

PARTON KIRK

as a Community and Science Centre



*a feasibility study prepared for
by Julian Watson Consultancy*

*Parton Community Council
April 2023*

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION:	7
Parton Kirk and its present status	7
Parton and its community	8
Parton, James Clerk Maxwell and his contribution to science	10
CONSIDERING THE BUILDING:	13
Previous architectural study for change of use	13
Updated Building Costs	27
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	29
The Present Situation	29
A New Village Hall?	30
What is a Visitor Centre?	31
A Different Perspective	32
A WIDER COMMUNITY – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE	34
PROPOSAL	36
A Different Enterprise	36
Project Development	38
Conclusions	42
Acknowledgements	44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Study introduces **Parton Kirk** and its place within its community in Dumfries and Galloway. Its congregation merged with those of Crossmichael and Balmaghie since 2015, Parton Kirk was decommissioned as a formal place of worship in 2022. With the current reduction of dedicated Church of Scotland properties across the country, the sale of the building now seems probable, even imminent. When is not yet clear. The first step towards this outcome, listing by the Presbytery of South West Scotland, has not, as of April 2023, occurred. **Parton Community Council** have been sensitive to this developing situation for many years. In 2010 they commissioned Ayr-based ARPL Architects Ltd to produce a condition report, which also looked at a wide range of options for change-of-use in the building. This report was revisited in 2017, with the formerly identified, but now single, focus on Parton Kirk continuing - as it was then still constituted to do - as a place of worship for its congregation, and with separate space for displays on the life and work of the globally renowned 19th century scientist, **James Clerk Maxwell**, who was from the area and who is buried in the graveyard.

This present study was commissioned in the context of Parton Kirk's decommissioning. It was to look at the *feasibility* of 'a James Clerk Maxwell Science and Innovation Centre' in Parton Kirk. The working assumption was that this might be a **Visitor Centre** dedicated to the scientist, while maintaining a **wider community use**. It draws on the earlier work by ARPL Architects, which remains current and useful, and investigates the required steps involved in community acquisition of former churches. It looks at what 'Visitor Centres' are, how they operate, and the strengths and weaknesses in the model. It provides updated financial estimates of the figures provided in the 2017 report and examines the implications for the community in aspiring to taking on a project such as this.

Board members of the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation, members of the Parton community, and members of the wider science and natural sciences community have been consulted. Concurrently, a report on the '**Parton Strategic Context**' has been produced by One Planet Consulting. This looks at relevant and current National, Regional and Loch Ken area strategies, with a particular eye to future development. Rather than repeat this work, it is recommended that this Feasibility Study is read in conjunction with the Parton Strategic Context Report.

While Parton Kirk's connection to its community is strong and undeniable, former working assumptions for the project can no longer be seen as on target. In the process of reaching this conclusion, however, seeing Parton Kirk's place in a **wider community** and centered on a different, more enterprising entity in the building, produces a project founded in the original assumptions but more useful and broader in its remit. This is feasible, but it will require the formation of a Trust to action it, accruing allies and sound business planning to bring it to fruition.



INTRODUCTION

*The three subjects in this Introduction - **Parton Kirk and its present status**, **Parton and its community**, and **Parton, James Clerk Maxwell and his contribution to science** - look at the building; its locality and people; and the remarkable man who could be celebrated in the building. A lot of information is available elsewhere on all of these subjects. This is a distillation. The intention is to concentrate on a core of components, often-linking, in pursuit of the issue of whether - and in what form - Parton Kirk could be a Community and Science Centre.*

PARTON KIRK AND ITS PRESENT STATUS ~ Designed by the prominent Dumfries-based architect, Walter Newall, and supervised by local architect and builder, Adam Halliday, Parton Kirk was built over an 18-month period between 1833 and 1834. The first service took place there on 15th June 1834.

There was debate about the positioning of the new church, but in the end the site which was chosen was the one that maintained traditional associations with worship for the community. The remains of the 16th century Old Kirk are in the churchyard only a few yards to the south of Parton Kirk. The decrepit condition of that building in 1818 prompted the Presbytery to agree to the new building. The story goes back further. Before the Old Kirk, there was a medieval Barony Chapel nearby and to the southwest, a couple of hundred yards away, is the 12th century Kirkland Motte which took advantage of the same higher ground and wide views across the valley. Parton Kirk is in the heart of a place that is redolent of its history and sense of place.

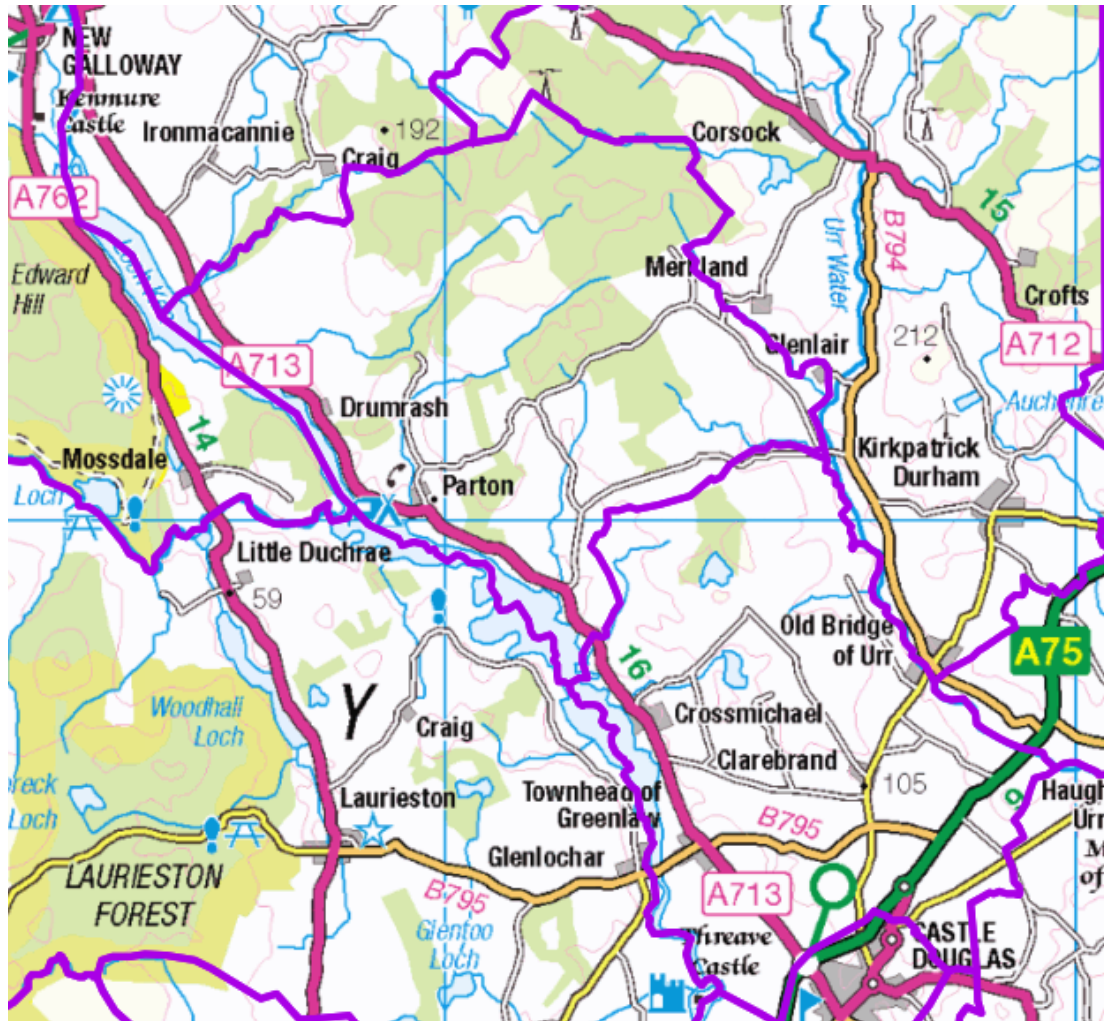
Some people remember uncertainty about the future of Parton Kirk and its congregation in the 1980's. Parton Community Council's concern in 2010 to investigate options for change of use in Parton Kirk is evidence that awareness of change was in the air, locally and nationally. In 2019 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland approved a strategy that required every presbytery to prepare a mission plan by the end of the year on how growing congregations could be enhanced but spending could be cut, and administrative structures dramatically reduced. The fall-out from this has seen many dozens (the number is hard to ascertain) of churches across Scotland, particularly small ones in rural areas, slated for closure and sale. This has had a challenging impact on communities, whether churchgoers or not.

Prior to closure, congregations are often amalgamated, as in the case of Parton, Crossmichael and Balmaghie. When a church is eventually 'decommissioned', as Parton Kirk was in 2022, a decision on its future rests with its area presbytery. (The number of area presbyteries have themselves been reduced - from 45 to 12). Decision made; it may then be placed on a list by its presbytery. This list is then given to the Church of Scotland central office for the collation of relevant records, prior to handing on to the legal department who initiate sales.



PARTON AND ITS COMMUNITY ~ This is a view of the village of Parton from just north of Parton Kirk. There is more to the community than that distinctive line of cottages. More houses line the road to the northwest, and beyond them, amongst trees and close to the shore, is the Loch Ken Holiday Park. Its short-term population, from Easter until early autumn, can be six times that of the village.

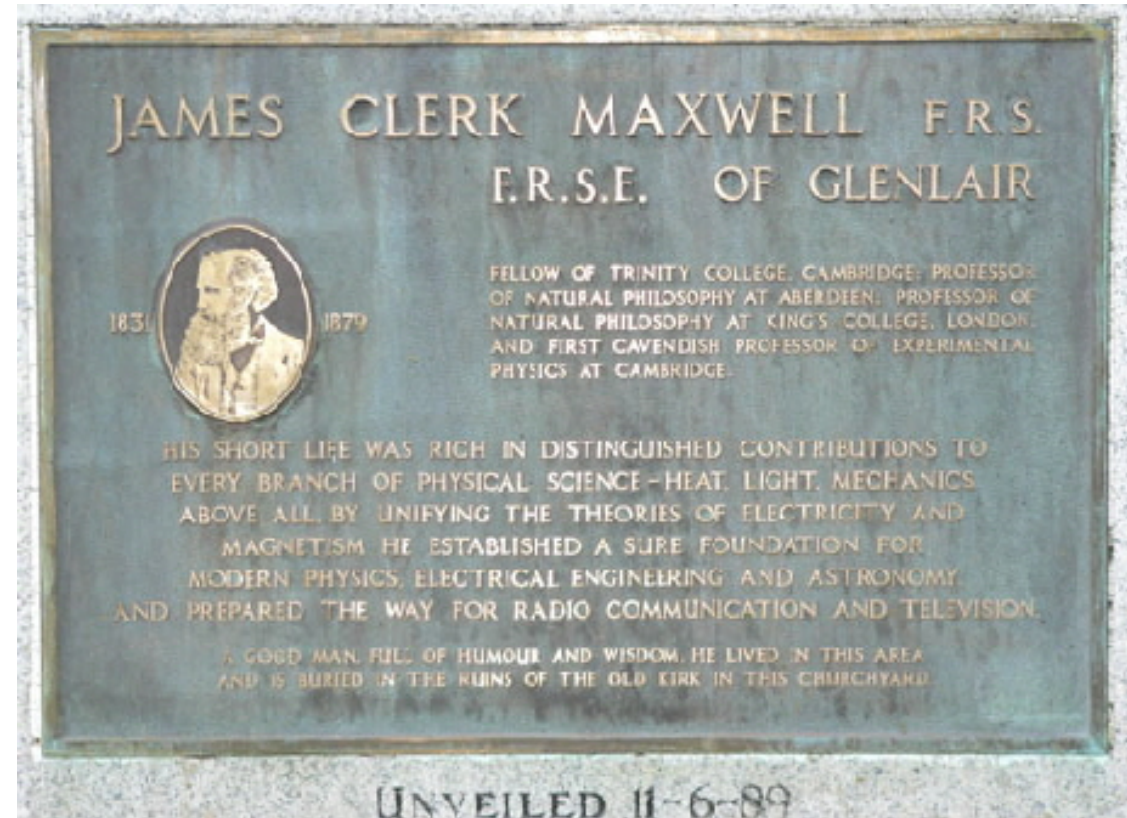
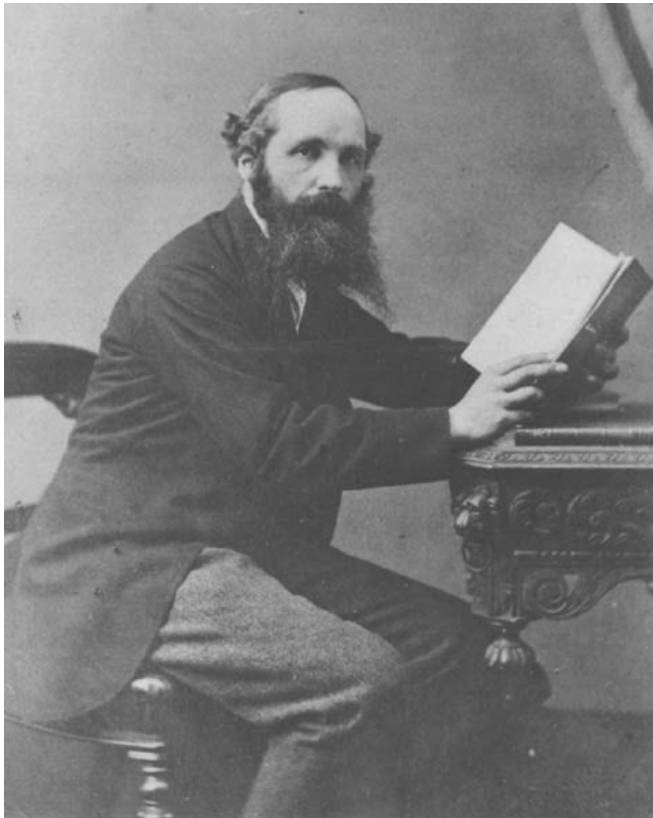
The cottages in the photograph were built, or improved, in 1901 as something of a model development by Benjamin Rigby Murray, of Parton House. The clock tower was added to an existing byre which was converted into a communal laundry, now a house. The Village Hall, to the right, was added in 1908. For some years the building across from the Hall was a village shop and post office but, as with many small settlements now, is so no longer. It was the home of Sam Callander (1922 - 2012) who devoted much of his life to promoting the memory of James Clerk Maxwell.



The Community Council area, *shown on this map*, climbs inland from Loch Ken to Glenlair, formerly the home of the Clerk Maxwell family, and edges close to Mertland and Corsock. The Dumfries and Galloway Council website gives the population of the Community Council area as 146.

Parton is situated towards the southern end of the A713, one of the few roads across the Southern Upland hills from Dumfries and Galloway to the western Central Belt. Approximately midway between St John's Town of Dalry to the north, and Castle Douglas to the south, the village is at a mid-point on the eastern shore of the long, scenic, hydro-scheme-enhanced Loch Ken.

Parton is an old settlement, dating back to the 7th or 8th centuries. It is not particularly isolated; it is small; but it is historic.



PARTON, JAMES CLERK MAXWELL AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE ~ In 2008 a full-scale, plinthed sculpture by Alexander Stoddart of a seated James Clerk Maxwell was placed prominently at the east end of George Street in Edinburgh. In spite of this modern acknowledgement, it is truly remarkable how little even his name - let alone his achievement - is generally known in his home country. In the history of science, the pivotal names of Newton, Maxwell and Einstein are cited together. This is not a trope in some kind of hagiography. The implications of his achievements are colossal. His work and insights underpin understanding and technologies which are in so many ways at the heart of our modern world. The plaque, close to the entrance to Parton Kirk and unveiled on 11th June 1989, gives a succinct description, but it is also worth quoting fellow scientists to gain a feeling for the breadth and substance of his achievement.

..... many think that Maxwell's study of the particles of Saturn's rings led him directly and inevitably into the realm of the kinetic theory of gases, in which so much of his life was spent. However this may be, when he crossed the bridge from Astronomy to Physics he left behind him forever the prospects of becoming a great mathematical astronomer – but only to become the greatest mathematical physicist the world has seen since Newton.

Sir James Jeans

One scientific epoch ended and another began with James Clerk Maxwell.

Albert Einstein

There can be little doubt that the most significant event of the 19th century will be judged as Maxwell's discovery of the laws of electrodynamics. The American Civil War will pale into provincial insignificance in comparison with this important scientific event of the same decade.

Richard P. Feynman, Nobel Laureate

James Clerk Maxwell (1831 – 1879) was born in Edinburgh but spent his childhood summers at Glenlair, which was the country seat of his land-owning family and then in the parish of Parton. His mother died when he was eight years old. His father, John, had commissioned Walter Newall to design the house at Glenlair and was a church elder and chairman of the heritors in the congregation at Parton, signing Newall's plans for the new Kirk. A distinctively practical and creative man he seems to have warmly encouraged his son's lively and inquisitive mind. He died in 1856, leaving Glenlair to James, who continued to return there from a succession of academic appointments in Cambridge, Aberdeen, London, and again in Cambridge as the first Chair in Experimental Physics at the newly formed Cavendish Laboratory. He generally attended church as an elder in Corsock where another church had been built in 1839, largely through the support of his father. He is buried, with the remains of his parents and his wife, in Parton, the Kirk there remaining in the Church of Scotland after the Secession. James Clerk Maxwell was not only a scientist and physicist. He was also deeply religious, a poet, and a profoundly enquiring man, who could turn his hand to producing offshoots to his work, such as the world's first ever colour photograph (*shown here*).



Parton maintains supportive links with the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation which has representatives in science and research departments in universities in Scotland and around the world.



CONSIDERING THE BUILDING

*The aerial photograph (opposite) gives a very good idea of the overall site and its place in its landscape. It shows the south elevation of the Kirk and its proximity to the Old Kirk (with the Clerk Maxwell gravestone visible). The following subjects – **Previous Architectural Study for Change of Use and Updated Building Costs** – look at proposals for the adaptation of Parton Kirk and provide background on thinking up to recently on whether - and in what form - Parton Kirk could be a Community and Science Centre.*

PREVIOUS ARCHITECTURAL STUDY FOR CHANGE OF USE ~ In 2010 Parton Community Council commissioned Ayr-based ARPL Architects Ltd to produce a condition report, which also looked at a wide range of options for change-of-use in the building. This report was revisited in 2017, with the formerly identified, but now single, focus on Parton Kirk continuing - as it was then still constituted to do - as a place of worship for its congregation, and with separate space for displays on the life and work of James Clerk Maxwell.

THE 2010 REPORT remains informative and useful, particularly as - for reasons which have more recently come to the fore - the enterprise that might be most feasible, appropriate and viable in the building may be less the 'visitor centre' that was reasonably envisaged in 2017, and more an innovative 'study centre' with other elements in it which are addressed in the earlier report. It is necessary, however, to summarise both reports to get a handle on the practical issues suggested here.

Addressing the condition of the building, the report then proceeds to present fourteen conceivable options for change-of-use. These are: **(1) Museum/Visitor Centre; (2) Residential Development (Private Homes or Holiday Accommodation); (3) Arts/ Gallery/ Theatre/ Studios Use; (4) Private Hostel or Bunk House; (5) Hotel/ Restaurant/ Venue (with 6 bedrooms); (6) Leisure/ Sports/ Fitness/ Spa Facility; (7) Commercial/ Hospitality/ Leisure combined; (8) Partnership of Community Use/ Commercial Residential Use;** (9) Education; (10) Community Centre Use; (11) Music/ Dance Studio; (12) Children's Centre/ Play Area; (13) Archive/ Library; (14) Commercial Office/ Retail/ 2nd Hand Junk Store.

The first eight (here in bold) were considered more viable. Accompanying architectural sketches for the division of the interior space for each are provided in the report. Edited presentations of the **SUMMARY, POTENTIAL FOR NEW USES, and PREFERRED OPTIONS BY THE COMMUNITY** are presented here:

We have examined all the possibilities suggested through the consultations to see how user options could be accommodated, to test how they work in spatial terms and to take an overview of the financial position for the conversions. It must be recognised that different options would call for different levels of repair of the existing fabric, and [that these would depend] on capital funding and opportunity for planned maintenance. The figures shown reflect this. For many of the options to be viable it is anticipated that only a proportion of the possible fabric works would be considered [appropriate] with the conversion.

The existing church is a usable working building that is in a reasonably good state of repair for its age and could be managed on an economic long term maintenance plan. There is a commitment for the congregation and community to maintain and care for the treasured features, furnishings and fittings which for a conversion would be removed and re-housed in a more appropriate setting.

The responsibility for running and maintaining a building of this size is an expensive demand on a population the size of Parton and may compromise the commitment they already have for the Village Hall which currently just manages to sustain itself. Realistically outside support will be required to keep the building in use.

The listing of the building will have a significant impact on the potential for conversion, alteration and change, for which some options are more demanding than others. The Church is a significant element of the Parton landscape and needs to be treated with some care.

POTENTIAL FOR NEW USES - *The church has certain characteristics which make it attractive to new owners:*

It has a good visual presence at the roadside entering the village with the lay-by facilitating existing vehicular and reasonably level pedestrian access.

- *the church is a well-proportioned simple single volume suitable for lightweight structural intervention,*
- *the positioning of windows and entrances are easy to work with in various options,*
- *the condition of the church is reasonably good,*
- *the setting and historic interest of the building and the graveyard are visually attractive.*

The potential uses of this church are numerous; it does seem suited to accommodating a flexible range of community functions seen to be preferred by the village. However, the building [may be] too large to accommodate these functions financially in a remote location with a small population and limited visitor and tourist numbers. It is unlikely to achieve adequate funding or to cover running costs with only community use unless a great deal of management and servicing is carried out on a volunteer basis.

The value and attractiveness of the site, if offered for sale will be limited because of the restrictions due to the public graveyard and lack of existing services to the building. The ongoing maintenance costs and the cost of conversion, combined with the cost of providing drainage, suggest that if a user is found for the church a sale would likely be at a nominal value. Therefore, a community led purchase of the building for alternative use would not be a major expense. [This observation was valid in 2010 but may not be so in 2023].

The commercial and residential uses, other than holiday accommodation, do not seem to be viable under current conditions, but may appeal to a one-off purchaser. This however cannot be relied on.

PREFERRED OPTIONS BY THE COMMUNITY - *Local preference is for a multi-purpose community use and the key to this would be capital fundraising and long-term revenue funding. [The three options looked at by the study seemed most relevant to the community]*

- *A multi-use community building with simple and basic new facilities of café with kitchen and toilets, and an exhibition area provided in one third of the building and retaining 2/3 as a large hall space. This would be a community owned and run facility.*
- *A new commercial business use takes over the majority of the building, with very limited access for the community and public to the tower room. Ownership could be considered by the Community Council and leased, which would generate and income for the community. This would also keep future options open and care for the building within the control of the community should a business venture fail.*
- *A hybrid option of a community facility in partnership with a residential use, where public access the ground floor and basic facilities are provided with an upper floor are provided with self-contained holiday apartment managed on a business basis.... Ownership by the community council with financial support from the business use. [The Vivat Trust was considered to be a possible manager, but it went into liquidation in 2018].*

A fourth option that has to be considered is that the community are not able to take on the commitment required to develop any of these potentials and that the building will go onto the open market where a new use might be found for which there is no local involvement. The building may be closed and become redundant for some time if no buyer is found.

THE 2017 REPORT covers some of the ground of the previous study, but it concentrates on one option, and provides designs for it:

The local community considered a range of options for alternative uses for Parton village church outlined in a feasibility study in 2010. The congregation are now on a periodic monthly use of Parton Kirk for worship, with other services held at Crossmichael [this is no longer the situation

in 2023] and the village community are looking for ways to extend the purposeful use of the Kirk. From the original option study there was a layout, which seemed to give a suitable layout for the combined church and visitor use.

This preferred option has now been developed further with a more defined brief to provide the following accommodation:

- *Mezzanine gallery to the West end of the church, to be open to the main space,*
- *Under the mezzanine to provide catering / hospitality area and exhibition, to be enclosed for heating /security /separation of space but to be flexible,*
- *Exhibition areas for James Clark Maxwell and local interests,*
- *Level access for visitors to new areas, including a lift if possible,*
- *Replacement of the old boiler house with new toilets, which can be accessed from the outside when the church building is closed,*
- *The new areas to be created with appropriate materials, structure and services to suit the needs of the spaces and comply with Building Regulations.*

USE- *For flexibility of spaces, it is proposed to provide sub-division using glass screens so that the main whole space is not lost but there is localised control of heating, lighting, security and access. The proposal does not alter the existing structural form of the building, and the new areas are created with inserted structure and the build of an extension.*

SITE LIMITATIONS - *Existing layout of the churchyard with extensive number of graves restricts the size of the extension and new drainage is proposed to follow the historically established paths to a septic tank located in a place where there are no graves and least sensitive archaeological areas. There are 3 locations which will require negotiation with the council and owners: Option A is [the] most economic location (shortest drain run); however, option C would be easiest to agree as this neighbour has already indicated willingness, but [it] is the longest drain run.*



DESIGN OF EXTENSION - The location for the toilets is in a discrete position when viewed from the surrounding area and is slightly larger than the existing redundant boiler housing, which is in a poor condition. It is anticipated that this will be an acceptable location with local planners for the formal Listed Building Consent and also unlikely to have archaeological issues. The West entrance door can also be provided with a ramped level access within the existing path area. The proposal for the structure of the new extension is a timber well insulated frame structure with timber boarding which will weather to a soft grey colour, and a slate roof. Small timber windows will allow for natural light and keep the use of electricity down. The foundation for the structure can be kept lightweight on the ground, avoiding disturbance of the church structure and be an economical build. Two regular-sized cubicles and a fully accessible disabled toilet with baby change facilities are proposed. As the toilets can be accessed when the church is locked, they will be available for visitors at any time, including walkers or mourners attending burials in the cemetery etc.

INTERIOR ALTERATIONS - The new mezzanine gallery works best with the building regulations by remaining as a single large space volume with an open gallery and fire protection will be necessary for the supporting structure and can be achieved with plasterboard and fire linings. New structure is proposed as a steel frame and would have new foundation pads located within the existing church masonry structure.

At ground floor we propose to enclose the space with frameless glass screen with two pairs of glass doors, which gives maximum visual link with the main church space but can be locked for security and heated separately. The glass doors can open in both directions and when left open the under-gallery space can be used as an overflow area to the main space. The catering provision is for a simple kitchen, referred to as a servery, with plenty of counter space and could function well for serving light refreshments and use as a seasonal café space. For aesthetics the recommendation would be to have domestic contract cupboard units and worktops, which are suitable for this level of use (catering stainless steel is not necessary).

A stair to the gallery level is conveniently accessed from the entrance area and a platform lift, which can accommodate 4 or 5 people, gives disabled access to the gallery level. The cost of a lift will be circa £20k and if considered not necessary at the outset, could be added at a later date, as there is not a major structural or operational technical requirement.

The gallery level will benefit from the large west facing window and as a flexible space can accommodate various activities and or exhibitions. The glass balustrade would be part of the overall glass screen design for the underside area.

The main area of the church sanctuary will continue to serve as a large flexible public space. New facilities are at the west end and extension and will be picked up on one new drain run, which will then have to find a route through the churchyard without disturbing archaeological remains. Localised and zoned controls are proposed to make the systems flexible and economic to run. Hot water would be most economically provided by

electric localised water heaters to the kitchen sink and washbasins. Re-modelled areas are to have new lighting to suit the activities and upgrade on the power distribution will service the kitchen area with a suitable number of socket outlets.

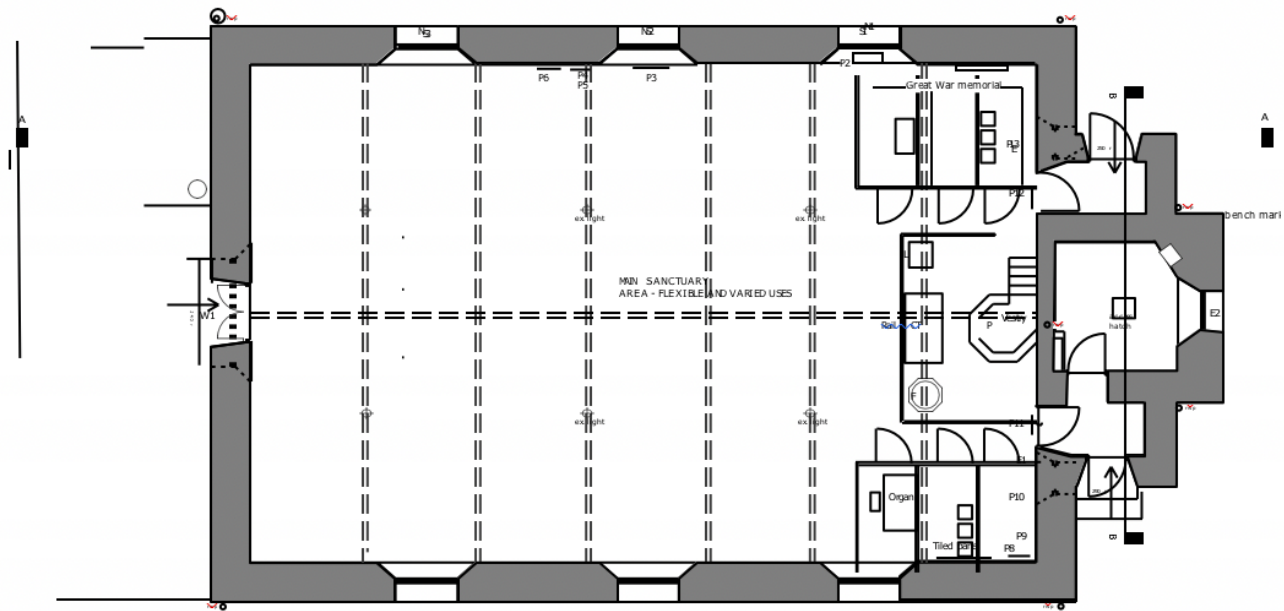
The existing church heating system can be upgraded to cope with the ground floor use of the space and an extended supply to radiators at gallery level. The toilets would be best to have a separate localised heating arrangement, possibly with the use of electric convectors or oil filled radiators on timer and frost stat controls.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AND CONSENTS - *A number of consents and licenses would be required for the conversion proposals to be implemented. This would include Planning and Listed Building Consent and Building Warrant for the extension from the local authority, Dumfries & Galloway Council. We do not anticipate that these consents will be difficult or contentious....The drainage and location and discharge from the septic tank will require D&GC and SEPA approval. These are detailed negotiations and submissions for the next stage of detail design.*

The church is a grade B listed building and as such is deemed to be of national interest. The Historic Scotland Listing Report concentrates on the exterior features including the tower and windows. No particular features of the interior are noted. The Local Authority and Historic Scotland are actively supporting the need for alternative uses for churches and other recent similar projects in the region have been considered sympathetically, providing it is carried out sensitively. The prominent location of the church on the village landscape gives the building significance beyond its architecture and particular care will be needed to ensure a quality and long life for the building.

The 2017 report contains seven pages of plans in support of the presentation of this option. They are reproduced here. It is conceivable, in the face of the 2023 context and the light of revised thinking, that a 'hybrid' option from the 2010 report may prove to be more appropriate.

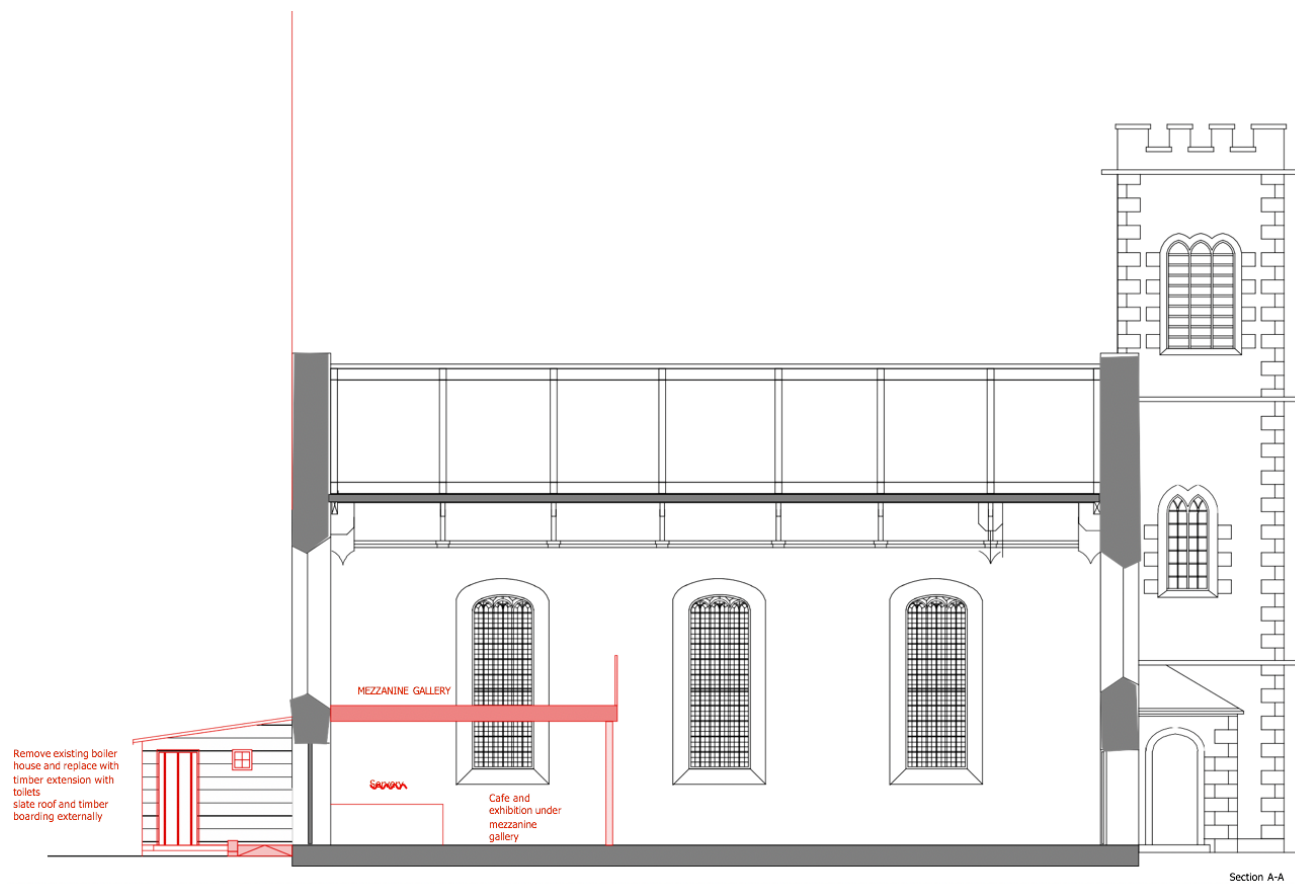
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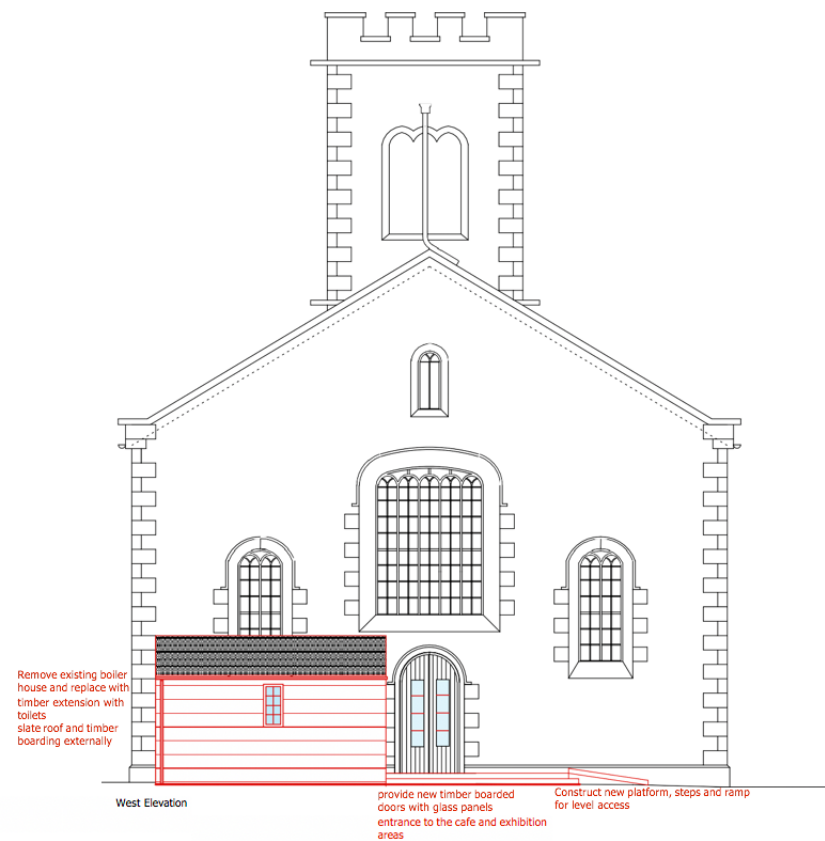
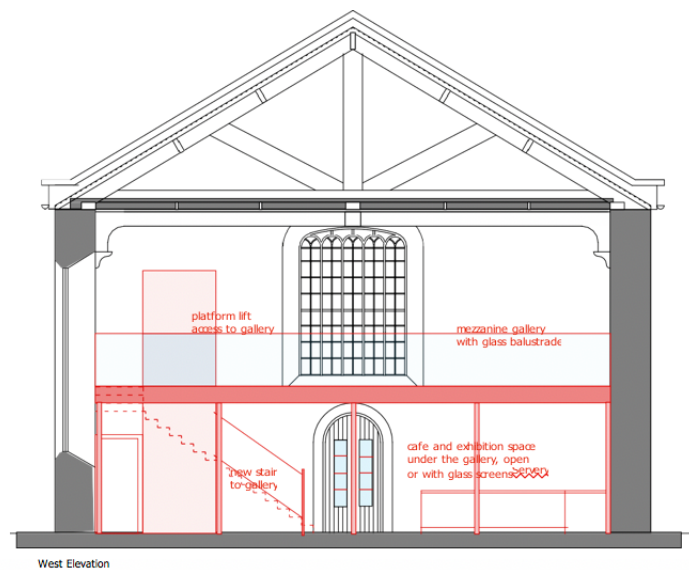
Ground Floor Plan

331			
Parton Kirk			
Proposed Ground Floor Plan			
1:50 @ A1	FRW	Oct 2009	
1:100 @ A3			
DRAWING NO:			
CLIENT: Parton Community Council			
ARPL ARCHITECTS 11 WELLINGTON SQUARE, AYR TEL: 01292 289777			
arpl			

NOTE: DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWING; DIMENSIONS TO BE SITE CHECKED.

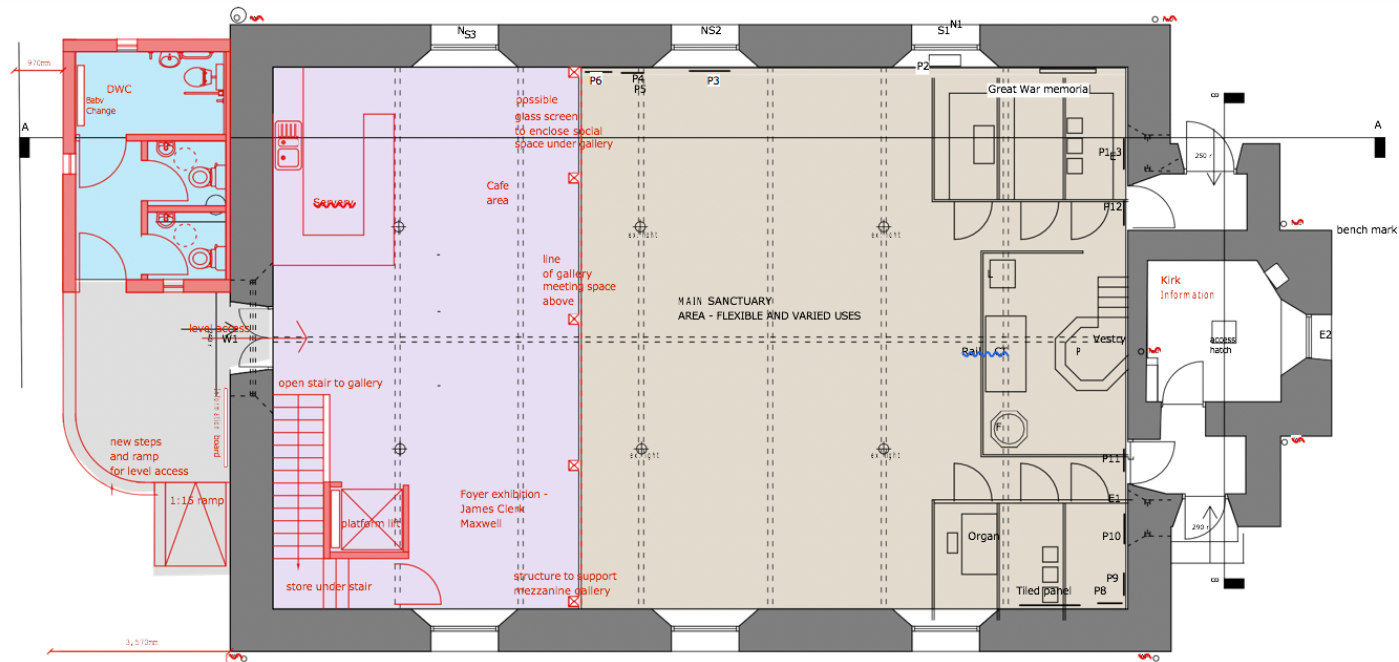


Parton Kirk			
Proposed Section A-A			
SCALE	DRAWN	DATE	
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1:100 @ A3			
DRAWING NO.	1 REV		
Parton Community Council			
ARPL ARCHITECTS 11 WELLINGTON SQUARE, AYR TEL. 01292 387777			
arpl			

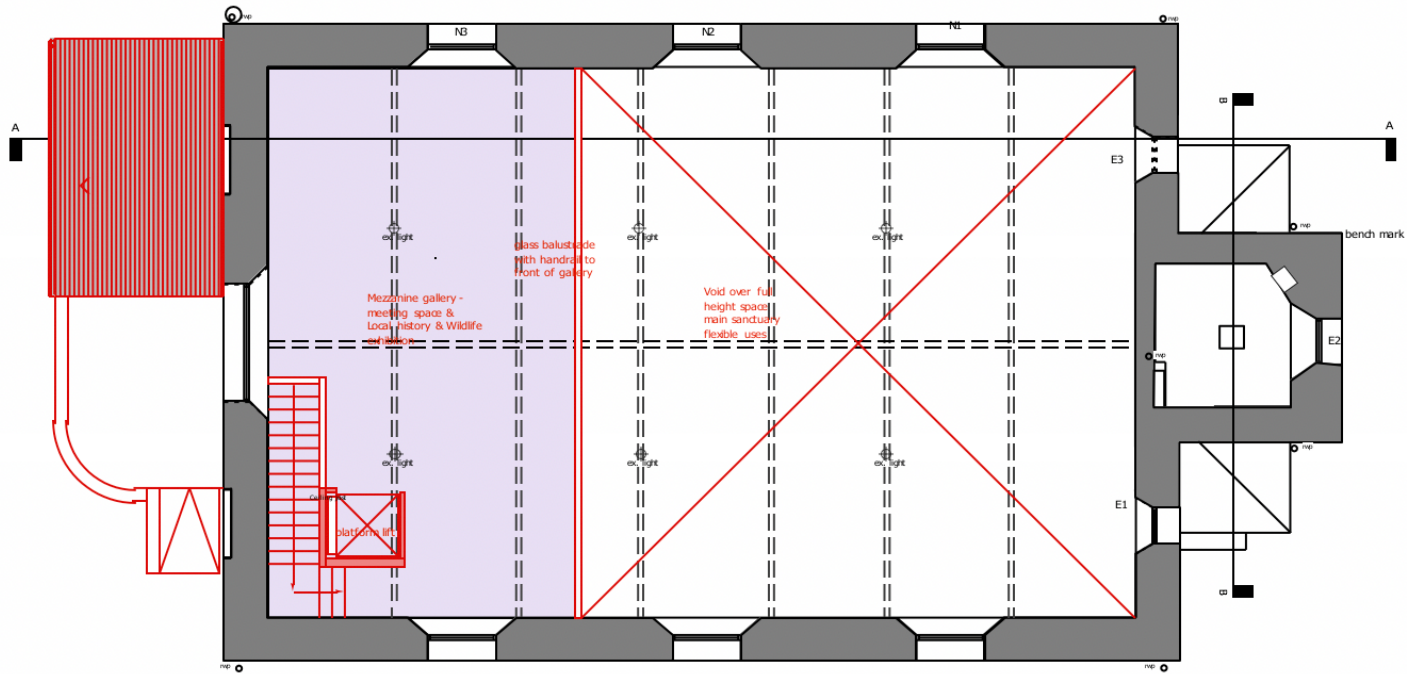


Parton Kirk			
Proposed Cross Section/ West Elevation			
SCALE	DRAWN	DATE	
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DRAWING NO	REV		
6077-03			
Parton Community Council			
ARPL ARCHITECTS 11 WELLINGTON SQUARE, AYR TEL. 01292 289777			



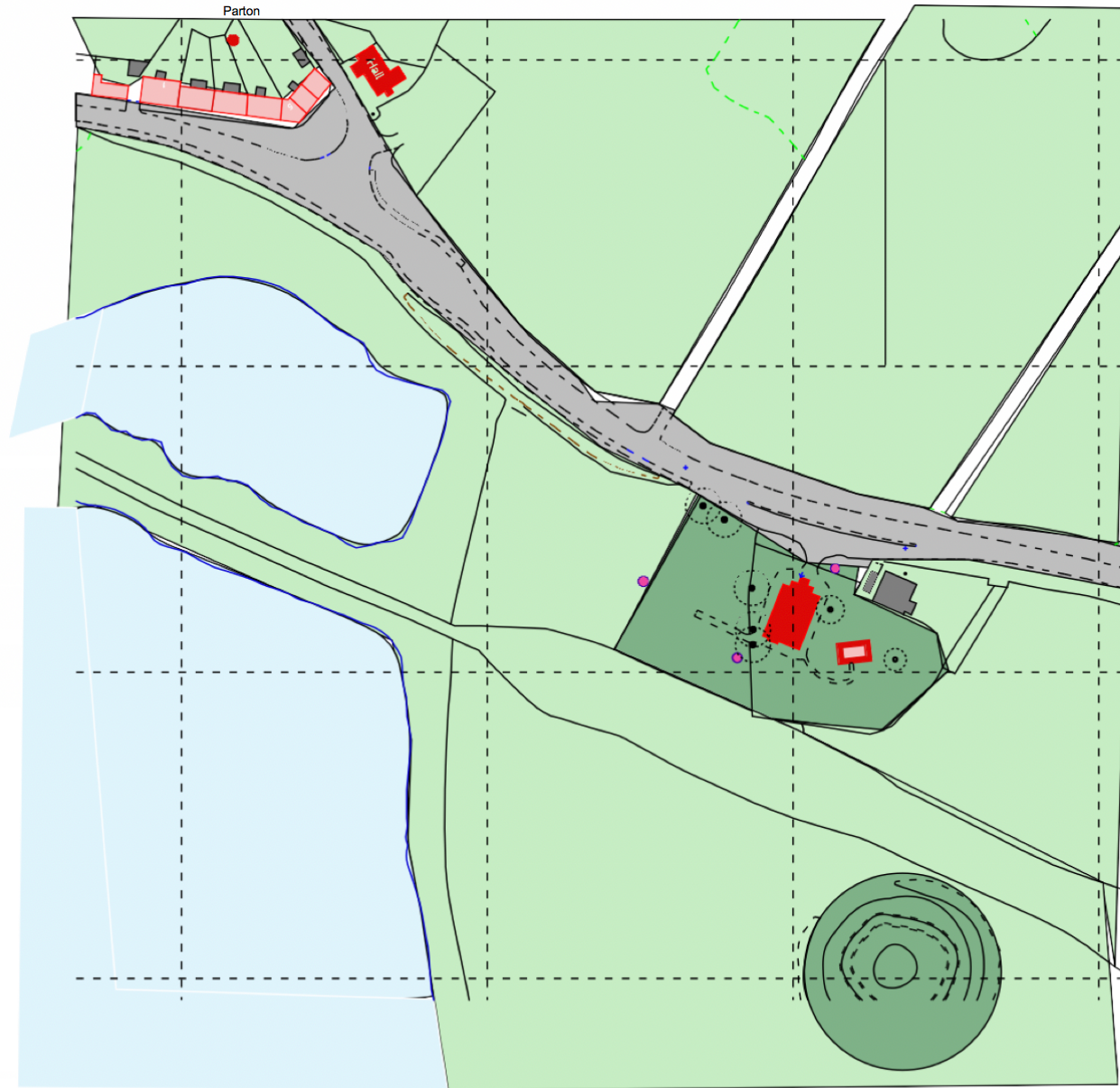


Ground Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

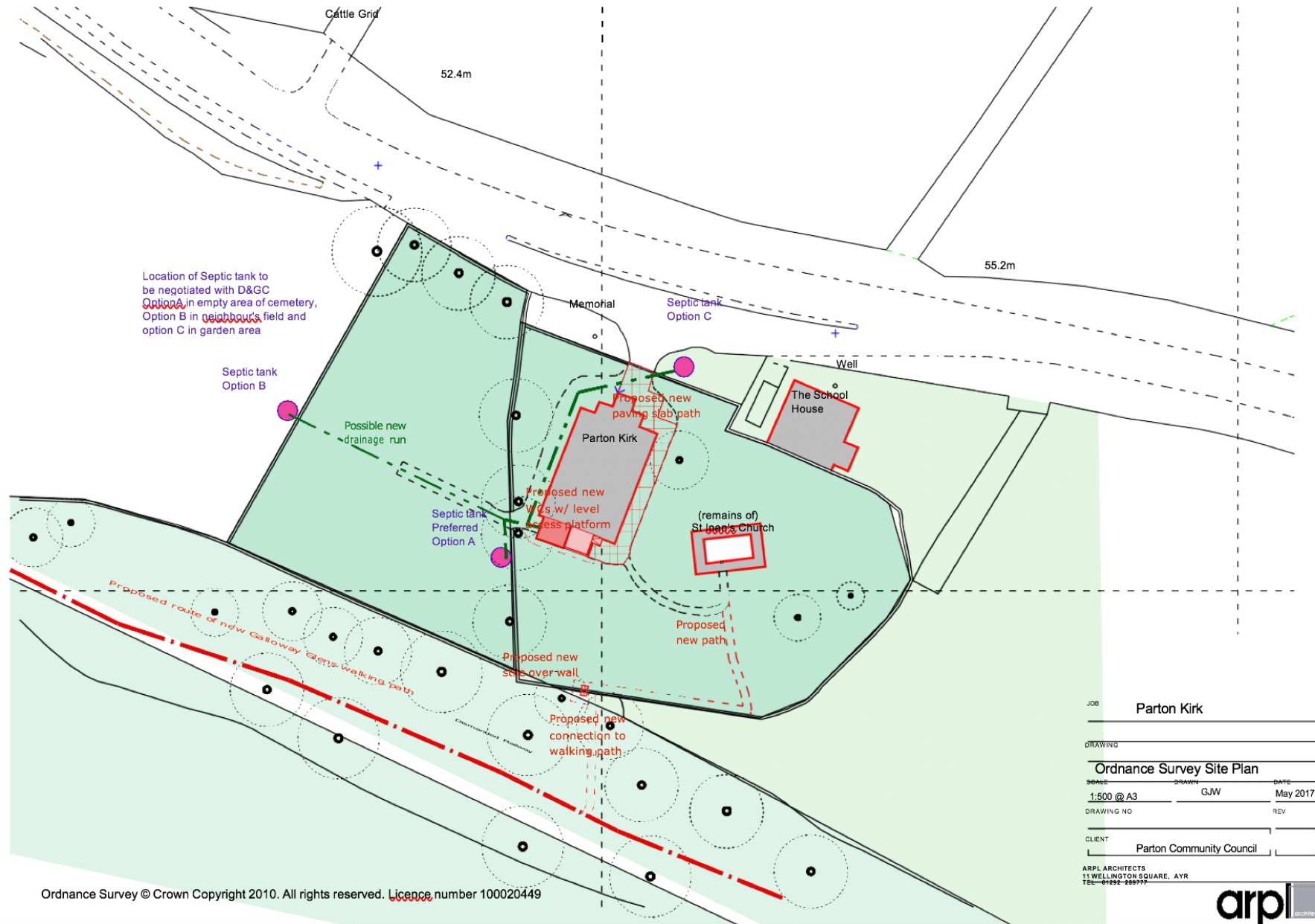
JOB		
Parton Kirk		
DRAWING Proposed Gallery Floor Plan		
SCALE	DRAWN	DATE
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1:100 @ A3		
DRAWING NO	REV	
CLIENT	Parton Community Council	
ARPLARCHITECTS 11 WELLINGTON SQUARE, AYR TEL 01292 289777		
arpl		



JOB	Parton Kirk		
DRAWING			
Ordnance Survey Site Location Plan			
SCALE	DRAWN	DATE	
1:1250 @ A3	IRW	Oct 2009	
DRAWING NO		REV	
CLIENT	Parton Community Council		

ARPL ARCHITECTS
11 WELLINGTON SQUARE, AYR
TEL 01292 289777





UPDATED BUILDING COSTS ~ ARPL's 2017 report provided an elemental cost plan for the repair and conversion of Parton Kirk to according to the plans which are reproduced above. Building costs having risen substantially in the last five years, and it is prudent to have an updated understanding of the 2017 proposal.



ELEMENTAL COST PLAN

Job Title: Parton Kirk
 Job Ref: DQ3617
 Location: Castle Douglas
 Gross Internal Floor Area (m2) : 278

ELEMENTAL COST PLAN		
ELEMENT	Total Cost of Element (£)	Cost/m ² of Gross Floor Area (£)
1. SUBSTRUCTURE		
1.1 Substructure	5,556.50	19.99
1.2 Lowest Floor Slab	5,088.50	18.30
Group Element Total	10,645.00	38.29
2. SUPERSTRUCTURE		
2.1 Frame	5,480.00	19.71
2.2 Upper floors	7,075.00	25.45
2.3 Roof	7,902.50	28.43
2.4 Stairs & walkways	11,100.00	39.93
2.5 External walls	10,650.90	38.31
2.6 Windows, screens & external doors	14,775.00	53.15
2.7 Internal walls & partitions	3,780.00	13.60
2.8 Internal doors and screens	3,120.00	11.22
Group Element Total	63,883.40	229.80
3. INTERNAL FINISHES		
3.1 Wall finishes	3,028.30	10.89
3.2 Floor finishes	10,420.00	37.48
3.3 Ceiling finishes	4,150.00	14.93
3.4 Decoration	9,730.00	35.00
Group Element Total	27,328.30	98.30
4. FITTINGS & FURNISHINGS		
4.1 Fittings & furnishings	8,500.00	30.58
Group Element Total	8,500.00	30.58
5. SERVICES		
5.1 Sanitary appliances	3,750.00	13.49
5.2 Services equipment	0.00	0.00
5.3 Disposal installations	1,000.00	3.60
5.4 Water installations	1,200.00	4.32
5.5 Heat source	0.00	0.00
5.6 Space heating & air treatment	2,000.00	7.19
5.7 Ventilating systems	0.00	0.00
5.8 Electrical installations	19,750.00	71.04

5.9 Gas installations	0.00	0.00
5.10 Lift & conveyor installations	30,000.00	107.91
5.11 Protective installations	3,000.00	10.79
5.12 Communication installations	0.00	0.00
5.13 Special installations	0.00	0.00
5.14 Builders work in connection with services	500.00	1.80
5.15 Builders profit & attendance on services	0.00	0.00
Group Element Total	61,200.00	220.14
6. EXTERNAL WORKS		
6.1 Site work	21,200.00	76.26
6.2 Drainage	30,000.00	107.91
6.3 External services	0.00	0.00
7.1 Other building works	6,000.00	21.58
External Fabric Repairs to the existing building - extent unknown at this stage - pc sum to cover the items listed in the report of May 2017	150,000.00	539.57
Group Element Total	207,200.00	205.75
SUBTOTAL	378,756.70	1,362.43
Preliminaries 18%	68,176.21	245.24
Contingencies 10%	£44,693.29	
TOTAL	491,626.20	1,768.44

Notes:-

1. Costs are exclusive of professional fees, loose furniture/fittings and VAT.
2. Costs assume no abnormal ground conditions existing.
3. Costs are exclusive of any underpinning works to existing stone walls.
4. Cost assume tenders will be sought no later that 3Q23.
5. Note the above costs are for the drainage, site works, new extension and mezzanine and all associated works.
6. A provisional amount of £150k has been incorporated above to include for external fabric repairs identified in the May 2017 report however the extent and quantity of these is unknown for costing at this stage - TBC by the Architect.

McGowan Miller Construction Consultants
20th March 2023

The **full budget total** in 2017 was £384,000. It is over £491,000 in 2023. Not considered in 2017, but worth mentioning now, is the **costing of displays**. An approximate estimate from the Glasgow Science Centre, provided in January 2023, states that they can be between £1,000 / m2 and £3,000 / m2, depending on the level of their involvement in specification, development, interpretation and installation. The **building price** - hard to ascertain without professional valuation - may, from current Scottish sale figures for churches, be in the region of £150,00.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

*How Parton Kirk's building was appraised in recent years remains coherent and useful. Current considerations, however, present some fundamental adjustments to how the situation is understood. The following subjects – **The Present Situation; A New Village Hall?; What is a Visitor Centre?** and **A Different Perspective** – look at these considerations. They are key to a revised understanding of the project...*

THE PRESENT SITUATION ~ In 2010 and 2017, when the ARPL reports were presented, there was still, formally, a congregation in Parton. People could see the Kirk as naturally 'theirs' and the Kirk as fundamentally a Church of Scotland church. That the community council would want to be supportive and join with the congregation in thought about a Parton-based future for the Kirk, was also sound.

In 2023, circumstances are quite different. The situation is no longer one where the congregation is looking for an extended use for its functioning, albeit-in-a-reduced-capacity Kirk. Parton is home to a fine church building, it is home to kirk members, but, formally speaking, it no longer has a church. Anyone wanting to effect major changes to the building will have to purchase it. How the building is purchased is subject to a process which is defined, but subject to periods of limbo and uncertainty. Moreover, it is neither possible nor advisable for the community council to aim to purchase the Kirk. In the case of community interest, the Church of Scotland, as the seller, and funders, who might support the purchase, can only negotiate with a constituted charitable trust.

This pending, but not-yet-clear situation has difficulties. There is an opportunity, but it is difficult to be quite sure when it will arrive. When it does, it is a one-off. If the community cannot respond, this cornerstone of community life will be gone, effectively, forever.

And is it just a case of 'trying to save the Church'? If this is the main motive, it probably won't succeed. There are many communities facing the same problem. Without a viable and sustainable proposal - in addition to that understandable motive - they are usually unsuccessful. Their churches then appear on the open market and disappear from community use. In the case of Parton, 'trying to save the church' is a quieter motive, in the face of the awareness of a genuine creative opportunity. Fundamentally, as community-based change-of-use and its business planning are brought together, the need will be the presentation of *a viable enterprise*.

Reframing what the 'community' is, as well as the enterprise which might include a visitor centre within a wider remit, gets much closer to a feasible formulation.



A NEW VILLAGE HALL? ~ Parton's Village Hall is a small, serviceable, wooden building. It was built in 1908, in step with the nearby cottages and has been appreciated and used well ever since. In the wake of severe flooding in 2016, it required substantial repair. With it being wooden and over 100 years old, people have begun to ask practical questions. What will happen when flooding comes again? Will further repair be feasible? Might it be better to move to Parton Kirk? With Parton being small, is it in a position to have two communal buildings at its heart? Does this mean disposing of this old Village Hall? And, if so, how and when?

As it is at present, affection for the Village Hall is strong. It is part of village life and used as it should be. But its future *is* questionable and uncertain. The Kirk's future is also questionable - and dependent on future developments, which, at this point in time, may be promising but are yet to be worked out.

For the time being, Parton's base will be in the Village Hall. However, **given the uncertainty surrounding its future, the community council should ensure it maintains an interest in the Kirk and in any Trust that is established to further a Community and Science Centre there.**

WHAT IS A VISITOR CENTRE? ~ A working assumption had been that Parton Kirk might be a **Visitor Centre** dedicated to James Clerk Maxwell. This would form a 'unique selling point' in a building that would otherwise maintain a local community use. A 'Visitors' Centre' is a common model. Its core components are simple:

- an entrance and reception,
- displays on 'the attraction's' theme,
- a café,
- a shop.

There are hundreds of such places across the country and the model is applied to large and small attractions. Because it can be a serviceable and useful model, an assumption arises from the outside that one can pretty much 'buy one off the shelf' and viability will be assured. In fact, **each of these components requires continuing work**. If the attraction is in a sort of elite, like Skara Brae or Stonehenge, it may have more traction, but the public can lose interest easily if the displays stay the same, notice if the shop's stock gets lacklustre, and move away if the café fails to maintain standards. These issues may not be obstacles that irredeemably close the place - but they do sometimes - or they can consign it to a struggling half-life that is dispiriting to be responsible for and work in.

The most successful visitors' centres find ways – relevant and enterprising ways - to spread their remit and focus more widely, to the point where their offer is more - a lot more - than what their title might suggest. This adds complexity to the model which, in turn, requires more detailed business planning.

The basic question *in the Parton context* is: would people stop from their journey along the A713 to visit a Clerk Maxwell Science and Innovation Centre, to buy a cup of coffee, pay an entrance charge and look at a small - however well formed - display *in sufficient quantities* to bear the expense of a manager, a café operator and the maintenance of the building? One can look at the density of traffic flow on the road, accept that it might be a seasonal operation only, look at how the large space might be used more intensively (for performance, concert, conferencing) but there is no escaping that success will require energy and sustained commitment, with the likelihood of continuingly tight margins. Moreover, this basic model - of a 'visitor centre', *as such* - is unlikely to be particularly attractive to funders.

The working assumption had been that somehow Parton, in the form of its community council, would have to deliver this project and take responsibility for its viability. This might have been justified in 2017 when there was still a local congregation affiliated with Parton Kirk. Now, with the building decommissioned, the assumption that a new Parton-based charitable trust, with Parton's population of 146, can purchase and take on the building, institute a visitor centre and guide it to viability is not realistic. **Reframing what the 'community' is, and the enterprise, which might include a visitor centre within a wider remit, gets much closer to a feasible formulation.**

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ~ Two further facets transform perspectives and shift away positively from the initial working assumptions. One arises from conversation with the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation about what it *cannot* and *can* do in support of 'a James Clerk Maxwell Science and Innovation Centre' in Parton Kirk. The other arises from an examination of the wider strategic contexts which are in process in the country, region and area. The latter has been addressed in a study concurrently with this one and is referenced in the next Section. The former is addressed here. Both significantly adjust what one means by 'community', while respecting its original Parton aspect. Both open a way to envisaging an enterprise which is dynamic and forward looking, as well as respecting of original aspirations.

The James Clerk Maxwell Foundation was founded in 1977 and, as well as commemorating the man and conserving his scientific inheritance, exists (selecting some core aims) to: *promote, encourage and advance the study of, the research into and the dissemination of knowledge relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in all their aspects; to organize and/or contribute towards the cost of, inter alia: teaching, lectures and symposia, bursaries, scholarships and research grants for, or relating to, and research into any branch or aspect of STEM or the history thereof; to co-operate with, in any manner the trustees may in their discretion consider proper, other societies, individuals, trusts, associations, universities, colleges and other educational establishments and local or national authorities or institutions in any undertaking or project which will advance any of the foregoing objects.* It cannot fund what might happen in Parton Kirk, but (minuted in a meeting with Parton Community Council on 25th July 2022) it *can* help significantly in finding support and in bringing to the Project:

Partnership - bringing expert knowledge on the significance of James Clerk Maxwell's work; Science communication; Contacts with scientific bodies, educational institutions, learned societies; Contacts with possible philanthropists, businesspeople, industrialists and those likely to have an interest in helping to promote Maxwell; Support with contacts with tourist [and cultural-] related organisations....; Promotion of Maxwell's non-scientific input too, e.g. poetry, humour, wit, needlework, association with colour photography; Promotion and publicity, e.g. via Trustees, Fellows, visitors to house, and Foundation website and publications; Help with crowdfunding; Connection-making with other existing local and wider ventures; Bringing the Project to the notice of the wider group of Trustees and Fellows of the Foundation.

The Foundation thus has an international as well as national and local perspectives, and connections with many respected scientific institutions. It is clear from the above, and from further conversation, that it can contribute significantly to what a Science and Innovation Centre could consist of as well as contributing insight into how it could viably sustain itself.



A WIDER COMMUNITY: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The preceding photograph is a view to the northwest from the Kirkland Motte. Parton Kirk is just visible through the trees to the right. In front of them is the embankment for the railway line which used to run from Dumfries to Loch Ken and then on spectacularly over the hills to Stranraer. The transformation of this into a cycling and walking route is under close consideration. To the left, across a field below the Motte, is Loch Ken. A major part of James Clerk Maxwell's work was in his foundational, theoretical investigation of the electromagnetic spectrum. His association with this landscape is a family and lifetime one, and he had a vision of Creation in its depths. The subsequent development of applied, electrical generation technologies, in response to our society's vastly increasing needs, have greatly impacted on this landscape, with Loch Ken's ambitious interlinking scheme of hydro power, and the windmills now proliferating in the hills. This is a view to a much wider 'community', which includes science, natural heritage, as well as the resident, and visiting, public in South West Scotland.

Concurrent with this study has been one produced by One Planet Consulting: **Parton Kirk – Strategic Context Assessment**. This looks at current development strategies at National, Regional and Area levels relevant to a development of Parton Kirk, which is seen to be well positioned to respond to, and with, them. **Parton Kirk – Strategic Context Assessment** should be read in conjunction with this study.

It looks at the location of Parton Kirk and then widens the perspective to examine the National Strategic context with the National Tourism Strategy, Tourism Megatrends and the National Planning Framework that structure it. Within this, the Regional Strategic Context, via the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP2), and the South of Scotland Destination Alliance and Loch Ken Plan initiatives present a more detailed and specific intermediary insight. Within *this*, bringing the focus to the Area, the 2020 Glenkens and District Community Action Plan and the Loch Ken Strategic Visitor Framework are used to return to pointing out the advantages of the location and how all these policies and principles can align. The benefit in widening the project's location to include access to a view point and the shores of Loch Ken are also addressed.

Parton Kirk – Strategic Context Assessment concludes with:

Parton, and Parton Kirk within the village itself, sit in strategically significant position within the wider Loch Ken and Glenkens environs. At the mid-point on the eastern shore, on the disused railway and with access to outstanding views of Loch Ken there are considerable and unique geographical advantages to this location.

With thoughtful development the reimagined use of Parton Kirk and the immediate surroundings could unlock a set of outcomes that benefit the wider region. This could include:

- **A key destination on the active travel artery;** working in conjunction with a gateway towards the south of Loch Ken near the A75, Parton would be an excellent initial destination for a walk or bike ride before continuing over the viaduct and on towards Mossdale.
- **Regional visitor management;** alongside development of the public slipway a development to the south of Parton would alleviate existing and growing visitor pressures at key points on Loch Ken, could fill provision gaps (public toilets) and could act as a base for wider ranger activity.
- **Deepening of the scientific and natural heritage offering of the area.** Extending the James Clerk Maxwell offering to encompass wider scientific features of the area (i.e., hydro-power, wind-power, biodiversity etc.) could see Parton develop as a scientific/nature counterpart to the cultural and arts regional development that the CatStrand already offers. It could also offer a focal point for some partner activity (including Drax and the Biosphere) to tell the wider story of Loch Ken and the Glenkens.
- **Improvements to the regional visitor offering.** In addition to a themed visitor experience (Science/JCM centre) the development could address gaps in provision for visitors including a lack of night-time economy options (restaurant or performance events), a lack of view points on Loch Ken's eastern (and more accessible) shore and a limited food and drink offering outside of New Galloway and Castle Douglas.

The development of Parton Kirk as a single community activity is the subject of another report and may be challenging to achieve. However, there is considerable merit in regional actors considering Parton, and the pending sale of Parton Kirk, as an opportunity to meet their wider strategic ambitions.

PROPOSAL

A DIFFERENT ENTERPRISE ~ The Project has rested on an assumption of the creation of a Visitors' Centre - **the James Clerk Maxwell Science and Innovation Centre** – in Parton Kirk. The building is appropriately located, well positioned, about the right size, but still 'the model' of a Visitors' Centre can be a bit passive, indeed *unenterprising*.

What would a 'Science and Innovation Centre' *be, contain*, as well as look like? This was always going to have to be worked out - and with the right expertise. A conversation with a member of the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation around the difficulties of the basic model, produced an idea which changes the view. The suggestion was that the Centre could be based on a buy-in by science departments – nationally, even internationally – in a sort of 'academic time-share'. Those that were part of the scheme would use the Centre according to their allotted time for conferencing, project development, formulation time, as well as be participative in wider education and as a visitor attraction. In return, this would be one way for the Centre to achieve an enterprising and steadier income foundation. The suggestion also, along the way, affirms science as being current, active, a *doing*, rather than just consigning it to part of the heritage industry.

This is a first step in looking at the situation differently. The proposal needs to be worked on. Questions arise around nature, content and accommodation which should transform the idea further.

Whatever is presented in Parton Kirk would need to answer the needs of its users. Content and business planning will have to be worked out in much more detail than we have now. There are, however, some helpful, parallel precedents. This is the Hive, the recently built community centre for Glentrool, Dumfries and Galloway (<https://www.glentroolhive.co.uk/>). The village is slightly smaller than Parton. The building primarily consists of a flexible hall and kitchen. There is also some office space and showering facilities for walkers and cyclists. Less visible, but part of the overall scheme and of crucial importance in its business planning, is holiday accommodation at the back of the building and, across the road, three houses which are let out to local residents at



affordable rents. The creation of this income stream, which answers serious local and community need, was encouraged by South of Scotland Enterprise. It enables the Hive to operate as a steadier state operation. Hall hire and other activities are offered but the Hive's viability does not solely depend on them.

The model of rented artist studios (<https://www.fairislestudio.com/fair-isle>) in creatively conducive places is one that might have a parallel for the sciences. The fundamental direction needs, however, to be one of **answering needs through consultation with scientists and science departments and in partnership with the network of science-based organisations in Dumfries and Galloway.**

Provision of office space for the ranger team active on Loch Ken is appropriate in terms of practicality, location and theme.

As the perspective in the previous section shows, there is advantage in seeing this project as wider than just Parton Kirk, and including routes to the shore of Loch Ken and a view point that is integrated with other routes that are planned. The project becomes larger with these steps, but they can also be seen as part of a longer term, phased and creative development.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ~ These are the main, and often interlinking steps, which will bring this project to fruition:

Forming the Trust: This is the viable community-based route to purchasing the building. The Trust's purpose aims and objectives should be more than building-purchase and include an understanding all the other steps (below), plus a foundation in the project's 'vision'. Help with Trust formation can be obtained through engaging with the Scottish Land Fund process (stage 1) and from the Development Trust Association of Scotland (<https://dtascot.org.uk/>). The Trust should have Parton representation but should draw involvement from a much wider field, including science and environmental representation from the area, regional and national contexts.

James Clerk Maxwell Foundation: The JCMF is already aware of this project as a potential undertaking and is supportive of it. As soon as it begins to build, the Project should be linked with the JCMF and members for the Trust sought. The Foundation has networks and connections which are directly appropriate to the Project and its advice and connections will be valuable and insightful.

Business Planning - establishing the business model and the nature of the enterprise: South of Scotland Enterprise should be approached (<https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/>) as should Community Enterprise (<https://communityenterprise.co.uk/>) at an early opportunity. They can help greatly in this core process and help in identifying supportive structures and appropriate funding.

Purchasing the Building: When Parton Kirk becomes recommended for sale, and the Church of Scotland has included the Trust's interest in the building in its considerations, the probable route for purchase will be through the Scottish Land Fund (stage 2), but by this time the Trust should have made contact not just with SLF, but with SOSE and Community Enterprise and other possibilities may become apparent.

The Heritage Trust Network: (<https://www.heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk/>) is helpful for bodies wanting to take on and understand the implications of a historic building. Grand Bequest is a new organisation (www.grandbequest.co.uk) which may be able to help get support.

A note on the Scottish Land Fund: The Fund can support acquisition of many types of land, land assets and buildings ranging from large estates and forestry to community shops and hubs where a route to ownership can be identified. They can fund capital and some revenue costs associated with the acquisition of assets.

Consulting on and creating the contents of the Science Centre: What will be *in* the Science and Innovation Centre? How to build Institutional buy-in and Institutional use and public use? How to formulate the displays? All these should involve JCMF and other science bodies. Displays can be labour intensive and require maintenance and care should be exercised in their selection and choice.

Accommodation: Reference to the Glentrool Hive indicates a model that includes various kinds of accommodation (office, services and residential) within the building. Options for it elsewhere and nearby, may be advisable. This will be a subject in the business planning process. To what extent is hard to ascertain at this point, but the subject's presence in the model both aids project sustainability and supports community wellbeing.

Briefing the Architect: Because a somewhat different business model has been suggested, it is possible that some adjustment to the building specification will be necessary, possibly in line with the hybrid options suggested in the 2010 report.

The Project's integration within its landscape: 'As the perspective in the previous section shows, there is advantage in seeing this project as wider than just Parton Kirk, and including routes to the shore of Loch Ken and a view point that is integrated with other routes that are planned. The project becomes larger with these steps, but they can also be seen as part of a longer term, phased and creative development'.

Establishing and maintaining Community Use: As has been pointed out there are differing but linking communities involved. As far as Parton is concerned, sensitivity should be exercised and an openness to community use should it be maintained.

Partnership working: Excellent opportunities can be provided by partnership working between organisations with similar visions and values, including joint projects, the provision of match funding, opportunities for underwriting projects in periods of uncertainty and the sharing of resources. Operational and reputational risks can be present, but good relationships can lead to projects of real substance.

Fund raising: Purchase, Development, Capital and Project Costs are all in different categories.

Project management Funding should be sought for a development officer who would be able to: develop the finer detail of the project (including partnership arrangements where appropriate); look to secure capital funding; continue to work up the business model for the viable operation of the Centre; begin promotion of the offerings that will ultimately be available; and begin developing an education programme.

Potential funding streams for the development phase: These are a few of the possibilities:

The National Lottery Community Fund - Community Led: Through Community Led funding the National Lottery Community Fund aim to support communities to improve the places in which they live and the wellbeing of those most in need.

They fund organisations to deliver work that achieves the following outcomes:

- Everyone in the community has the opportunity to influence and get involved in community-led activity.
- People in the community are better connected and work together to improve their wellbeing.

Community Benefit Funds: Community benefit funds distribute the money made available to communities as a result of wind farms in the locality.

National Lottery Open Fund for Organisations: This has recently been announced (by Creative Scotland). As well as funding organisations to deliver a wide range of creative activity, the fund can also support:

Organisations to undertake business and organisational development that will:

- enhance their business sustainability through the development of new or more diverse income streams *or*
- consider broader organisational development costs.

Potential Funding for the capital phase: Although the funding climate is changeable – having seen significant changes to the availability of capital funding in the few years since Covid – it is prudent to outline some of the current capital funding streams (other than the Scottish Land Fund) that may provide the support needed to take this project from vision to reality.

Community Wellbeing Facilities Fund: The funding is part of the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP), an overall Scotland wide investment of £325m, that supports community led regeneration and town centre revitalisation. The programme also seeks to build on the work of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and Town Centre Action Plan.

The Community Ownership Fund – UK wide, match funding: Dependent on the option chosen, the UK-wide Community Ownership can support the ownership of the freehold or a long-term leasehold of at least 25 years minimum (with no break clauses). The fund can support purchase and/or renovation costs. The fund requires match funding up to 50% and can include revenue costs up to a maximum of 20% of the project costs.

The National Lottery Community Fund - Community Led: Through Community Led funding the National Lottery Community Fund aims to support communities to improve the places in which they live and the wellbeing of those most in need, funding organisations to deliver work that achieves the following outcomes:

- Everyone in the community has the opportunity to influence and get involved in community-led activity.
- People in the community are better connected and work together to improve their wellbeing.

£50,000 of minor capital costs can be built into an application and so could be considered as part of a larger funding strategy.

Trusts and Foundations

The following are known to support capital projects and so, as part of a larger application, could help to achieve the overall target:

- Tudor Trust
- Clothworkers Foundation
- Wolfson Foundation
- Percy Bilton
- Robert Barr Charitable Trust
- AMW Charitable Trust
- Darroch Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- Stafford Trust
- The Barrack Charitable Trust
- The Meikle Foundation
- The Swire Charitable Trust
- Rank Foundation
- The Glasgow Galloway Association

CONCLUSIONS ~ This project is distinctive - and feasible. It will require development, partnership and work. Requiring several stages, the outcome cannot be assured, but with vision and leadership the goal can be achieved. It can provide a truly significant contribution to science education, green tourism, heritage understanding and environmental and community support.

The business model which this Project follows must maintain a wide perspective. It must and can express a creative, flexible and enterprising approach. This will be essential to how the Project operates effectively and links viably with its communities.

Parton Kirk's building *is* important for its architectural quality, location and position; its history; its role in gathering its community together and its openness to adaptation, while maintaining its original qualities. *Its* creative adaptation is also possible and feasible.

Its association with James Clerk Maxwell is vital - for its connection to the man and his work, but, quite as much, for how it can partner with present science practice and how science is applied in the landscape - now.



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