

ALTERATIONS TO 55 GORDON
STREET FOR GORDON RURAL
ACTION

DESIGN STATEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

McWilliam Lippe Architects have been appointed by Gordon Rural Action to assist in developing proposals for the alteration of the property they own located at 55 Gordon Street Huntly.

The proposed design solution described within this supporting statement responds to the qualities of the existing site delivering an appropriate intervention to a prominent building within the town of Huntly.

We believe that the proposals put forward comply with the current Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan policies and the newly adopted NPF4. This statement will set out how this is achieved through the design.

BACKGROUND

Gordon Rural Action (GRA) is a registered charity that offers a wide range of free, impartial and independent advice services.

The charities aims are to improve the quality of life for individuals within the local community through the provision of a high quality, professional and focussed advice and support service.

In addition, Gordon Rural Action also operates a charity shop “the Bargain Box”, a baby bank and a school uniform exchange.

All of the above services and activities are located and run from the premises at 55 Gordon Street.

The charity is operated day to day by a mixture of employees and volunteers with the buildings at Gordon Street having as much as 40 individuals working at any one time.

GRA currently own the premises at 55 Gordon Street and are looking to make alterations to the buildings to secure the long term future of the fabric and improve the services they provide on a daily basis.

There is no relevant planning history relating to the site.



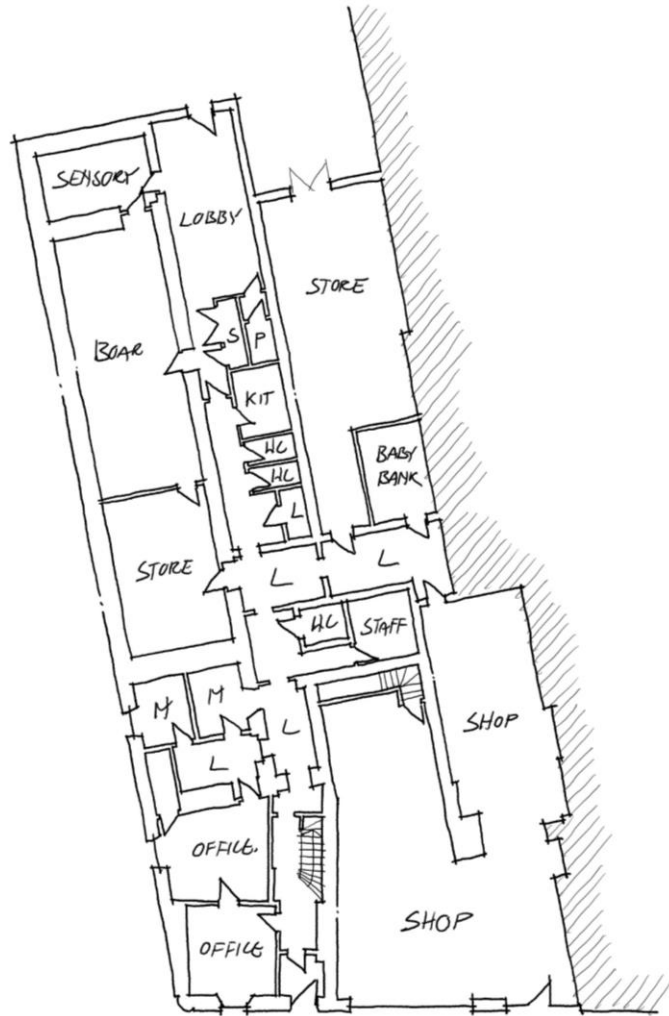
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LOCATION

The building/site is located on the junction of Gordon Street and Torry Street within the town centre of Huntly. The buildings are also within the designated Huntly conservation area.



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EXISTING LAYOUT

The building fronts onto Gordon Street and 2 entrances are located on this elevation. The first entrance is to the “Bargain Box” shop which forms part of a large glazed shop frontage which is modern in appearance and not sensitive to the wider context of Huntly’s conservation area. The second entrance is more discreet and provides access into the office areas.

The area of building that fronts Gordon street is 2 storey with additional office provision located at first floor and the second floor used as storage.

The buildings frontage on to Torry Street is far more muted in comparison. While there are some openings still present on this elevation it is clear that many openings have been built over at various points during the buildings history. This part of the building houses office space, storage and a large board room.

Both frontages onto Gordon Street and Torry Street are formed in a traditional mass masonry construction which comprises areas of both granite and sandstone. For the most part the masonry can be described as being in a reasonable condition. However the sandstone features including quoins, window and door reveals and string courses show evidence of erosion.

The two areas fronting the streets comprise of a series of slate roofs which are in fair condition.

The buildings are bounded on their Northern boundary by neighbouring properties not within GRA’s ownership (GRA currently lease these buildings).

The internal spaces between the masonry frontages and the neighbouring properties comprise of WC’ provision, a small baby bank and a large storage area. These spaces are located under a corrugated fibre cement roof which is likely to contain asbestos materials.

The remaining areas between the primary roofs are formed as flat roofs which are in some areas not laid to correct falls



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EXISTING LAYOUT

Internally the building is arranged around a central spine which doglegs through the building linking the office entrance on Gordon Street to the rear entrance set back off Torry Street. However, due to the length of this corridor and the numerous breaks along its path it can feel disorientating.

Internal spaces to the rear of the building suffer generally from a lack of natural light which contributes to the feeling that the building is tired.



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EXTERNAL PHOTOS



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ROOF PHOTOS



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PLANNING POLICY

The proposals accompanying this application have been put forward in the context of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023, (ALDP), and the recently adopted NPF4. Discussion of the relevant policies is contained below in order to demonstrate how the proposals are in line with both the objectives of the ALDP and NPF4.

NPF4 policies relevant to the application

Policy 1 – Zero Carbon & Nature Positive places

Policy 2 – Resilience to climate change

Policy 7 – Historic assets and places

Policy 14 – Design, Quality & Place

Policy 25 – Community Wealth Building

ALDP policies and guidance relevant to the application

B1 – Town Centre Development

P1 – Layout, Siting & Design

P6 – Community Facilities and Public Amenities

HE2 – Protecting Historic, Cultural and Conservation Areas



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PROPOSALS

The proposals are intended to be implemented by Gordon Rural Action across several phases of work to ensure that the building can be occupied and used throughout the life span of the project.

The most significant intervention to the existing cluster of buildings will be the complete removal of the existing rear block (hatched blue) and the introduction of new purpose built infill in its place. This will allow for water to be dealt with more effectively, allow the introduction of solar panels, and provide opportunities for getting natural light into the internal spaces.

The final layout for the building is shown opposite and is organised around a central corridor which runs through the building from front to back. This corridor provides access to the buildings principal spaces including the Baby Bank, School Uniform, Board Room and Staff Rooms. The central corridor will incorporate large format rooflights over its length creating a well lit and legible central space.

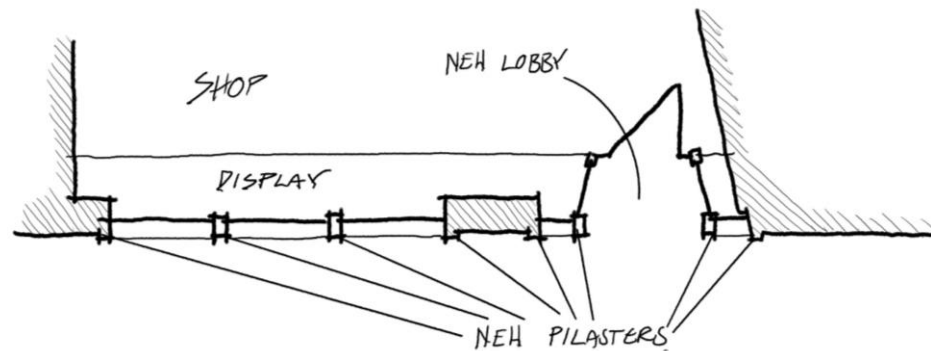
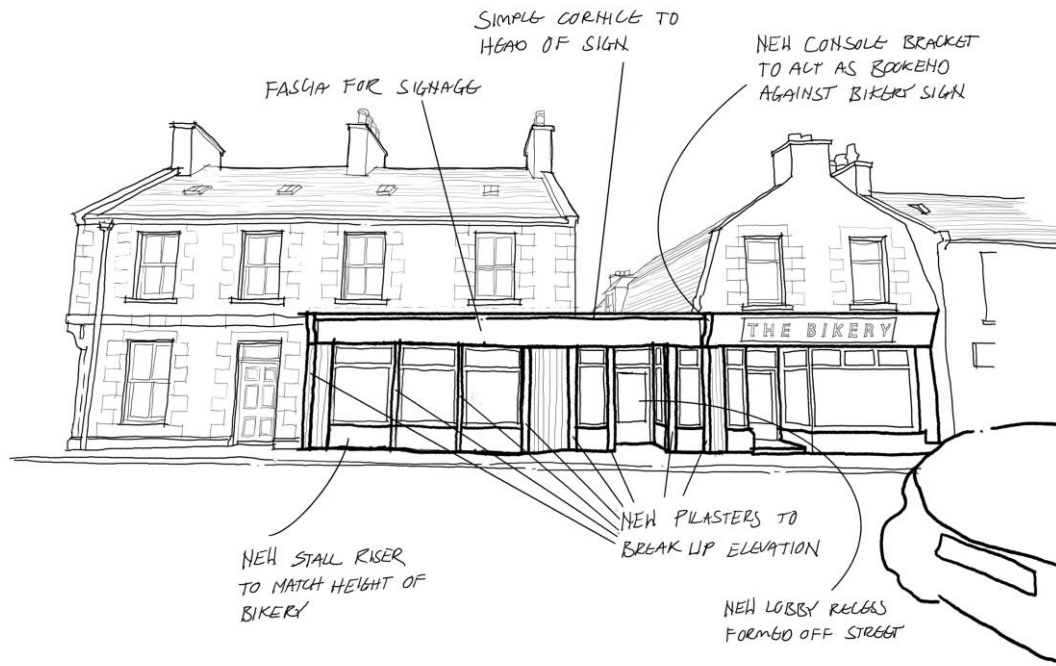
The existing toilet provision within the building is being relocated to better serve the staff and customers within the shop as well making the access to these facilities more private. This reconfiguration also incorporates a large laundry space with its own dedicated drying area.

The existing board room and storage space along Torry Street will also be reconfigured by reducing the size of the boardroom to introduce an additional room/space which is intended to be flexible in use. New windows and rooflights will be introduced into this area.

The existing shops layout will remain substantially unaltered with works in this area comprising replacement of the existing flat roof and the formation of a new shop frontage.



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SHOP FRONTAGE

Central to the proposals is the restoration of the Shops frontage onto Gordon Street. Currently the frontage comprises large areas of glass within a modern frame arrangement. It is considered that the existing frontage lacks many of the features that would be associated with a traditional shop frontage and given the shops location within the Huntly Conservation Area the works will substantially replace this.

It is proposed that the new frontage will included a new lobby set back to echo the arrangement of the Bikery next door. This intervention will dramatically improve the proportions and appearance of the frontage as well as making access to and from the shop more practical.

The introduction of the lobby allows for the creation of a display area on the internal side of the new glazing giving the shop staff far greater flexibility for window displays.

The replacement glazing will be reconfigured to be a more appropriate size through the introduction of traditional shop front features including a new rendered stall riser, painted pilasters, console brackets and a new cornice and fascia.

Areas of masonry on Gordon Street and Torry Street will be subject to a serious of repairs comprising of: the removal of areas of cement pointing and replacement in lime; replacement of delaminating stone; mortar repair of delaminating stone and repointing and re-haunching of chimneys.



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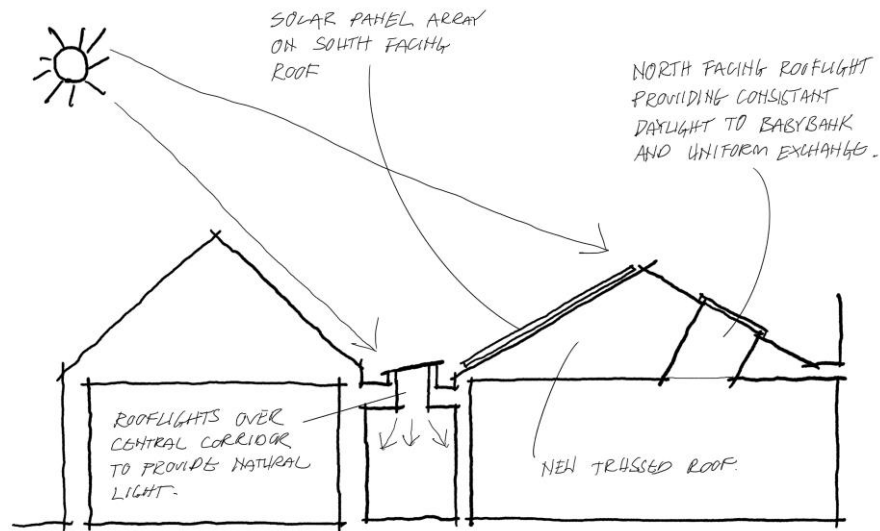
RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGIES

It is intended to install a new solar panel array on the predominantly south facing roof being formed during Phase 2 of the works. This roof will have a pitch of 30 degrees and is capable of incorporated a total of 36 solar panels.

Based on typical performance characteristics of solar panels at the time of writing we would expect this to equate to approximately a 12kW array.

Battery storage will installed to allow power to be storage on site and used more efficiently.

New areas of the building will incorporate high efficiency electric panel heaters to allow the energy created to be used and reduce the heating demand on the existing gas wet system.



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THE SIX QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL PLACES

The proposals respond the 6 qualities of successful places as follows:

WELL CONNECTED

The proposals location within the town centre make it well connected to public transport and pedestrian routes. The new shop frontage will provide a clear and legible public entrance which will respect the existing streetscape.

DISTINCT

The proposals will improve the streetscapes along both Gordon Street and Torry Street through the replacement of the existing shop frontage and the introduction of new openings

SAFE & PLEASANT

The proposals will present no barriers to entry or use. The works will result in the removal of known hazardous material on site

RESOURCE EFFICIENT

The proposals will result in improvements to the buildings fabric increasing insulation values and resulting in the building being more efficient in use. The introduction of solar panels and battery storage will reduce the buildings reliance on the national grid.



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THE SIX QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL PLACES

WELCOMING

The new frontage provides a more welcoming and legible entrance for customers of the shop. The entrance to the rear provides discreet access to the Baby Bank and other facilities for the privacy of those users.

ADAPTABLE

The building has been designed as a series of large spaces which can be combined to allow different uses and secure the long term viability of the building.



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SUMMARY

The proposals for alterations to 55 Gordon Street respond to their context and the relevant Planning Policies within the ALDP and NPF4

The proposals include the replacement of an inappropriate shop frontage, introducing traditional features more appropriate to the Huntly Conservation Area in line with Policy 7 of NPF4 and Policy HE2 of the ALDP. The new openings introduced along the Torry street will enhance the streetscape of what is an otherwise bland elevation, adding interest and character.

The proposals respond to the 6 qualities of successful places as outlined previously, complying with Policy 14 of NPF4 and Policy P1 of the ALDP.

The areas of building being replaced will improve the standard of the building fabric upgrading its thermal performance. This in turn will reduce the heating load and the buildings reliance on fossil fuels in accordance with the objectives of both the ALDP and NPF4.

The proposals also include the introduction of solar panels and battery storage which will further reduce the carbon generation within the building.

As has been demonstrated within this supporting statement the proposals that form part of the this application comply with the relevant Planning Policies and should be approved.



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