies of scale and cost savings will also be achieved by using the Victoria Infirmary site. Land is in very short supply in Helensburgh and no other appropriate sites have been found that would accommodate the proposed development. Even if land was available, land costs in Helensburgh are extremely high and no provision has been made within the SAS Capital Budget for such large additional costs which would be required to allow a site to be purchased, even if one was available. Joint site visits have been carried out to investigate whether there is another location within the site that could accommodate the proposed development but it has been confirmed that no reasonable alternative is available. Again, Page 24 of the papers that were considered at the first meeting of the Local Review Body at Kilmory on 20 January 2010 specify why the alternative locations within the site are unsuitable. See copy attached.

This ambulance service was originally based at Garelochhead for many years before the decision by the SAS was taken a number of years ago to move it to Helensburgh. It may be possible to identify alternative sites at Garelochhead or elsewhere in the Lomond area that could possibly be considered for the new station if the appeal relating to the Helensburgh site is not successful. Unfortunately this would mean moving the service 9 miles from its current location and further away from the most concentrated area of population in Argyll & Bute. Unfortunately such an option would only go towards further extending response times that are already failing to meet the required national targets. **Although, along with the wider community in my Lomond North Ward, I would welcome an ambulance once again being based in Garelochhead, it must not be at the cost of losing this essential service from Helensburgh.**

Helensburgh Community Council and others have questioned some of the statements that have been made that if this application is not approved, that Helensburgh (and possibly the wider Helensburgh & Lomond Area) could lose this service. Helensburgh Community Council states that this is "a claim not publicly made by the Scottish Ambulance Service itself". **This is untrue. The Scottish Ambulance Service confirmed publicly at the meeting of the Vale of Leven Hospital Monitoring Group on 25 January 2010 that the service could be lost to Helensburgh and even the wider Helensburgh & Lomond area if this application was not approved.**

FURTHER COMMENTS

OBJECTIONS. Apart from the objections from the Council's Conservation Officer and the correspondence from Helensburgh Community Council opposing the current proposal, there are only two other minor objections, both relating to car parking issues, although these refer to areas out-with the development site.

SUPPORT. Since the application was refused, support for the application has been recorded / submitted by Lomond LHCC Patient's Group, Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) – NHS Highland, the Vale of Leven Monitoring Group (set up by Nicola Sturgeon, Health Secretary within the Scottish Government), Helensburgh & Lomond Community Care Forum and Rhu & Shandon Community Council amongst others.

Given that one of the main reasons for this planning application is to improve ambulance response times, it is my view that this application is a life and death issue that must be approved. There is wide public interest

in, and support for, this application as has already been highlighted above. The public have been infuriated by the Council's decision to refuse this application. I have no doubt that the public will never forgive the Council if Helensburgh/Helensburgh & Lomond was to lose such a vital service. **I believe that it is totally unacceptable that complying with planning policy is considered more important than the retention of an essential emergency service (in the largest town in Argyll & Bute) that serves approximately 30% of the population of Argyll & Bute.**

It is my view that this is an application where the needs of the community far outweigh the impact that this application will have on an already degraded B listed building. Senior NHS officers fully support this application. The NHS Locality Planning Manager has previously highlighted the "**severe detriment**" to the communities of Helensburgh & Lomond if this application is refused and a site outwith the area has to be found. The major fear is that instead of the SAS enhancing the current service, it could be that the locally based service in the largest town in Argyll & Bute could be lost.

Given all the information submitted to the Local Review Body (LRB) to support this application, I would respectfully request that Members of the LRB uphold the appeal against the Planning Officer's delegated decision to refuse this application. I can confirm that I would support a condition that would require the roof of the proposed building to be brown instead of the grey as is currently proposed, as this would blend in more with the proposed buildings surroundings. I would also request that if Members of the LRB are minded to uphold the appeal, that any conditions that are attached to the approval are delegated to officers in close consultation with LRB Members so that the application is not delayed unnecessarily.

Councillor George S Freeman JP - Ward 9 (Lomond North)

28th February 2010

Chairman
Argyll & Bute CHP
Aros
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Argyll
PA31 8LB
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Councillor Daniel Kelly
Argyll & Bute Council
Kilmory
LOCHGILPHEAD
PA31 8RT

Date 8 February 2010
Your Ref
Our Ref WB/MJ

Enquiries to : Bill Brackenridge
Direct Line 01546 605682
Extension 25682
Email billbrackenridge@aol.com

Dear Councillor Kelly

HELENSBURGH AMBULANCE STATION

As you are probably aware, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing has established the **Vale Monitoring Group** and has charged it with two purposes:

1. To monitor the **development of plans** by Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to determine whether they are appropriate for achieving the full implementation of the Vision for the Vale of Leven Hospital that she has approved and whether the timescales for implementation are appropriate.
2. To monitor the **implementation of these plans** to establish whether the adopted plans are being fully implemented within the envisaged timescales.

The Cabinet Secretary has charged me with chairing the Group.

Patients from Helensburgh and Lomond account for about 30% of episodes at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

A major aspect of the Vision is that certain interventions will no longer be undertaken at the Vale; a second is that a few patients will require to be transferred to other hospitals after admission to the Vale; a third, and important, aspect is that a significant number of patients who are initially treated elsewhere will be returned to the Vale for recuperation and rehabilitation.

Clearly, these aspects of the Vision will have a major impact on the call for ambulances by people in Helensburgh and Lomond. At its meeting on Monday 25th January, the Group was delighted to hear that agreement has been reached between Greater and Glasgow and Clyde Health Board and the Scottish Ambulance Service about how much extra Ambulance resource will be required and, possibly importantly, how it will be financed. As a result, even more Ambulance vehicles and staff are to be based in Helensburgh.

As you are aware, the Scottish Ambulance Service has applied for planning permission to build a new ambulance station in Helensburgh, the current station being inadequate for the current

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Chief Executive: Dr Roger Gibbins BA MBA PhD
Chair: Mr Garry Coutts

resources and no longer fit for purpose. You will also be aware that this application has been refused but has been appealed. I understand that you will be chairing the appeal process.

At the Group's meeting, the Divisional General Manager for the South-West Division of the Scottish Ambulance Service indicated that the Scottish Ambulance Service would be challenged even to continue to provide the current level of cover, never mind the enhanced level of cover require for the implementation of the Vision for the Vale, should the new ambulance station not be built. The Scottish Ambulance Service has not been able, I understand, to identify any alternative sites in Helensburgh.

It seems inconceivable that the largest town in Argyll does not have its own ambulance station especially as the provision of healthcare to the people of Helensburgh and Lomond comes to depend yet more on ambulance services.

The Group tasked me to write to you to ask that every possible avenue is explored in the appeal process to ensure that a way is found to allow for a new ambulance station on the Victoria site, as proposed. The Group believes that the new ambulance station on the Victoria site is an important requirement for achieving the Vision for the Vale and crucial to the delivery of modern healthcare to the people of Helensburgh and Lomond.

Please let me know if you require further information about the Vision for the Vale – or about the Monitoring Group. You can contact me at home by phone on 01436 671373 or by e-mail at BillBrackenridge@aol.com. I am away quite a bit in the next few weeks. If you cannot contact me, the General Manager of the Argyll and Bute CHP, Derek Leslie, will be able to help. You can contact Derek by phone on 01546 605646 or by e-mail at Derek.Leslie@nhs.net.

Yours sincerely



W Brackenridge
Chairman, Vale Monitoring Group

Copy: Councillor George Freeman, Argyll & Bute Council

General Manager
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Councillor D Kelly
Argyll & Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
Argyll PA31 8RT

Date : 8 February 2010
Your Ref
Our Ref DSL/SC

Enquiries to : Derek Leslie
Direct Line : 01546 605646
Extension : 25646
Email : derek.leslie@nhs.net

Dear Councillor Kelly

Helensburgh Ambulance Station

As you are aware the Scottish Ambulance Service has applied for planning permission to build a new ambulance station in Helensburgh, the current station being inadequate for the current resources and no longer fit for purpose. You will also be aware that this application has been refused but has been appealed. I understand you will be chairing the Appeal process.

At the most recent meeting of the Vale Monitoring Group, which has been charged with the responsibility of monitoring the development plans set out by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde in regard to the Vale of Leven Hospital and also to monitor their implementation, a wide ranging discussion took place concerning this subject.

In particular, the Divisional General Manager of the South-West Division of the Scottish Ambulance Service indicated that the Scottish Ambulance Service would be challenged even to continue to provide the current level of cover, never mind the enhanced level of cover required for the implementation of the Vision for the Vale, should the new ambulance station not be built as proposed. The Scottish Ambulance Service has not been able, I understand, to identify any alternative sites in Helensburgh.

I share the comments made at the meeting that it is inconceivable that the largest town in Argyll would not have its own ambulance station, especially as the provision of healthcare to the people of Helensburgh & Lomond requires the local availability of the ambulance service to compliment other local services. The Group has asked me to write to you to request that every possible avenue is explored in the appeal process to ensure that a way is found to allow for a new ambulance station on the Victoria site, as proposed. This will also, as you know, complement the considerable works that have been taken forward by the Argyll & Bute CHP to upgrade and improve the range of services provided locally to the population of Helensburgh, an aspect I am sure the community will be happy to commend, equally I suspect the community will be critical of the performance of the Scottish Ambulance Service, which will undoubtedly be affected if this Appeal is not upheld. This is against the background that the Group firmly believes that the new

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ambulance station on the Victoria site is not only an important requirement for achieving the Vision for the Vale, but crucial to the delivery of modern healthcare to the people of Helensburgh & Lomond, and indeed beyond.

In conclusion, I would implore you and the Committee to consider very seriously the impact of rejecting this Appeal and the not inconsiderable consequences, both in the medium and the long term, on the provision of services to the community that we all serve.

Yours sincerely

Derek S Leslie
General Manager



Planning Application Document

Page 1

Glen, Stephanie

From: Thorndyke, Michael A
Sent: 30 July 2009 14:22
To: Glen, Stephanie
Subject: Proposed Ambulance Station, Helensburgh

Dear Stephanie,

Suggested "Reasons" as follows:

The principle hospital buildings are Listed Grade B and should be protected from harm. The site is situated within the Helensburgh designated Conservation Area, the character and appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced.

The historic building's foreground would be seriously compromised by this proposal whose proposed siting is uncomfortably close to this fine structure.

In terms of design, form, scale, roof pitch, general detailing, fenestration, materials and finishes, the proposed building would be an unacceptable addition to the listed building's curtilage degrading both the Listed Building and its Conservation Area context which would neither be preserved nor enhanced.

The proposals are therefore contrary to the aims of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, to the advice given in the HS Memorandum of Guidance 1998 and to policies..... of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan.

Regards,

Michael Thorndyke
Conservation and Design Officer
01546 604 277

From: Young, Howard
Sent: 23 February 2010 15:31
To: Freeman, George
Subject: RE: LOCAL REVIEW BODY 09/0002/LRB RELATING TO PLANNING APPLICATION 09/00790.DET

I would advise that Michael visited the site on 19 August 2009. This was in connection with a pre-application discussion for the main listed building. This involved an examination of both internal and external aspects of the building. This subsequently became application 09/01367/LIB.

Howard Young
Area Team Leader
Argyll and Bute Council
T: 01436 658888
M: 07769640880

Argyll and Bute Council - Leading Rural Area
<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk>

From: Freeman, George
Sent: 23 February 2010 12:42
To: Young, Howard
Subject: LOCAL REVIEW BODY 09/0002/LRB RELATING TO PLANNING APPLICATION 09/00790.DET
Importance: High

Howard,

I refer to our telephone conversation yesterday when you confirmed that the Conservation Officer did not visit the site at 93 East King Street, Helensburgh when assessing the above planning application. You informed me that the Conservation Officer was familiar with the site from a previous visit to assess another planning application relating to the listed building at this location. You will recall that I asked if you could confirm this information to me by email. It would be appreciated if that could be done as soon as possible please?

It would be appreciate if you could also confirm which planning application was being considered when the Conservation Officer visited the site and became familiar with the building / site.

As I am trying to complete documentation for the above LRB within a very tight timescale, it would be appreciated if you could provide the information requested by return.

Regards,

George Freeman

Councillor George S Freeman JP
Ward 9 - Lomond North
Argyll & Bute Council
Chair - Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee

Flats on East King Street to the east of Victory Infirmary site.



Ex local authority flats on East King Street, opposite the front of the Victoria Infirmary site.



Vacant overgrown site on East King Street to the west of the front entrance to the Victoria Infirmary site



West side of the front entrance to the Victoria Infirmary site on East King Street.



West side of the front entrance to the Victoria Infirmary site on East King Street.



View of listed building from the front entrance to the Victoria Infirmary site on East King Street



Land to the west of the front entrance drive on East King Street - Alternative Site A



Car parking area in front of the listed building and adjacent to East King Street.



View on East King Street showing (what appears to be) Ex local authority houses on the east side of the Victoria Infirmary site.



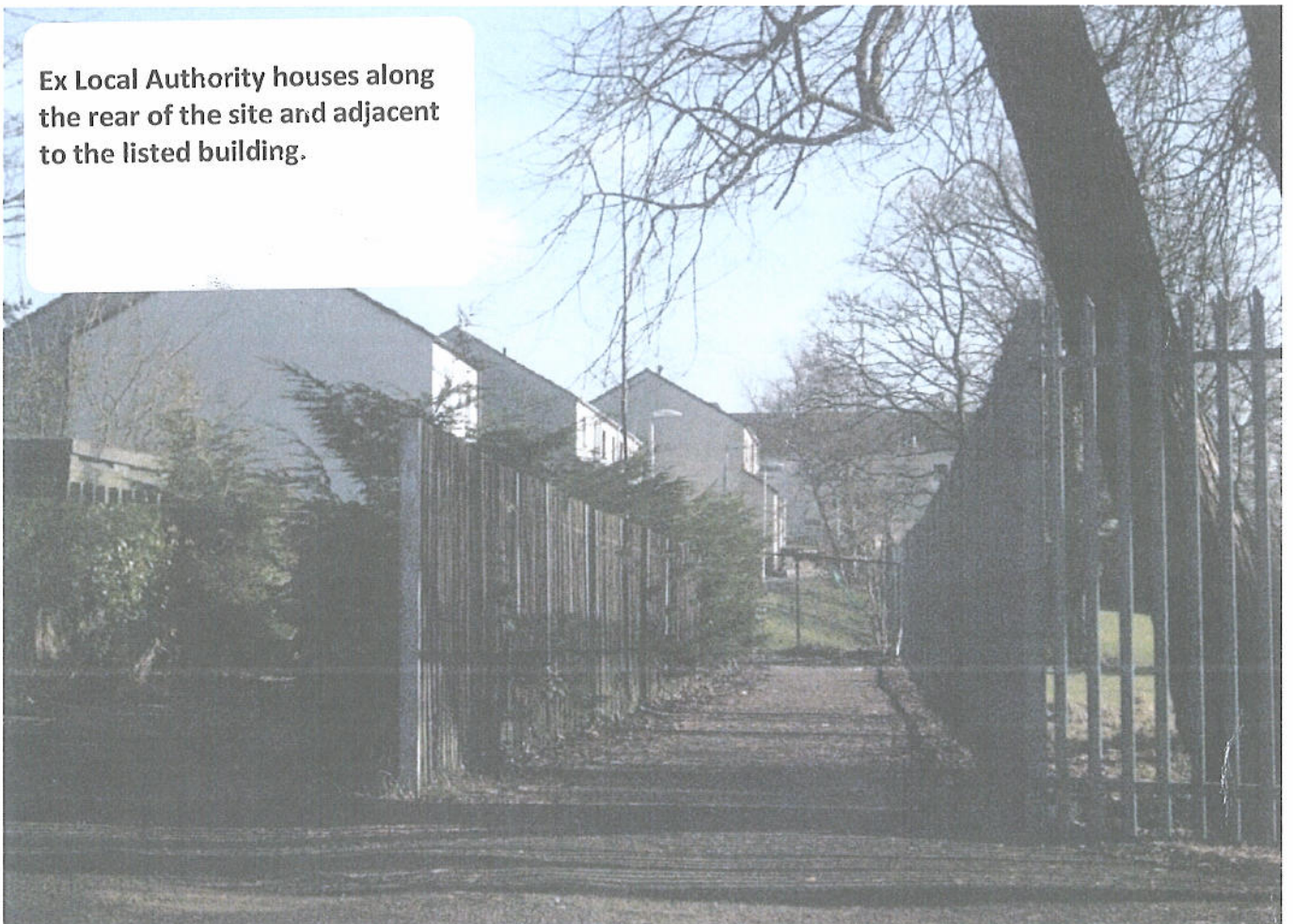
Ground to the front of the Jeanie Deans Unit on the Victoria Infirmary site adjacent to East King Street - Alternative Site D.



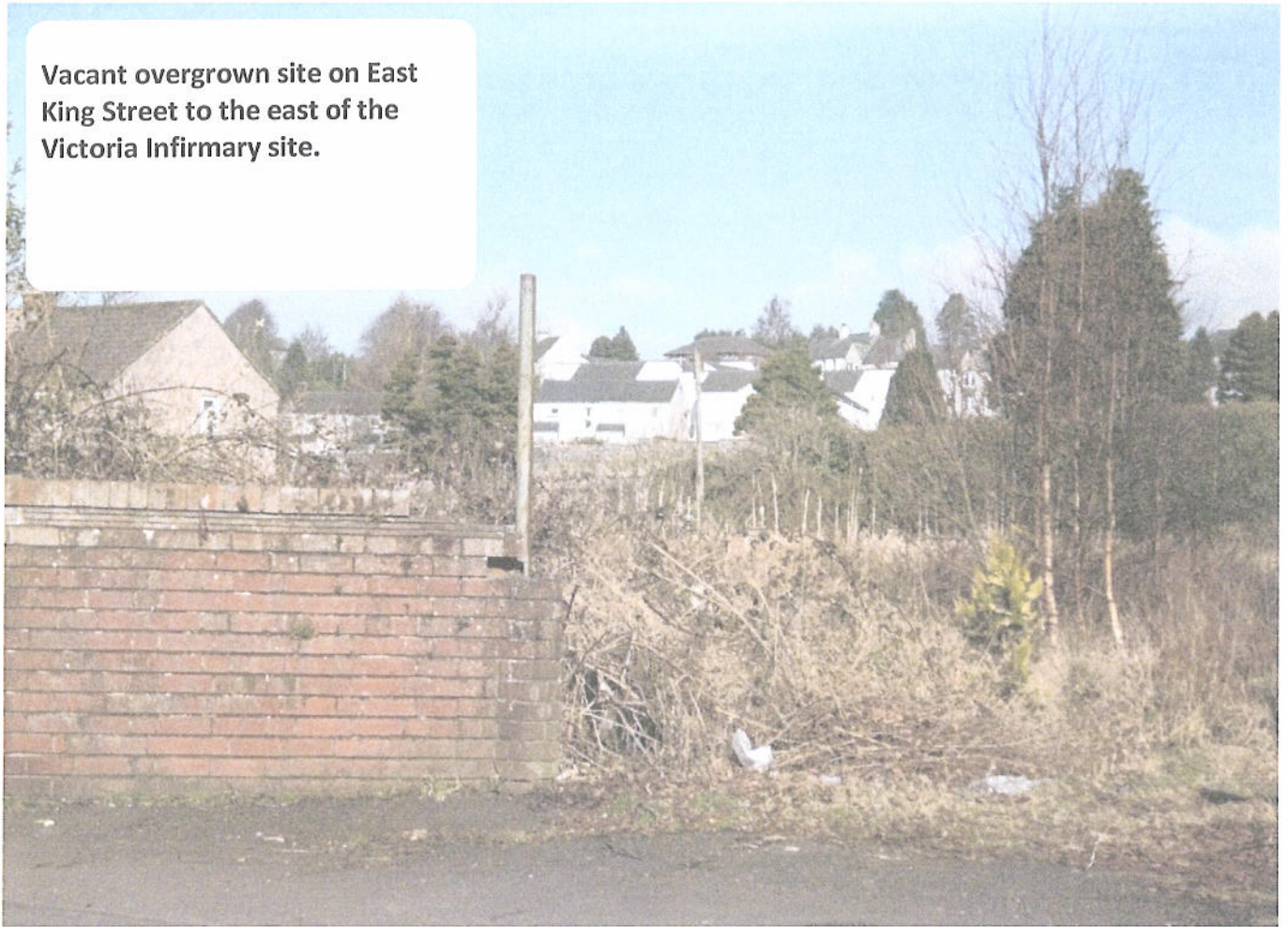
The view towards the listed building from East King Street from the front of the Jeanie Deans Unit.



Ex Local Authority houses along the rear of the site and adjacent to the listed building.



Vacant overgrown site on East King Street to the east of the Victoria Infirmary site.



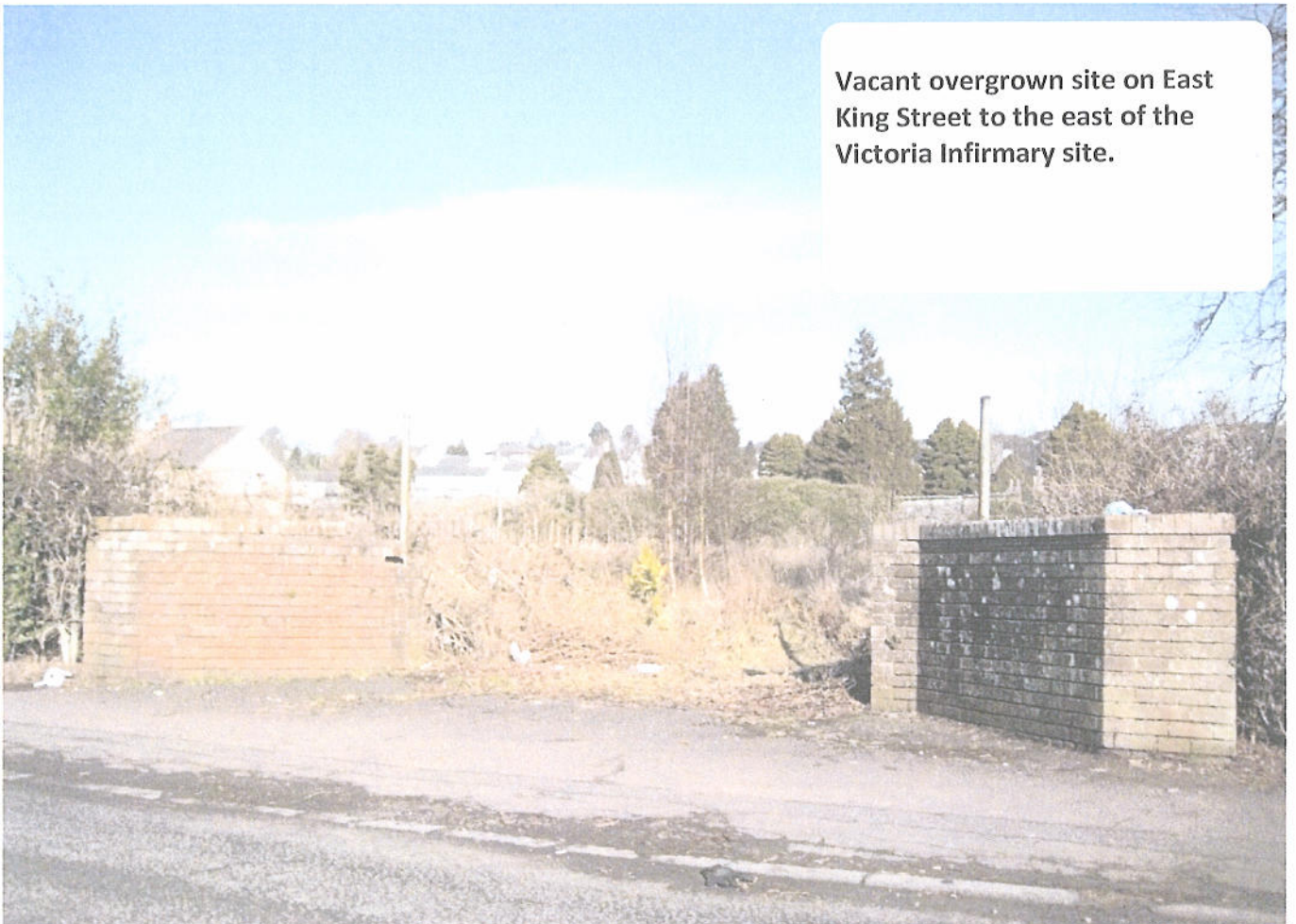
View on East King Street looking west towards the front of the Victoria Infirmary site.



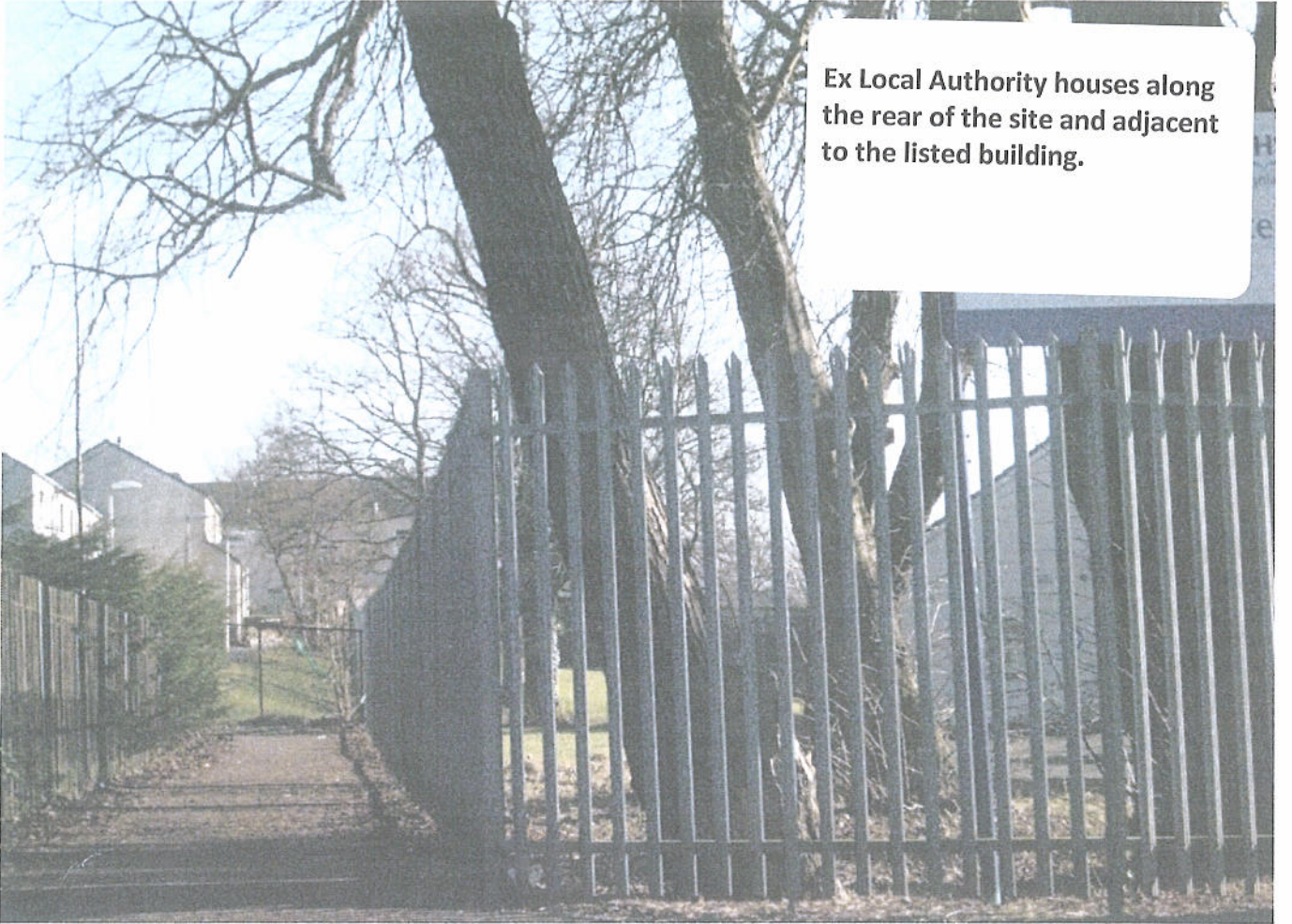
Car parking area in front of the listed building and adjacent to East King Street.



Vacant overgrown site on East King Street to the east of the Victoria Infirmary site.



Ex Local Authority houses along the rear of the site and adjacent to the listed building.



13 AUG. 2009

AMGFER OVER AMBU BUT ANGE DEPOT BLOW

Fears that service could now pull out of town completely

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.

By Fiona Howard

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 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 lifetime 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."

TURN TO PAGE 11

Ambulance depot blow

FROM FRONT PAGE

"I consider this to be a most unfortunate decision.

"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 bus has two options in the face of the refusal.

It can submit an appeal in which 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 NIS 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 principal elevation of this Category B listed building would be visually intrusive, visually discordant and would unacceptably detract from its setting."

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.

LOCAL REVIEW BODY REFERENCE 09/0002/LRB

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 09/00790/DET – ERECTION OF AMBULANCE STATION

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

LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REFERRED TO BY COUNCILLOR GEORGE FREEMAN AT THE ABOVE LOCAL REVIEW BODY HEARING ON THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010.

1. Letter dated 8 February 2010 from Bill Brackenridge, Chair of the Vale of Leven Hospital Monitoring Group to Councillor Daniel Kelly relating to Local Review Body Hearing.
2. Letter dated 8 February 2010 from Derek Leslie, General Manager, Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) to Councillor Daniel Kelly relating to Local review Body Hearing.
3. Email dated 30 July 2009 from Michael Thorndyke, Conservation Officer, Argyll & Bute Council to Stephanie Glen, Planning Officer, Argyll & Bute Council relating to Local review Body Hearing.
4. Email dated 23 February 2010 from Howard Young, Area Team Leader Development Management (ATLDM) to Councillor George Freeman relating to Local review Body.
5. Set of seventeen photographs of development site and area around development site.
6. Copy of front page article in Helensburgh Advertiser dated 13 August 2009 relating to decision by Council to refuse the planning application referred to above.
7. List of alternative sites taken from papers for Local Review Body held at Kilmory on 20 January 2010.

Councillor George S Freeman JP - Ward 9 (Lomond North)

28th February 2010