



15th February 2018

Julia Webster
Wigton Town Council
Wigton Market hall
Church Street
Wigton
CA7 9AA

Dear Julia

**Refurbishment / Rebuilding of Changing Rooms
Barton Laws Playing Fields, Wigton**

Further to our discussions today I am writing to you in relation to the advice we provided regarding the replacement of the Barton Laws changing rooms.

The Town Council's initial enquiry to us was in relation to the potential refurbishment and extension of the existing changing rooms. Upon completion of our inception meeting we suggested to you that, subject to the budget available, we believe the most appropriate solution for the changing rooms may actually be to demolish the existing buildings and replace them with a new fit-for-purpose facility. The basis for our advice was based on the following:

- 1) Site inspection of the existing buildings by myself and George Stephenson of Irving Developments (the architect);
- 2) The Building Condition Report provided by AL Daines Civil Engineering; and
- 3) Sport England 'Clubhouse Design Guidance Notes – 2016 Update'.

It is important to note that whilst neither myself or George Stephenson are building surveyors and we have **not** made any cost analysis of the refurbishment / rebuilding options, we are both in agreement that in our professional opinion, the existing buildings are functionally obsolete. It is our opinion that attempts to refurbish and extend the buildings would be impractical, unviable and may even be impossible to achieve to any modern building standard requirements.

I will set out the rationale for our opinion below.

The objectives of the Town Council are to provide a changing room facility for local sports teams (ideally to accommodate up to 4 teams) that would include a community space and a kitchen that could cater for small social events or community functions. The facility must also provide access to public toilets.

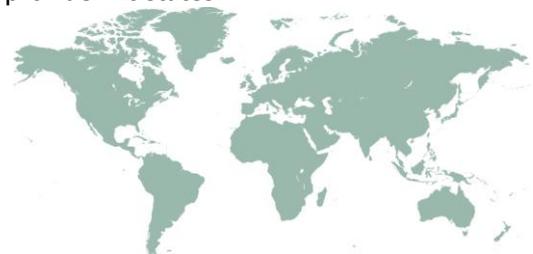
The facility must be compliant with the requirements of Sport England and the Football Association (FA).

In this respect Sport England have produced helpful guidance in the form of the document 'Clubhouse Design Guidance Notes – 2016 Update' (CDGN).

The CDGN provides detailed guidance on the quality and standards that a clubhouse should meet, and acknowledges the value that well-used and maintained clubhouses can provide. It states:

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“Although clubhouse buildings are often small in scale and shared on a multi-sports community basis, they are nevertheless, essential elements in the sporting landscape. They provide the access, social areas, changing, storage and other essential support spaces for the particular sport.

It is important that the facilities are designed, operated and maintained well to help create a sporting habit for life.”

On page 4 of the CDGN, the issue refurbishment vs rebuilding is discussed. It is stated:

“Much of the existing clubhouse facility provision was provided over twenty years ago during which time, much has changed. Design standards have moved on considerably and public expectation has risen ...

These factors can combine to mean that refurbishing an existing facility may not be a sensible option. It could be that:

- **The location of an existing building may no longer serve the needs of the local population, because people have moved away or the area is no longer a residential area;**
- **The local population may be better served by other providers who have more or better facilities;**
- **In physical terms the existing facility may not be adaptable and the associated costs are so high that refurbishment is not a reasonable option.”**

On page 7 of the CDGN, a list of issues which can typically occur with older clubhouse buildings, leading to the need for replacement is provided, these being:

- **Heat loss from poor insulation and poor air tightness**
- **General wear and tear to finishes and fabric due to use and age**
- **Building Movement**
- **Damp and water ingress**
- **Inadequate ventilation**
- **Blocked drains**
- **Structurally unsafe ceilings, walls and roof**
- **Failure of double glazed windows**
- **Lack of plant efficiency and control**
- **Asbestos and other deleterious materials**
- **General lack of maintenance**
- **Lack of DDA compliance**
- **Poor storage**
- **Lack of flexibility to meet current demands.**

In considering this advice, our attention turns to the Building Condition survey which was undertaken by AL Daines and Partners, which is attached.

The report sets out the thorough inspection of the building that was undertaken and it is concluded that **“The property is basically sound but is showing its age under heavy use and is approaching its design life requiring complete renovation if it is to remain in use in the coming years.”**

Significant issues which are identified within the report are as follows:



- 1) The property is thought to date from the late seventies.*
- 2) There is some slight settlement of the gable corner of the more recent extension which has damaged the internal finished. The movement is thought to be largely historical but further trial hole investigation shall be required to ascertain the condition of the foundation in this area and whether any additional remedial underpinning would be required;
- 3) Stepped diagonal shrinkage and thermal movement cracking is apparent to the continuous rear western elevation that is not broken up with door and window openings;
- 4) There is an open combustion air vent through the wall at low level to the boiler room and extensive moss growth below the overflow pipes;
- 5) The timber doors and window on the front elevation have been over painted a number of times and have bolted steel security face sheets. Corrosion of the leading edge of a steel angle lintel is apparent above the doors;
- 6) The bolted triple timber veranda posts bear into a thin steel shoe at ground level and degradation of both the timbers and shoe are apparent at low level;
- 7) The gas fired boiler appears to only serve hot water with an associate header tank and insulated hot water tank. The boiler and plumbing fittings and fixtures appear to be original.
- 8) The shower mixer taps are enclosed in locked timber boxing at each shower.
- 9) The kitchen appears to be original and the chipboard units and sink show sign of use and water damage;
- 10) The roof structure comprises timber trusses and purlins. No holding down straps are provided and cracking associated with uplift is apparent at both the truss and purlin bearings.
- 11) The rear section of the roof over the toilets is single translucent sheets giving natural light and fiber cement liner panels are visible on the underside of the roof elsewhere;
- 12) The property would benefit from a new boiler, improved pipe insulation, re-roofing and cavity wall insulation to enhance the thermal efficiency of the facility.

*Planning records show that the building was first given approval in 1950.

It is evident therefore that the existing buildings will need extensive work to bring them up to an appropriate standard.

It is to be noted however that whilst remedial works to the existing buildings may be technically achievable, these do not take into account the aspirations to upgrade and extend the change rooms to a multi-functional community use. Given the findings of the Building Condition survey, it is my own and George's opinion that the existing structure of the building would not be resilient to the stresses of the construction process, which would place further pressure on the existing foundations and the need to knock through walls and rearrange the internal layout. We are of the opinion that the level of works required to upgrade and extend the building would effectively render the demolition of the existing building inevitable. We do not believe the building can be suitably adapted for modern requirements.

Furthermore, it is of fundamental importance to note that, given that the site is located within Flood Zone 3, any future building (including an extension) must be flood resilient.

National Planning Guidance states that whilst sports changing rooms are classified as a 'water compatible use', they must be flood resilient and protect both people and property from the damage of flood ingress. The Flood Risk Assessment which we have provided for you sets out that, in this location, any new building would need to have a Finished Floor Level (FFL) or at least 300mm above the existing OAD. This would mean that there would be a significant 'step' up between the existing building and the proposed extension which, at best, would be impractical and at worst would have implications for disabled access requirements.

In summary, given the above evidence and information available, it is my opinion that regardless of whether the existing building could technically be refurbished, it is doubtful that the extension and upgrading of the building would be feasible or viable. Furthermore I do not believe it would provide



the best value for money as the existing building will inevitable need replaced in the very near future. The provision of a new fit-for-purpose building would instead secure the facility for the community for many decades to come.

I reiterate once again that I am not a building surveyor and the opinions I have expressed above are based upon the evidence and information available to me at this time.

I do hope the above information is of assistance to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Kindest regards

Julie Diamond, MSc, MRTPI
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WYG Planning