

Appendix 3: Comments from Stirling Council

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Planning application 2014/0235/DET

The Craigmore Centre closed at the end of June 2011 due to lack of numbers to allow the property to continue as an out of school care club. The building was declared surplus to requirements by the Education Service and following the Council's surplus property procedure the property was placed on the market for sale with a closing date of 31 August 2012. Discussions took place with the community on their interest in reusing the property, but they were unable to progress with their proposal. It was agreed, subject to Council approval, to ring fence the net proceeds from the sale for community projects.

There have always been issues with suitable access to the building due to its elevated position and narrow access path leading to the property. The planning permission sought is for change of use to a single dwelling house with vehicular access. Before the property was marketed, an agreement in principle had been reached with the Church of Scotland for a servitude right of vehicular access over their ground to the property. The Church of Scotland have since reconsidered their position and have decided that they will not agree to a right of access for residential conversion for the Craigmore Centre. In order to obtain a change of use for the Craigmore Centre, Stirling Council Road's Service advises that designated off street parking is required.

Alternative solutions to facilitate off street parking were discussed with the purchaser, the National Park Planning Authority, Stirling Council Roads Service, Strategic Asset Management and Aberfoyle Primary School. Consultation was also carried out with the Parent Council and a representative from the Community Council. A suggestion by Officers to create a small car park in the field opposite the school to alleviate the parking problem was rejected by the community.

After many months of negotiation, a solution was agreed to create a parking space at the bottom of the footpath leading to the Craigmore Centre. In order to minimise disruption to the nursery garden and to avoid the culvert, only a small area, 9 sq m, of nursery garden ground was required to facilitate this. After discussion with Education Services, to compensate for this small loss of space it was agreed to incorporate a much larger area of the former schoolhouse garden into the playground of the nursery and school. This will substantially increase the size of the school grounds and will provide much needed green space within the curtilage of the school. The Parent Council was fully consulted with regarding this proposal. Clarity was given regarding the access to the woods, it was confirmed that it is not a registered right of way and both the Council and the prospective purchasers have been made fully aware of the school/community's interest in the pathway running up the side of the Craigmore Centre. The Head Teacher did not raise any operational concerns with the proposed rearrangement of the garden.

Various meetings with the representatives from the Community Council, Parent Council and the Church of Scotland to discuss issues surrounding the Craigmore Centre have been held over the past 2 years, so that they were kept fully abreast of developments.

The building has been empty and unoccupied for 2 winters and is deteriorating. The current access restrictions means that if planning permission was sought for another change of use, the property would not comply with The Disability Discrimination Legislation and therefore be left vacant and unused.