DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

New Regional Climbing Facility, St. Andrews Church, Bank Street, Lochgelly

Applicant: Fife Council
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1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION
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1.1 Project Brief

The project is the development of a site in the centre of Lochgelly, Fife, for a new extension to the rear of St Andrews Church. The proposal forms the second phase of works to the church which follows the extensive refurbishment of the existing church, due to complete in October 2017.

1.2 Applicant

The applicant for the development is Fife Council, who are working alongside agents Fife Historic Buildings Trust to deliver this second Phase following their recent efforts to refurbish St Andrews Church, Lochgelly. Fife Council & FHBT have a long-standing close partnership, together having delivered more than £35m of investment over the past 20 years.

1.3 Architect

ECD Architects are project architects for the aforementioned St Andrews Church refurbishment, and have also worked extensively alongside Ore Valley Housing Association on various residential developments (such as Cook Square) as well as the award-winning Ore Valley Business Centre in Lochgelly.

The application site provides an opportunity for ECD to continue their longstanding commitment to regeneration within the local area.
2.0 SITE DETAILS

2.1 Location

The application site is to the rear of the newly-refurbished St Andrew’s Church, Lochgelly, which is one of the anchor buildings which form part of a significant Fife Council town centre regeneration project.

The physical context is strategically very important to Lochgelly. The site is now embedded in the Lochgelly Supplementary Planning and Transport Guidance (SPTG) with the design principles of improved pedestrian links, the enhancement and re-use of prominent historic buildings and creation of new civic space.

The site looks onto a proposed future civic square and will be developed to take cognisance of this. In addition, the site neighbours the new residential development by Fife Council at the Town House as well as the recent new-build Cook Square housing development by Ore Valley Housing Association.

2.2 History

St. Andrews Church is a single storey stone building with a pitched slate roof, constructed in 1915. Though not listed, it is of architectural merit and has recently been restored as Phase 1 of this project. This application covers a second phase, the extension of the church, to enable it to be brought back into use after a significant period of abandonment. The application site for the extension lies to the rear of the existing church and is a cleared site, formally a single storey extension providing ancillary accommodation for the church, including a church hall, kitchen and WC facilities, which was demolished in 2012.

The town of Lochgelly was a thriving mining village which, in the mid 1890s, experienced an extensive period of development in the coal industry, with coal production of 44 million tons between this period and the 1950s, prior to closure of all pits within the town during the 1950s - 1960s.

The historical map from the 1950s shows buildings with a footprint of 25% of the application site. The previous use had been stables and blacksmiths.

The site is likely to be contaminated and undermined, and may require to be remediated prior to construction (pending Site Investigation information).
2.3 Ownership
The application site and adjacent future town square site is owned by Fife Council. The adjacent pedestrian through-route and vehicular access from Bank Street to the Cook Square housing development is owned by Ore Valley Housing Association.

Fig.5 Historical map – 1920, with application site highlighted

Fig.6 Historical map – 1951-1962, with application site highlighted

Fig.7 Present aerial photograph with historical aerial overlaid (circa 1950 - 1960) indicating local pits, with application site highlighted
3.0 AREA APPRAISAL
3.0 AREA APPRAISAL

Fig.8 Location Plan indicating Site (Plan reproduced from Ordinance Survey under licence)

Fig.9 Aerial Photograph of site

3.1 Physical
The site is currently waste ground and is bounded to the north by the new Cook Square Housing Development by Ore Valley Housing Association, separated by a continuous stone retaining wall and a private access road. To the east there is a timber fence bounding the site of the same Ore Valley housing development. This lane also serves as an informal pedestrian through-route giving access east-to-west from Cook Square to Bank Street.

To the South, the site is bounded in part by a derelict factory building and also fencing to the rear of the Fife Council Town House development which has just completed on site.

The western boundary is formed by the existing St Andrews Church: the local building with the most meaningful contribution to the quality of townscape. The application is for an extension to the rear of the Church which will be linked to the existing building.

The illustrations show the character of the site.
The opportunity to improve linkages between Bank Street and surrounding residential streets is evident from the existing arrangement of vehicular and pedestrian access.

The location of the site will provide a frontage onto the future civic square (which will follow as a separate application). The proximity of the site to the main thoroughfare of the town centre, and the future intention to link this to the new public square, allows the opportunity for this site to provide a strong urban connection which would benefit the continuing regeneration of the town centre and help to enliven and enrich the civic space.
3.2 Social
In its current state and location, the site serves little in the way of social purpose - it is essentially wasteland resulting from the demolition of a former extension to the church. The site is not maintained and some fly tipping has been known in this area. The new housing developments at Cook Square and the Townhouse look onto this space which has no purpose nor visual interest.

However, the site becomes very important when the Charrette of March 2010 is taken into account. As the Planning Policy Context noted below makes clear, the site, together with the existing St Andrews Church, The Townhouse, Cook Square and the works depot offers the opportunity to form new streets and public spaces which are significant in improving the townscape and civic identity of Lochgelly.

- New buildings shown in red.
- Layout creates much greater pedestrian permeability to Bank St, with a network of overlooked streets and spaces.
- St Andrews Church and the Town House are released from the existing confinement, giving them more prominence within the town centre as befits their previous civic role.
- The solid red line indicates the potential long term opportunity to create a continuous new building frontage to Bank St, enhancing the activity onto the new pedestrian routes and avoiding service areas being presented onto these public spaces.

3.3 Economic
Site investigations are about to proceed, however the recently developed adjacent site at Cook Square was found to be seriously undermined which, given Lochgelly’s history as a mining town, is not unusual. It does however contribute to a high cost of site preparation for development.

The site may also have contamination issues, to the extent that the site area may require to be remediated to become suitable for development. This will be confirmed in due course upon receipt of information from the forthcoming Site Investigations.
3.4 Planning Policy Context

The Supplementary Planning & Transport Guidance refers specifically to this site and the relevant diagrams are reproduced below from page 14 of the guidance.

- Existing pedestrian routes to Bank St are limited (as shown in red routes).
- St Andrews Church and Town House (shown in blue) ‘hemmed in’ by surrounding unsympathetic buildings.
- The solid red line indicates a current poor quality pedestrian link that should be improved as part of any development proposal.

- Removal of selected buildings (grey) would enable development to be achieved that meets the urban design strategy within this document.

- New buildings shown in red.
- Layout creates much greater pedestrian permeability to Bank St, with a network of overlooked streets and spaces.
- St Andrews Church and the Town House are released from the existing confinement, giving them more prominence within the town centre as befits their previous civic role.
- The solid red line indicates the potential long term opportunity to create a continuous new building frontage to Bank St, enhancing the activity onto the new pedestrian routes and avoiding service areas being presented onto these public spaces.

Note: All footprints of new buildings shown above are indicative.
The guidance relates to the 2010 Charrette which was a week-long consultation and intensive design process aimed at identifying and masterplanning the built form of the next 20 years for Lochgelly. The locale of the site was identified as strategically important and thus any development proposed must comply with the SPTG and further the aims of the Charrette. Also pertinent is the Charrette Report and the Structure Plan.

"Proposed:
The proposed Market Square redevelopment would be anchored by the supermarket. A plaza would connect to and “anchor” the current high street.

Development would include:
• The development of a supermarket at a currently under-utilised corner site; this new development could preserve the existing corner pub, if necessary.
• The introduction of a paved plaza between the market’s entrance, leading diagonally to the preserved church (transformed to a farmers’ market); this paved plaza would include the Town House.
• The renovation of the church into a farmers’ market.
• The demolition and replacement of several outdated buildings south of the church, including the empty library. Their replacement with new “liner” buildings bordering the plaza.
• The renovation of the existing Town House, preferably into a senior care centre."

**Application Site**

![Application Site](image-url)

**Fig.16 Planning Policy Documents**

**Fig.17 Extract from Charrette Document regarding Site**

**Fig.18 Extract from Charrette Document regarding Square**

**Fig.19 Extract from Charrette Document regarding Site**
4.0 EVALUATION

4.1 Physical
The physical constraints upon the site are a governing feature of design development. Vehicular access to the site will not be provided and access will remain as pedestrian only - due to the constrained nature of the site and enhancement of pedestrian routes in line with the Planning Guidance, vehicular access to the application site is not considered to be feasible nor appropriate. Level access to the site will be from the east following the desire line through the future civic space. The existing stepped access from Bank Street will be retained, providing a through route between Bank Street and Cook Square, leading to the entrance to the proposed Climbing Centre and passing via the future civic space.

Construction form should be as lightweight as possible due to the site bearing conditions.

4.2 Social
The social implications of the development of this site will be to give greater access and provide for an increasing social need. The development of this site for the intended use will be of significant social benefit. As a social enterprise, the intended operators of the facility aim to provide a new recreational facility for the local residents, providing them opportunities to become involved in the sport of climbing and to become generally more active, bringing social and health benefits to the area.

4.3 Economic
The investment in this site and in the refurbishment of the existing church is significant and will result in this site being brought back into beneficial use for the community.

Site Investigation works are currently ongoing. A full report of the ground conditions will be available to the Planning Authority in due course. Remediation measures will be undertaken if required, the extent and methodology of which will be determined by the findings of the Site Investigation.

The wider implication of this development is to continue the physical delivery of the Charrette vision, the purpose of which is to improve the physical environment to the extent that the economic vitality of Lochgelly also improves.

The nature of the building as a Regional Climbing Centre for Fife will put Lochgelly on the map and draw people from across the region - this gives potential for significant economic benefit for the town.

4.4 Planning Policy - Context
The policy context of this site is very important and very much a determining factor in terms of use and design. The implications of the SPTG are such that the design has to reinforce the street and public space formation.

It will form an anchor development of significance while providing a visual focus to the development of the future public open space. This in turn means that the architecture has to be considered and relate well to the space, paying particular respect to materiality and form.

As a building of a significant scale amongst residential development, the building has been designed to be as sensitive as possible to the immediate context, including the adjoining early 20th century church, though not listed, is considered to be of architectural merit.
5.0 DESIGN
5.1 Planning Policy - Review and Design Development

Following analysis of the site characteristics and development of the project from concept through to detailed design, the following guidance notices were considered when finalising the proposals to their current form for full planning permission submission.

PAN 33 Development of Contaminated Land
PAN 56 Noise
PAN 77 Designing Safe Places
PAN 78 Inclusive Design
NPPG 11 Sport, Physical Recreation & Open Space

Charrette Series Report - Lochgelly
Creating Places - A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place
Designing Streets - A Policy Statement for Scotland
SPTG for Lochgelly
5.2 Design Principles

The proposed design for the extension to St Andrews Church provides a significant urban contribution to a space which has been an undeveloped brownfield site since 2012, located at the heart of the commercial and residential interface within Lochgelly. Furthermore, it has an important part to play in the revitalisation of the existing church which previously lay abandoned.

The scale of the proposed building, by nature as a climbing centre, is large however the form has been designed such that it relates to the surrounding context, with the lower-level training walls positioned at the lane side to the north, adjacent to the Cook Square housing development. The building slopes down at this north facade to meet the eaves level of the existing church, sloping down to create an elegant glazed entrance space between old and new, a space within which the character of the existing church will be celebrated by way of the existing stone walls being left exposed internally.

The materials palette has been carefully selected to compliment the surrounding context as well as to break up the form and massing of the extension itself. Furthermore, durability and robustness have been key considerations in the selection of materials. The use of modern shapes and materials juxtaposed against the existing church allows for distinction between old and new. The grey standing-seam metallic cladding on the main space compliments the greys of the stone and stave used on the existing church whilst the fibre cement cladding on the training areas reflects the white render of the Cook Square flats opposite. The white element appears to ‘fold’ around the main space thus reducing the impression of scale from street level.

By nature as a climbing centre where maximising internal wall space is vital, there is little scope for fenestration. In order to break up the massing of the space from the future town square side, semi-translucent backlit cladding have been proposed to add visual interest. The future landscaping in the square should be integrated with the extension, as shown in the visualisation in figure 24.

Fig.21  Proposed Floor Plan
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New Regional Climbing Centre, St Andrews Church, Lochgelly

Fig. 22  West Elevation on Bank Street

Fig. 23  East Elevation to future town square

Fig. 24  View from Cook Square & future Town Square
Access will be via the lane, creating an important new pedestrian link between Bank Street and the High Street as per the Charette Vision and Planning Policy Guidance for the area. Due to site levels, access from Bank Street will remain stepped as present, however new level access will be provided from the area, following the desire line through the future Town Square.

Both routes will lead to the new entrance to serve the church and extension which provides a linkage between old and new as depicted in the 3D visualisation below.
6.0 CONSULTATION
6.1 Pre-Application Consultation
There have been several meetings held during the course of the design development stages of this project, between Fife Historic Buildings Trust, Fife Council and ECD Architects.

In particular, Fife Council Planning representative Ewen Campbell has been invited to attend various Design Team meetings from the project’s inception in 2015 prior to Phase 1 (refurbishment of the existing Church) through to the design of the Phase 2 extension as covered by this planning application. Ewan has been present at and has offered feedback during the following Design Team meetings:

23rd June 2015
01st September 2015
27th January 2016
15th February 2016
24th May 2016
10th June 2016
30th August 2017

The proposals were considered to be an exciting contribution to the overall regeneration of Lochgelly’s Town Centre. The proposed extension will activate a derelict site and will be an important factor in bringing the previously abandoned St Andrews Church back into use.

Whilst, by nature as a climbing centre, the building’s geometry is large and has little scope for fenestration, it was felt that careful consideration of form and materiality and integration with the future public square offered a sensitive approach to the context.

In particular, care has been taken to minimise the height of the extension at the North elevation on the lane side, sloping down to the height of the existing church eaves and presenting a human scale at the access way adjacent to the Cook Square housing.

Semi-translucent backlit cladding on facade facing the town square serves to add visual interest on this elevation and breaks up the massing of the extension.

The use of modern shapes and materials juxtaposed against the existing church allows for distinction between old and new and is celebrated by the glazed entrance space between.
6.2 Community Consultation

A recent open day held at the Lochgelly Centre on 4rd July 2017 provided the opportunity for the design team and client to exhibit proposals and consult with members of the public and local councillors to assess general feedback and response of the local community prior to the planning submission.

A series of proposed plans, elevation, sections and 3D visual representation of the development were available to view. A physical model prepared by ECD of Lochgelly Town Centre enabled visitors to gain a clear understanding of the proposals for the application site, within the context of its local surroundings.

A consensus of positive feedback was given throughout the course of the open day, with comment forms documenting the support received from local residents. The design and aesthetics of the proposals were well-received by those in attendance, and the commitment for improvements to an area which has been sitting derelict for many years was appreciated by all. Full details from these feedback forms can be provided to the Planning Authority on request.

The proposals were also on display at the Lochgelly Gala, during which Hazel Cross of Fife Council was available to discuss with members of the public.

Fife Council have also consulted local community groups, including a youth group consultation on 25th July 2017.
7.0 APPENDIX
7.1 Transportation Statement

The consultation response from the Transportation Team was that, although the Fife Council Transportation Development Guidelines do not contain a parking standard for a climbing centre use, the expected peak parking demand generated by the climbing centre will be unlikely to exceed the peak parking demand generated by the former church hall.

As a social enterprise, the intended operators of the facility aim to provide a new recreational facility for the local residents, however it is acknowledged that by nature as a regional facility, the climbing centre will attract a greater proportion of trips from outwith Lochgelly in comparison with the former church hall.

It is proposed that this would be counteracted by the encouragement of sustainable means of transport for centre users, and indeed Lochgelly is well connected to the rest of Fife, including key towns of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy, as well as Edinburgh by bus and train. The climbing centre is located less than 1km from the town’s railway station and is on a bus route.

The use of private cars would be actively discouraged by promotion of sustainable modes of transportation and use of existing public transportation links. The centre’s operators would ensure that public transportation information is made readily available for visitors, particularly from further away locations, on their website and on promotional material relating to competitions/events. As a facility encouraging health and fitness, it is envisaged that encouraging centre users to arrive on foot or by bicycle, either from home or from a train station, fits well with the intended centre operator’s ethos. Further detail on public transportation and cycle parking follows within this section.

7.1.1 - Sustainable Means of Travel and Access to the Site

The proposed Climbing Centre is located less than 1km from Lochgelly train station which is served by routes calling at various stations between Edinburgh and Glenrothes, including Rosyth, Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath and Cardenden.

Although there are no direct trains, there are 36 daily scheduled Scotrail services between Dundee and Lochgelly. The centre is located on a bus route and is well served to connect to local towns across Fife as well with key towns of Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, South Queensferry and Edinburgh.

Lochgelly to Edinburgh/Edinburgh to Lochgelly
Trains per day 24
Average duration: 51 mins
Distance 22 miles
Fares from £7.40

Lochgelly to Dundee/Dundee to Lochgelly
36 daily scheduled services which stop at Lochgelly but there are no direct trains
Average duration: 1hr 49 mins

Buses
There are 60 local bus services a day. Scheduled services include buses to:

Cowdenbeath: 5 mins
Cardenden: 10 mins
Kirkcaldy Bus Station: 35 mins
Dunfermline Bus Station: 43 mins
7.1.2 - Absence of Car Parking on Site

The physical constraints upon the site are a governing feature of design development. Vehicular access to the site will not be provided and access will remain as pedestrian only - due to the constrained nature of the site and enhancement of pedestrian routes in line with the Planning Guidance, vehicular access to the application site is not considered to be feasible nor appropriate.

A Parking Survey was commissioned by the applicant and was carried out on 15th May 2018. The map in figure 30 shows the extent of areas included in the summary; this included existing parking facilities in the area surrounding the proposed climbing centre.

The table in figure 31 summarizes the findings of the survey, demonstrating available capacity within Lochgelly’s existing parking areas throughout the day, including at peak times.

Fig.30  Extent of parking survey undertaken in May 2018.
7.1.3 - Provision of Cycle Parking

7 no. Sheffield cycle stands will be proposed within the landscape design for the town square. This will provide parking for up to 14 no. bicycles. An initial layout of the square has been appended to demonstrate the intended location of these cycle stands, located near to the entrance door to the climbing centre (see figure 33). Please note that the landscape design will follow under a separate planning application.

Additionally, there is cycle parking available at Lochgelly’s train station.

7.1.4 - Building Access Arrangements

Access from Bank Street is via existing steps from the street up to the existing church. The change in level is significant and the steps are an important feature which contributes to the character of the existing St Andrews Church Building and the war memorial to the front of the site.

Level access to the site will therefore be from the east following the desire line through the future civic space (see figure 33 for the indicative landscaping layout, which will follow under a separate planning application).

In the interim stages between the construction of the Climbing Centre and the subsequent future landscaping works, a 2m wide pathway will be formed to provide level access to the entrance to the building (see figure 32). The existing stepped access from Bank Street will be retained, providing a through route between Bank Street and Cook Square.

The future application will also address illumination of the route.

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**Table: Lochgelly Parking Survey Summary – 15/05/2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>11:00 to 17:30</th>
<th>18:00 to 19:30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking Capacity*</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Occupancy</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Occupied (Peak)</td>
<td>63.68%</td>
<td>47.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Capacity %**</td>
<td>85.00%</td>
<td>85.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Occupancy @85%</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Capacity (Peak)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bank Street 3 (14 Spaces) & Main Street North (10 Spaces) areas have parking restrictions, no waiting and no waiting or loading between 08:00 and 18:00 respectively.

** Practical Capacity of 85% is the maximum accepted capacity to allow for the effective management of parking before any interventions are required.
Fig.32  Temporary accessible route to the Climbing Centre