

Perth and Kinross Council
Development Management Committee – 17 December 2013
Report of Handling by Development Quality Manager

Alterations and change of use of former church into a 13 bedroom hotel/self catering/holiday accommodation, spa and restaurant, Old South Church, Coldwells Road, Crieff, PH7 4BG

Ref. No: 13/01183/LBC

Ward No: 6 -Strathearn

Summary

This report recommends approval of the application for alterations and change of use of former church into a 13 bedroom hotel/self catering/holiday accommodation, spa and restaurant as the development is considered to comply with the provisions of the Development Plan.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

- 1 The proposal relates to the conversion of a former church on Coldwells Road in Crieff to a 13 bedroom hotel, spa and restaurant with the spa and hotel available for use by the public as well as hotel guests. The church is a substantial landmark building in Crieff and has most recently been used for the sale of antiques but has now been vacant since 2006. The church has been on the Scottish Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) since 1998, but in the years following vacation of the antiques shop has seen a steady progressive decline in its condition. In 2008 the BARR described the property as being in a “Fair” condition, then by 2010 it was described as having damage caused by vandalism, damage to gatepiers during clearance of the site by previous owners, and noted that parts of the roof had recently been subject to collapse. By 2011 the register had been updated to record water damage caused by deteriorating roof drainage and reported the condition of the Mission Hall roof as a cause of concern. The condition of the historic fabric has steadily deteriorated since 2011 as is recorded in the applicant’s submission. It is clear that without the investment that a new and sustainable use can provide, the condition of church fabric will continue on its rapid decline.
- 2 The church is positioned on a fairly steeply sloping site and the built form occupies the majority of the application site. There is a small area to the south east of the building which is currently planted and has a small gravel area. The existing church sits upon a site which slopes from north to south, with the church tower situated at the elevated North-east end of the site to make use of the raised elevation. The full height primary facade onto Comrie Street to the south west not only forms a dominant gothic facade, but also takes advantage of the slope to access the lower ground floor to the south of the building footprint. This elevation combined with the Coldwells Road facade forms the key view of the church when viewed from the Comrie/Crieff at Scrymgeour's Corner to the south.

- 3 The church was constructed in 1882 in a gothic style with the Mission Hall added in 1929. The materials include red bull-faced ashlar in uneven courses with ashlar dressings with a number of attractive gothic windows at both ground and upper levels and an attractive bell tower at its north eastern end. The main church hall is an attractive galleried hall with circular cast iron piers with moulded capitals giving way to segmental arches and panelled timber gallery fronts.
- 4 There are four main elements to this proposal which are outlined below.

Main Church

- 5 The proposal, as outlined in the supporting statement, is to form a “Moroccan Hammam Spa” at ground floor level together with a plant room. The ground floor of the church is to accommodate seven en-suite bedrooms. The first floor has been designed as an open plan flexible communal space. Two new floors are proposed at the top of the church at the level of the nave clerestory windows and within the open timbered ceiling and will contain 4 new en-suite rooms.

Mission Hall

- 6 The Mission Hall on the northern part of the site is proposed to be converted into a new restaurant, kitchen and toilets.

Terrace

- 7 An external terrace is proposed above the Mission Hall which has been revised from the original submission which was to erect an external terrace on the west side of the church after concerns were expressed regarding impact on residential amenity.

Church Tower

- 8 The church tower is proposed to be converted into an independent “VIP” guest suite with a bedroom at the top of the tower.
- 9 Members should be aware that there is an associated planning application which is also under consideration at this Committee (13/01182/FLL).

NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Scottish Planning Policy 2010

- 10 This SPP is a statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning and contains:
 - the Scottish Government’s view of the purpose of planning,
 - the core principles for the operation of the system and the objectives for key parts of the system,

- statutory guidance on sustainable development and planning under Section 3E of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006,
- concise subject planning policies, including the implications for development planning and development management, and
- the Scottish Government's expectations of the intended outcomes of the planning system.

11 Of relevance to this application are,

Paragraphs 110 - 124 Historic Environment
Paragraphs 113 - 114 Listed Buildings

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

12 The Development Plan for the area consists of the Approved Tayplan 2012 and the Adopted Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001.

Tayplan: Strategic Development Plan 2012-2032

13 The principle relevant policy is in summary: -

Policy 3: Managing Tayplan's Assets

- 14 Understanding and respecting the regional distinctiveness and scenic value of the TAYplan area through:
- ensuring development likely to have a significant effect on a designated or proposed Natura 2000 sites (either alone or in combination with other sites or projects), will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Appropriate mitigation requires to be identified where necessary to ensure there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy;
 - and safeguarding habitats, sensitive green spaces, forestry, wetlands, floodplains (in-line with the water framework directive), carbon sinks, species and wildlife corridors, geodiversity, landscapes, parks, townscapes, archaeology, historic buildings and monuments and allow development where it does not adversely impact upon or preferably enhances these assets;

Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001

- 15 The application site is located within the settlement of Crieff and within the Conservation Area. The site is located within an area allocated for residential or compatible uses but sits close to the edge of the Town Centre area. The site is also identified as an opportunity site (number 6) in the plan stating that alternative uses could include a museum facility, high quality craft based retail uses or community uses.
- 16 The principal relevant policy is in summary: -

Policy 27 Listed Buildings

- 17 There will be a presumption against works detrimental to their essential character. There will be a presumption in favour of consent for development involving the sympathetic restoration of a Listed Building.

PERTH AND KINROSS PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012

- 18 On 30 January 2012 the Proposed Plan was published. The Council's current adopted Local Plans will eventually be replaced by the Local Development Plan. The Council's Development Plan Scheme sets out the timescale and stages leading to adoption. The Proposed Local Development Plan has undergone an Examination following which a report was published on 11 October 2013 containing the Reporter's recommendations. The Council has a three month period to consider the Reporter's recommendations and the modified Plan will be published by 11 January 2014. This will be the Plan that the Council intends to adopt, subject to agreement by Scottish Ministers. Prior to adoption, the Proposed Local Development Plan 2012 is a material consideration in the determination of this application, reflecting a more up to date view of the Council than those contained in the relevant adopted Local Plan.
- 19 The application site is located within the Crieff settlement boundary in an area identified for residential and compatible uses. Similar to the adopted plan the site is located on the very edge of the area designated for town centre uses.
- 20 The principal relevant policy is in summary: -

Policy HE2 Listed Buildings

- 21 Presumption in favour of the retention and sympathetic restoration, correct maintenance and sensitive management of listed buildings to allow them to remain in active use, and any proposed alterations or adaptations to help sustain or enhances' the building'e beneficial use should not adversely affect its special interest.

OTHER POLICIES

Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)

- 22 The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) sets out Scottish Ministers' policies, providing direction for Historic Scotland and a policy framework that informs the work of a wide range of public sector organisations.

Crieff Conservation Area Appraisal

23 Site History

08/00983/LBC Conversion of redundant church to residential apartments including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule – Withdrawn

08/00981/FUL Conversion of redundant church to residential apartments including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule – Withdrawn

07/01885/LBC Change of use of redundant former church/antiques centre to form 12 flats including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule – Refused

07/01884/FUL Change of use of redundant former church/antiques centre to form 12 flats including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule - Refused

07/01589/LBC Change of use of redundant former church/antiques centre to form 12 residential apartments including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule – Withdrawn

07/01588/FUL Change of use of redundant former church/antiques centre to form 12 residential apartments including removal/demolition of former hall and side vestibule - Withdrawn

CONSULTATIONS

Historic Scotland

- 24 Welcome the re-use of this significant A listed building at risk and supportive of the proposed scheme, new uses and alterations in principle. Some concerns raised regarding impact of terrace on listed building appearance and fabric.

REPRESENTATIONS

- 25 A total of 2 letters of representation from individual properties/premises were received during the first neighbour notification period all of which objected to the application.
- 26 The representations have raised the following relevant issues: -
- Impact on fabric and visual appearance of listed building
- 27 During the second neighbour notification period, following submission of revised plans relating to the pull in area and revised outdoor terrace position a further single letter of representation was received from a neighbour who had objected during the first period of notification. The same reasons outlined above were raised.
- 28 These issues are all raised in the Appraisal section of this report.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

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| Environment Statement | Not required |
| Screening Opinion | Not required |
| Environmental Impact Assessment | Not required |
| Appropriate Assessment | Not required |
| Design Statement / Design and Access Statement | Submitted as part of related planning application |
| Report on Impact or Potential Impact | None submitted. |

APPRAISAL

Policy

- 30 In accordance with Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 1987 the listed building application has been advertised in the Local Press, Edinburgh Gazette and a site notice was posted on the 8 July 2013 and again on 15 October 2013.
- 31 The determining issues in this case are:- the statutory requirement under Section 14 and 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 for the planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural historic interest which it possesses; whether the proposal complies with development plan policy; whether the proposal complies with supplementary planning guidance; or if there are any other material considerations which justify a departure from policy.

Impact on Listed Building (External)

Outdoor Terrace

- 32 The balustrade of the outdoor terrace will be visible from Coldwells Road and is visible on the south east elevation but due to the layout of the street and the angle which the church sits at, the terrace is unlikely to be visible from Comrie Street. Given the visibility of the terrace it is important to ensure the materials do not detrimentally impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building. It is noted that the terrace floor will be concealed behind the ridgeline of the Mission Hall, there will be a void between the terrace and the NE elevation of the main church and that the balustrade directly in front of the tall, tripartite window (visible from Coldwells Road) will be structural glass. The use of structural glass will provide the terrace with a "light weight" appearance and limit the visual impact of the balustrade. To ensure this I recommend the exact

design details and details of the proposed structural glass, if the terrace is approved by members, is covered by condition. Furthermore in order to avoid any visual clutter from the terrace a condition is recommended to ensure there are no fixed fixtures or fittings on the terrace. The use of external lighting on the terrace would also result in potential impact on visual amenity during night time hours and could also impact on residential amenity as such I recommend a condition to ensure no external lighting is permitted on the terrace. A detailed design specification and large-scale section drawings should be submitted to indicate the connection of the terrace structure to the Mission Hall roof and areas where the terrace and lobby will abut the listed building fabric. Historic Scotland have stated that they are generally content with the relocation of the terrace but have suggested that further amendments should be sought to reduce the overall visual impact of the terrace.

- 33 Whilst the terrace will have a degree of visual impact, on balance I am prepared to accept the design and height of the terrace. Please note, that whilst I am satisfied with the visual impact which the terrace will have I cannot support its inclusion due to the detrimental impact on residential amenity which is referred to in the accompanying Report of Handling for the planning application. If members choose to support the inclusion of the terrace the above conditions are recommended.

Demolition of Lean To

- 34 The demolition of the lean to element on the north-west elevation is considered acceptable. Historic Scotland and the Council's Conservation Officer have raised no objection to this element of the proposal.

Drop-Off Area/Landscape Area

- 35 The area to the front of the hotel has been revised following discussions regarding servicing and vehicle drop off and the proposal now involves the creation of a drop off vehicle bay and the re-location of a section of boundary wall.
- 36 The layout of this revised area is considered acceptable and provides an attractive entrance to the hotel. A condition has been recommended by the Conservation Officer to seek a method statement for the demolition and re-construction of the stone boundary wall.
- 37 A condition will also seek details of the proposed paving slabs, setts, design specification for the seating and the planned tree species. Furthermore a condition will also ensure there is no fixed bin storage area and that the bin storage area marked is solely to be used during collection days. Historic Scotland have offered no objection to this element of the proposal.

Plant/Flues/Rooflights

- 38 A mechanical ventilation system is proposed to avoid the need to alter the stained glass windows which will involve the erection of lead clad vent dormers on the north west facing roof. The vent pipes from these dormers extend above the ridge of the roof and in order to reduce their visual impact they should be reduced below the ridge height. A condition is recommended to cover this aspect.
- 39 A plant area is proposed between in the valley between the Mission Hall roof pitches. No exact design details of this area have been provided but given that they sit in this valley their visual impact will be partly mitigated. Full design details of this area should be requested through a planning condition.
- 40 There were discussions regarding the installation of rooflights and the Planning Authority indicated concerns regarding the visual impact these would have. Unfortunately building regulations dictate daylighting requirements which mean the proposed rooflights are required. However the number of rooflights proposed has been kept to a minimum and reduced significantly from the initial proposal.
- 41 The Council's Conservation Officer has also recommended conditions to state that no new plumbing, pipes, soilstacks, flues, vents, grilles or ductwork shall be fixed on the external faces of the building unless shown on the drawings hereby approved.
- 42 Furthermore, no new security alarms, lighting, cameras or other equipment shall be fixed on the external faces of the building unless with the prior approval in writing of the Council and this can also be covered by a suitably worded planning condition.

Impact on Listed Building (Internal)

- 43 Extensive pre application discussion took place in attempt to find a solution to provide the space the applicant requires, together with ensuring as much of the historic fabric of the listed building can be retained and protected.
- 44 I note that, after pre-application discussion, the void to the north chancel has been extended to expose the existing stone quoins to the corner of the window recess. The design statement indicates that the void has been extended as far as possible whilst maintaining the minimum first floor area to provide communal space and the required number of bedrooms below. Whilst it would have been preferable for a larger void it is accepted that there is a need for floor space in order to make the project economically viable. Similarly, I accept that the retention of the gallery would prevent the necessary floor space and bedroom accommodation. It is noted that the existing trusses and sloping ceilings below the aisle gallery will be retained.

- 45 The design statement describes the proposals for re-use and re-location of the communion table, the pulpit and the timber panelling to the gallery and the pipe organ. It is suggested that the precise locations of these re-used features should be indicated on a detailed plan. This can be covered by a planning condition.
- 46 The design statement indicates that a more detailed schedule of repair and restoration works will be produced once suitable access to the upper levels is gained. This schedule of works, including a photographic survey, should be submitted for approval before any development work commences and it is recommended that this be covered by a suitably worded planning condition.
- 47 The Conservation Officer has also sought conditions relating to the security and protection of interior features.
- 48 The final details of the proposed spa area, according to the agent have yet to be finalised and may depend on the requirements of a spa operator. As such a condition seeking final details of the proposed spa layout is recommend to ensure the Planning Authority retains control over the proposed layout.

Archaeology/Built Heritage

- 49 The building was surveyed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) Threatened Buildings Survey between 2007 and 2008. As such an adequate record of its fabric and fixtures has been made. Further, there are no archaeological concerns for the development e.g. deepening of the basement given the church was constructed in the late 19th century on ground out with the centre of historic Crieff.

Economic Benefit

- 50 The applicant's statement indicates that the developer intends to spend £2m to implement any planning approval given. The applicant has also provided a brief appraisal of alternative options for the hotel including retail use, residential apartments and a hotel with either a smaller or larger number of bedrooms. All of these options were dismissed either due to financial constraints or due to the potential extent of physical intervention into the listed building. I believe the applicant has demonstrated that the use proposed is the most appropriate to allow the building to be brought back into use. It should be noted that in comparison to a conversion to private residential dwellings, hotel use is less onerous in terms of statutory requirements for natural day lighting and views which will allow the existing historic stained glass to be retained. The proposed use will also allow members of the general public the opportunity to use and enjoy the church for generations to come, rather than the more limited enjoyment offered by private residences as the spa and restaurant are to be made available to members of the public.

- 51 The proposed hotel is to employ approximately 20 people with additional employment generated indirectly with suppliers to the hotel. The construction project will also generate a significant level of employment. The introduction of a new hotel into Crieff with associated restaurant and spa will attract tourist to the area who will in put money into the local economy. It is therefore considered that the redevelopment of the building will result in significant economic benefit to Crieff and its surrounds.

LEGAL AGREEMENTS

- 52 None required.

DIRECTION BY SCOTTISH MINISTERS

- 53 Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, regulations 30 – 32 there have been no directions by the Scottish Government in respect of an Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion, call in or notification relating to this application.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 54 This building is on the BARR, category A listed and has not been occupied for a number of years and its physical condition is deteriorating. The church is a landmark building in Crieff and I believe it is important to ensure that it is brought back into use as soon as possible. The impact of the proposal on the listed building is considered acceptable subject to conditions.
- 55 In conclusion, the application must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this respect, the proposal is considered to comply with the adopted Strathearn Area Local Plan and Tayplan 2012. I have taken account of material considerations, including the Proposed Local Development Plan 2012 and find none that would justify overriding the adopted Development Plan. On that basis the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

A Approve the application subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The proposed development must be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and documents, unless otherwise provided for by conditions imposed on the planning consent.
- 2 The proposed outdoor terrace is not approved. Prior to the commencement of any development a revised set of drawings shall be submitted which omits the outdoor terrace from the plans. The drawings as approved shall be implemented as part of the site development.

- 3 Prior to the commencement of any development on the landscape/drop off area to front of the building a detailed method statement shall be submitted which outlines how the existing section of boundary wall and railings will be dismantled, the storage and protection of the material and the re-construction of the stonework. The details, as approved, shall be strictly adhered to during the works in this area.
- 4 Prior to the commencement of any development on the landscape/drop off area to front of the building samples of the paving slabs and setts, design specification for the seating and the details of all proposed tree species shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The details, as approved, shall be implemented as part of the site development.
- 5 Prior to the commencement of any development a revised north east and north west elevation drawing shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority which reduces the height of the proposed flues on the north west facing slope of the roof to ensure they sit below the ridge of the building. The details, as approved, shall be implemented as part of the site development.
- 6 Prior to the commencement of any development on the plant area between the Mission Hall roof ridges, full design details, including elevations and sectional drawings shall be provided of all proposed plant and machinery for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The design details and specifications should minimise the impact on the visual amenity of the area and the specification of the plant shall meet the requirements of conditions 11 and 12 of the associated planning consent. The details, as approved, shall be implemented as part of the site development and maintained in perpetuity.
- 7 No new plumbing, pipes, soilstacks, flues, vents, grilles or ductwork shall be fixed on the external faces of the building unless shown on the drawings hereby approved.
- 8 No alarms, lighting, cameras or other equipment shall be fixed on the external faces of the building unless with the prior approval in writing of the Council.
- 9 Prior to the installation of any new windows within any part of the clock tower, full details of the replacement windows shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The details, as approved, shall be implemented as part of the site development.
- 10 Precautions shall be taken to secure and protect the interior features against accidental loss or damage, or theft during the building work. Details shall be submitted to and approved by the Council as local planning authority before works begin on site, and the relevant work carried out in accordance with such approval. No such features shall be disturbed or removed temporarily or permanently except as indicated on the approved drawings or with prior approval in writing of the Council.
- 11 The schedule of repair and restoration works referred to in the submitted design statement shall be produced once suitable access to the upper levels is gained.

This schedule of works, including a photographic survey, shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development.

- 12 Prior to the commencement of any development, full details of the proposed re-use and re-location of the communion table, the pulpit and the timber panelling to the gallery and the pipe organ shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. This shall be in the form of a detailed scaled plan.
- 13 Prior to the commencement of any development at lower ground floor level on the spa area, fully detailed, scaled layout drawings of the spa shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The details, as approved, shall be implemented as part of the site development.

Reasons

- 1 To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the plans approved.
- 2 In order to protect residential amenity
- 3-13 In order to protect the character of the category A listed building

B JUSTIFICATION

The proposal is considered to comply with the Development Plan and there are no other material considerations that would justify a departure therefrom.

C PROCEDURAL NOTES

The property is listed Category A; Item 39; Crieff Burgh.
It is therefore necessary to submit the application to Historic Scotland for ratification of the Council's decision.

D INFORMATIVES

- 1 This is approval of application ref no (13/01183/LBC) for listed building consent only. It does not include any approval for the related planning application ref no (13/01182/FLL).
- 2 No work shall be commenced until an application for building warrant has been submitted and approved.

Background Papers: 3 letters of representation (over two periods of neighbour notification)

Contact Officer: John Williamson – Ext 75360

Date: 19 November 2013

Nick Brian
Development Quality Manager

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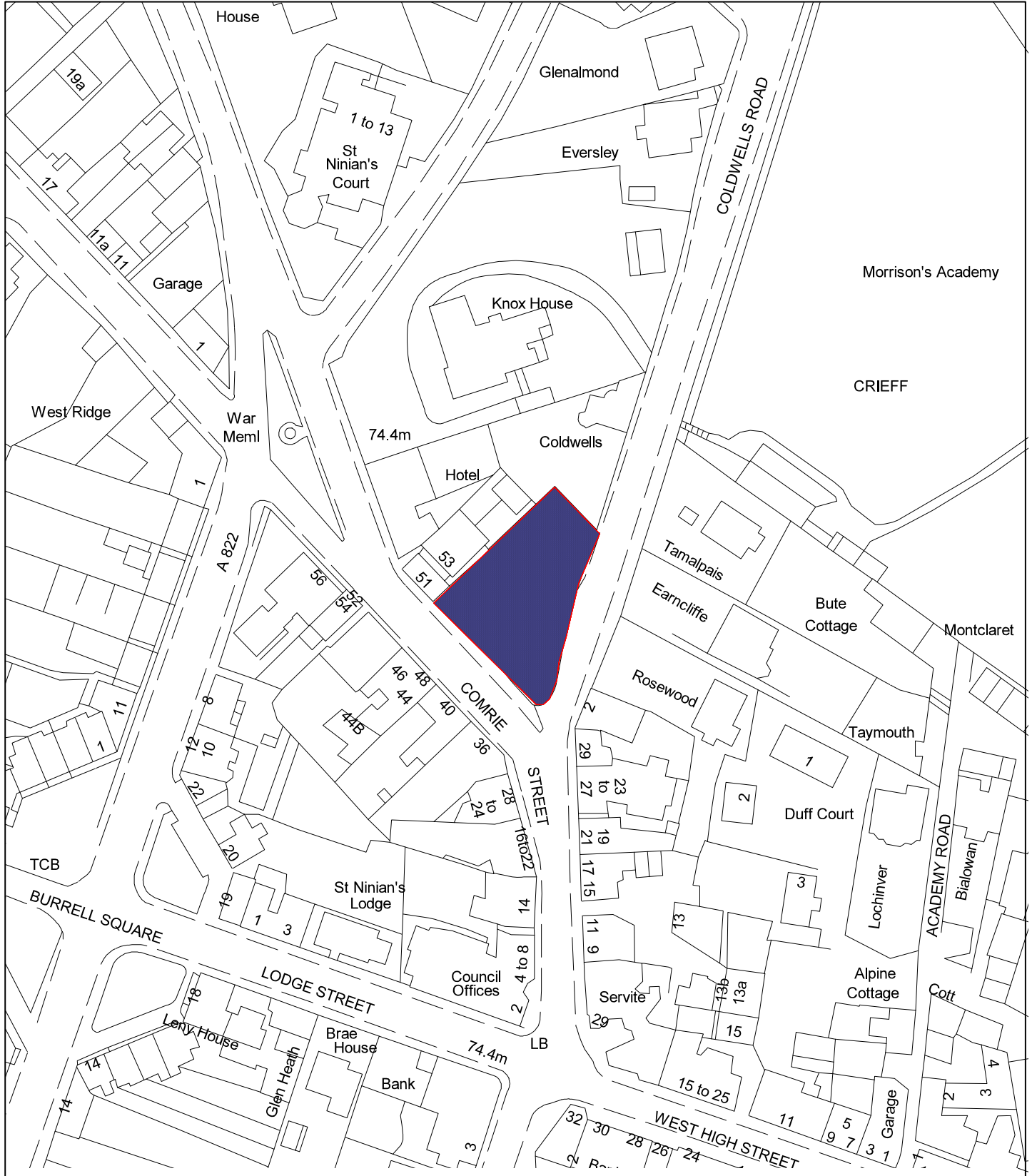
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Perth & Kinross Council

13/01183/LBC

Old South Church, Coldwells Road, Crieff

Alterations and Change of use to hotel, spa and restaurant



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Perth & Kinross Council

13/01183/LBC

Old South Church, Coldwells Road, Crieff

Alterations and Change of use to hotel, spa and restaurant



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