

Barrhill Memorial Hall- A Springboard Towards the Future

PROJECT SUMMARY

Background

"Barrhill District War Memorial

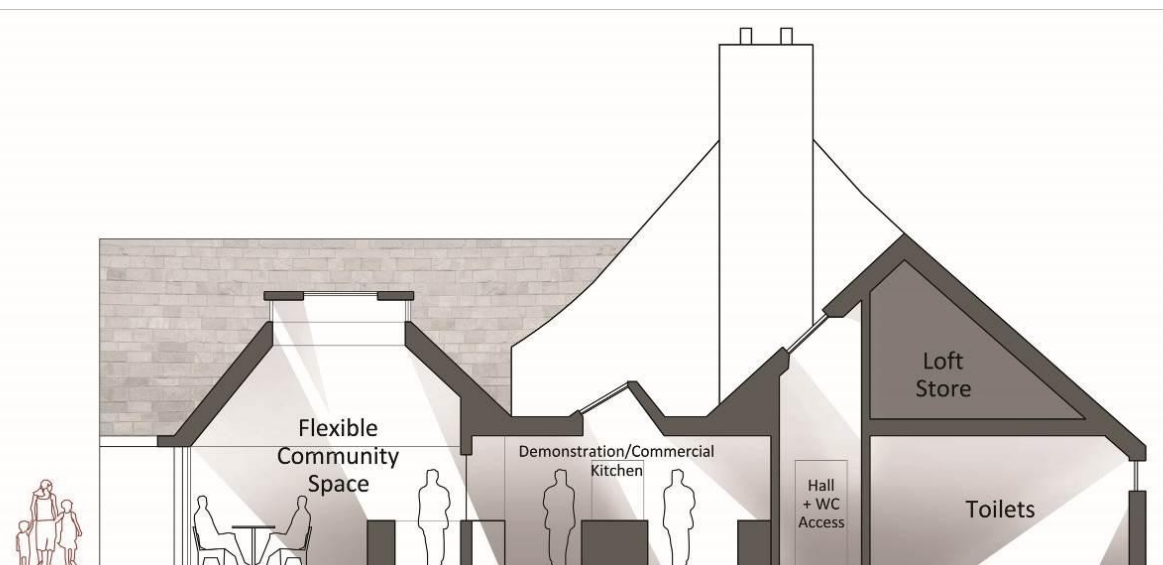
At a Public Meeting of the Inhabitants of the District, acting on the principle that the finest monument that can be erected is one which performs some useful purpose, it was agreed that a Public Hall with Reading and Recreation Rooms be erected in memory of those who had fallen, and in honour of those who had served in the War." These were the words used on 28th February 1920 in a letter to the Barrhill people appealing for public subscriptions. Four years later, in 1924, funds had been raised and Barrhill Memorial Hall was constructed and officially opened.

Capt. Euan Wallace of Kildonan, who later became a long serving member of Parliament, had gifted the land and also employed the already well established architect, James Miller. Although itself relatively modest, Barrhill Memorial Hall is in good company with grand buildings such as Turnberry: also designed by Miller.

The Need for Refurbishment

Its historical importance, both as a War Memorial and as an example of Arts and Crafts Design by a prominent architect, highlights the need to preserve what is an iconic building for the district. Additionally, the important social value of the Hall, for today and the future, is to "perform useful purpose" for our community, and this is no different to when it was first built. The demands placed on the Hall have, however, changed over the last ninety years and the layout of the building no longer allows it to fully perform the useful purposes our community needs. It does not easily accommodate different users at the same time; there is no storage for user groups; the kitchen is too small and, together with the toilet facilities, is in need of upgrading to meet modern demands.

The Springboard project



The project now reported was carried out from Summer 2012 to Autumn 2013, for Barrhill Memorial Hall Community Association, by a Design Team led by Anderson Bell Christie Architects and takes forward previously developed proposals for refurbishment and extension of the Hall. It concludes several years of community consultation during which alternative designs, to meet both present and future needs, have been investigated and discussed. It provides planning and cost information regarding the proposals which will allow the Association to take the next steps towards refurbishment.

This report identifies how the benefits the building has to offer the community, can be increased by changing the layout combined with having an extension which is in keeping with the original Arts and Crafts architecture. In addition, the quality of the design and the facilities it will be able to offer, will help it to approach economic sustainability while also supporting local business and the development of tourism.

The Design Team's main tasks have been:

- to examine the present condition of the building and establish costs for renewal, repair and building fabric upgrading work necessary to arrest the present deterioration of the structure and to ensure that it can remain an efficient resource for the future;
- to consult with the community and discuss the present and potential use of the building, and then to develop design proposals which enable maximum benefit to be gained from the Hall by giving it flexibility in the way it may be used;
- to prepare and obtain a Planning Consent for the agreed re-planning, refurbishment and extension.

A number of options were explored and a new design established. This was widely distributed for comment prior to making an application for Planning Consent.

The extension is designed to enable a retail outlet and a visitor information point to be incorporated and be the basis of community enterprises providing employment and funds. Being an attractive building, it is expected it will be of interest to visitors and be a good location from which local crafts and/or foodstuff could be both produced and be available for sale. Space will be available to promote local history, wildlife, activities and places of interest and so help visitors to the area, maximise their enjoyment. It is also intended that there should be public toilet facilities available even when the Hall is closed, accessible direct from the car park.



Repairs are Required

The building structure requires significant fabric repairs including re-roofing, new windows and full thermal upgrading. The specialist condition reports carried out established the extent of work required. In particular, there is significant rot and dampness at floors and walls, exacerbated by failed drainage of both the Hall's and neighbouring ground.

Costs were obtained for the fabric repairs only, and also for fabric repairs plus extension and re-planning. These indicate that whilst repair and upgrading is more easily affordable at this point in time, it would be a short term solution that would not tackle the basic problems of the building including its poor plan layout, inadequate storage and small kitchen.

Next Steps:

(a) Technical

The essential steps towards any building refurbishment and development are set out by The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and are included in the Appendix. Before construction can start, there are several stages we must go through:

- Stage E: detailed design drawings are required with material specifications followed by an application for a Building Warrant.
- Stages F, G and H include the preparation of production drawings and schedules for tendering and invitations to tender. It is only once these stages are complete that a more accurate idea of cost will be obtained.

To cater for this development process, funders often have a two part funding process with part 1 funding for pre-construction and part 2 for the actual construction.

(b) Funding Coordination

The Memorial Hall Community Association now wishes to enlist someone to liaise with potential funders: local and national. It is expected that this Community Officer will develop and implement a funding strategy to enable the refurbishment of the Hall but initially, it will be necessary to fund the preconstruction, technical stages.

They will need to update the business plan and demonstrate to funders, the feasibility of the newly refurbished Hall being economically sustainable once it is being used proactively. It is expected that they will need to liaise closely with South Ayrshire Council concerning both the current lease agreement and future funding, and also liaise with the architects' design team, through the technical stages.

Final Conclusions

Following the successful completion of this Springboard Project, Planning Consent for the proposed design has been obtained.

These visionary proposals, to enhance and extend the building and 're-focus' it within the village and local life, will help the Association achieve its aims of creating a dynamic heart for the community, capable of supporting social, economic and community growth.

This project has been part-financed by the Scottish Government, European Community,
Ayrshire LEADER 2007-2013 Programme

and

Barrhill Memorial Hall Community Association