Peebles Baptist Church
Kings Meadows
Planning Statement

Proposed development of new church and community facility on vacant site adjoining Victoria Park, Kings Meadows.

Cleland Avenue
Peebles
EH45 9AT

Ref: 1208
Issue A. 31.05.18

Boydell Architecture
for town & country

p. 113 Channel Street, Galashiels TD1 1BN
t. 01896 480480
e. info@boydellarchitecture.com
w. boydellarchitecture.com
Contents

1. Introduction
   1.1 Background
   1.2 Site Details
   1.3 History
   1.4 Recent Developments

2. Proposal
   2.1 Client Brief
   2.2 Proposed Development
   2.3 Services

3. Planning
   3.1 Key Planning Issues
      3.1.1 Contamination
      3.1.2 Flooding
      3.1.3 Heritage
      3.1.4 Traffic
      3.1.5 Trees
      3.1.6 Geotechnical & Structural
      3.1.7 Community Consultation
   3.2 Planning Policy
      3.2.1 Local Development Plan
      3.2.2 Peebles Settlement Profile
      3.2.3 Response to Planning Policies

4. Design Statement
   4.1 User Requirements
   4.2 Design Strategy
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The site has been owned by the Peebles Baptist Church for almost 30 years, and whilst it was acquired with the intention of building a new church, for which planning approval was received at the time (see below), this never happened and the site remains undeveloped.

In recent years, the church leadership decided to review the feasibility of developing the site, to consider whether it would be practical for them to establish a presence on the site, and how quickly that could be achieved. Boydell Architecture was commissioned in July 2017 to undertake a feasibility study on that basis, and this planning application is the end result of that process.

The proposal is to build a new church and community facility, comprising a building with a main floor area of approximately 560sqm with a further 20sqm of ancillary space, along with car parking, landscaping and other site works.

1.2 Site Details

The site adjoins the eastern edge of Victoria Park in Peebles, in the part of the town commonly referred to as Kings Meadows, or more broadly as the “South Side” given its location on the southern bank of the River Tweed.

The site is square-ish in plan with sides 51-56m in length, and is just over 0.3h in area. It is generally flat with a gentle slope to the north, but does include a steep fall from the road along its southern boundary where there is an overall change in height of almost 2m.

Apart from some raised garden beds and an associated shelter which were recently built in the north east corner, the site is undeveloped and comprises un-mown grass and a few trees. The boundary with the park is not marked and so visually it may be perceived as an extension of the park.

The street address is Cleland Avenue, Peebles EH45 9AT, although this is not currently a registered postal address. There is currently no formed kerb crossing for vehicle access to the site.

Access is from Cleland Avenue via Victoria Park Drive, leading in turn from either Glensax Road or Glen Road. Pedestrian and cycle access is also possible along various routes through Victoria Park. This includes the track along the side of the adjacent Day
Care Centre. Initial discussions have been held with the Council about the possibility of upgrading this track to allow vehicle access direct from Kingsmeadows Road.

1.3 History

Historically, the site was part of a large area of undeveloped land on the flood plain along the south side of the river. It may have been part of the Kingsmeadows Estate, the house of which still stands just a little further to the east.

In the first OS map series from the 1850’s the site is shown as wooded, in contrast to the bulk of the surrounding land which is cleared. This is presumably because it was the most low-lying land in that area, which would have made it damp and boggy. Note the track off Kingsmeadows Road is already in place at this time.

By the next OS map series of the 1890’s it is shown as a curling pond, an obvious outcome of its low-lying nature. This remains unchanged on the 1940’s OS map series. It is understood the site was referred to as the Moss Hole, although the town’s main curling pond was St Ninian’s Haugh to the west (see 1856 map).

Victoria Park is first shown on the 1890’s OS map series. We cannot find details of when it was formally established, but it does appear to build on earlier landscaping. There is reference to a “Ladies Walk” of Lime trees running from Kingsmeadows House west along the riverside and this is shown on the 1850’s OS map, albeit that is outside the actual park. There is a suggestion this path returned east towards the curling pond, but this is not supported by the historic maps which rather indicate a drainage channel in that area. However, the woodland planting generally was incorporated into the park, and some of the mature trees which remain on the site may be remnants of this. The boundary line between the site and the Park reflects the historic lot boundary as shown on the OS maps.

Extract from Ordnance Survey Map 1898
http://maps.nls.uk/view/82897560

Extract from Ordnance Survey Map 1898
http://maps.nls.uk/view/74954954

Extract from Ordnance Survey Map 1949
http://maps.nls.uk/view/75652508

At some time in the 1950’s or 60’s the Moss Hole site became used as a refuse tip. The tip was later closed, probably in the early 1980’s, and the site was grassed over. This has left the site with potential geotechnical and contamination issues (see attachments).
1.4 Recent Developments

In about 1988 discussions began between the Peebles Baptist Church and the Tweeddale District Council (later to become part of the Borders Regional Council, now Scottish Borders Council) about the church acquiring the site, with the final disposition dated 28 March 1991. As part of that process the Church obtained planning approval for “erection of church building” on the land, ref. T-171/89 issued on 9 August 1989 (now listed with Scottish Borders Council as 92/01339/REM) but since lapsed. The approval was for a building and car parking etc. of a scale similar to that now proposed.

No building has been constructed on the site to date, although there have been various fund raising campaigns for it over the years. However, there have also been discussions about selling the site back to the Council (as had been allowed for in the original sale agreement), or developing it for housing including past negotiations with Eildon Housing Association.

The church site covers only part of the old Moss Hole, with the section to the north being the Victoria Park Care Centre owned by the Council, and that to the east recently developed for housing by the Eildon Housing Association (ref. 10/01190/FUL).

In 2016 the Council proposed construction of a 3G football pitch in Victoria Park immediately adjacent the site, but this application was withdrawn after substantial community opposition (ref. 15/01460/FUL). More recently, the Council has proposed development of a skate park or other similar facilities in that same area, and the church has been involved in discussions about how these different projects could support each other.

Today, the site is essentially undeveloped and without any formal use, with the exception of the raised garden beds and shed in the north east corner which have been made by the church for community use. The bulk of the site is un-mown grass with a few mature trees.
2. Proposal

2.1 Client Brief

The proposal is to develop a building or building complex which can provide the spaces necessary for the full range of activities undertaken by the church, and be made available to other local and community organisations on a casual or permanent basis. There is strong emphasis on this being a community facility and not just a “church”.

It is anticipated the site will be developed in phases as funding and users are identified, but there is a desire to establish a site presence as soon as possible.

The church’s NOW group has prepared an inventory of expected activities as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No. people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Church Worship</td>
<td>100-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Groups (3)</td>
<td>10 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>up to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mens Group (Repair Café)</td>
<td>10 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky’s Tearoom</td>
<td>24 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacons Meetings</td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Meetings</td>
<td>15 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAM</td>
<td>10 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Meetings</td>
<td>40 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ’s</td>
<td>approx 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/Fellowship meals</td>
<td>approx 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukele Group</td>
<td>up to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening Group</td>
<td>up to 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Course</td>
<td>approx 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Mornings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate Recovery</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage outreach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>up to 200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>up to 200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup of tea after funeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Drop in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Classes</td>
<td>up to 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community / Life Courses</td>
<td>up to 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodbank Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>approx 30 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery provision</td>
<td>approx 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling / prayer space</td>
<td>2 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is suggested that the following spaces could be used, either separately or in combination, to meet the inventory requirements.

- Small meeting rooms: 10-15 people
- Large meeting rooms: 20-30 people
- Main hall: 150-200+ people
- Kitchen
- Toilets
- Offices
- Interview / counselling room
- Storage
- Foyer / circulation space

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises a single building with a main floor area of about 560sqm. This is raised above ground level to provide car parking in the undercroft, with an additional 20sqm of enclosed space.

The layout as proposed comprises:

Main Floor Level:
- Main Hall: approx. 160sqm with loose seating for up to 160 people and flexible staging
- Foyer: approx. 80sqm with folding wall to the main hall to allow for overflow seating of up to 90 people
- Meeting Rooms: 3 no. rooms each approx. 40sqm with folding walls to allow them to be opened into a single space
- Kitchen: approx 20sqm with servery counters to foyer and meeting room 1, plus secondary tea / coffee station
- Offices: approx 20sqm in total with separate reception, vestry and counselling rooms
- Toilets: approx 40sqm in total including 10 no. individual toilet cubicles as well as a disabled toilet, changing places toilet, and parents / baby-changing room.
- Storage: approx. 20sqm primarily in one room
- Plant: approx. 20sqm including cleaners facilities
- Airlocks: 2 no. rooms to main northern and southern entrances approx. 12sqm each
Undercroft:
- Car parking: 23 no. spaces including 3 no. designated disabled spaces and 1 no. electric charging point (potential to extend to other bays)
- Egress stair: also provides secondary entrance to main level
- Toilet: for use by people using the community garden on the site
- Store: for garden equipment and waste/recycling bins
- Enclosure: for cycle racks and rain water tanks

External:
- Drop-off bay created off Cleland Avenue with access bridge to southern entrance
- Access stairs and tiered seats to northern entrance
- Path suitable for disabled access from undercroft to main floor level, at grade
- New vehicle access drive from Cleland Avenue via existing turning bay
- Overflow car parking for 10 no. cars on existing grassed area
- Removal of 1 no. existing tree and planting of 3 no. new trees
- SUDS measures TBC

The building is conceived as a “big shed”, in part to allow for flexibility in the internal layout. This flexibility is also allowed for by the use of large folding walls to the main hall and meeting rooms. (Further details on the design strategy are provided later in this report.)

It is proposed that the building will be developed in three phases as indicated on the drawings, comprising:

- Phase 1.
  Central core of approx. 240sqm plus the entrance airlocks/bridge/stairs, with basic internal fitout only, and installation of the full solar PV array.
- Phase 2.
  Western end of approx. 160sqm comprising the main hall with folding wall to foyer created within the central core, and additional fitout to central core.

- Phase 3.
  Eastern end of approx. 160sqm with additional meeting rooms, toilets, and storage.

It is anticipated that construction of Phase 1 will commence as soon as possible after planning approval is received, with the aim of occupation during Spring 2019. The construction of Phases 2 and 3 will be dependent on how use and funding evolve during operation, but with the anticipation that full construction will be completed within 5-10 years.

Note that the final phasing will be confirmed during the building warrant process. Depending on the cost/benefit assessment and available funding, the structural frame and external cladding may be completed in full at the outset, with only the internal fitout to follow in phases. It is acknowledged that aspects of the development which are dependent on floor area and/or occupancy numbers e.g. car parking and toilets, will have to be complied with at each phase. It is also acknowledged that soft landscaping of the site as a whole will be maintained during all phases.

2.3 Services

There are currently no services connected to the site, although all are readily available given its location within the established town settlement.

- Electricity: proposed that a 3-phase electrical connection is installed, for which mains are available nearby and estimates have been obtained from SPEN.
- Water & Sewer: the sewer main runs through the site and water mains are available in Cleland Avenue adjacent the site, with the possibility of connections confirmed by Scottish Water.
- Telephone/Data: telephone mains are available in the immediate area from both BT and Vodafone.
- Gas: whilst gas mains are available in the area, the cost estimate received from SGN for a connection was significant and
hence the decision has been made NOT to install a gas connection.

Detailed consideration has also been given to the use of renewable energy or other on-site alternatives to supplement mains connections. The following systems are proposed:

- Electricity: 10kW solar PV array approx. 68sqm with battery backup
- Heating: air-source or ground-source heat pumps for space and water heating
- Water: rainwater storage tanks of approx. 6000l in total for use in gardens and toilets

3. Planning

3.1 Key Planning Issues

As part of the Feasibility Study, it was intended to lodge a formal Pre-application Submission with Scottish Borders Council, but at that time the Council had a moratorium on Pre-apps and hence this was not possible.

However, we were able to have informal discussions with the relevant Council Planning Officer, Chris Miller (10.07.17), with the Flood Management Officer, Ian Chalmers (15.03.18), and with the Landscape Architect, Siobhan McDermott (20.07.17). We were also provided with details of some recent communications between the Church and the Council about possible development of the site (27.11.15), and reviewed the 1989 planning approval for the site as well as the 2010 planning approval for the adjacent Eildon Housing development. Based on this, we identified the following as key planning issues relevant to this application.

1. Contamination
2. Flooding
3. Heritage
4. Traffic
5. Trees
6. Geotechnical & Structural
7. Community Consultation

3.1.1 Contamination

Given past use of the site for a refuse tip, it is clear that contamination will be relevant to any planning application. Overlays of historic maps indicate the approximate extent of the old curling pond, and hence of the refuse tip, over the site.

The Eildon Housing development was subject to a contamination report prepared by Green Cat Geotechnical, and we engaged the same consultants to prepare Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Reports for this site (see separate reports).
These reports confirmed that whilst some contamination is present on the site it should not prove an obstacle to the development as proposed.

http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=18&lat=55.6473&lon=-3.1842&layers=168&b=4

3.1.2 Flooding

Given the low-lying nature of the site flooding will obviously have to be considered, and the SEPA flood maps indicate it is within a Potentially Vulnerable Area. Note: the risk is due to surface water flooding not river flooding.

http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for the adjacent Eildon development was prepared by JBA Consultants, and the same consultants were engaged to provide an FRA for this site (see separate report).

The Eildon Housing FRA stated that the "surface runoff could result in the ponding of water up to a level of 158.79m AOD" and went on to note that the proposed floor level of the houses at 160.0m AOD would be adequate. Initial discussions with JBA during the Feasibility Study indicated we could expect similar results given the proximity of the two sites.

However, once the modelling had been completed we were informed that a floor level of 160.7-161.0m AOD would be required. This was reviewed in detail with both JBA and Council’s flood management officer with a minimum level of at least 160.6m AOD identified. We understand the significant variation is due to improved computer modelling and more extensive data sets which have been introduced since the Eildon Housing development was approved.

The higher level had very significant implications for the proposed development. The area of the site suitable for development is about 159.0m AOD, and hence we had been anticipating the finished floor level being no more than a metre above ground level, which could be achieved either by creating a building platform with cut and fill or by raising the building on low piers. However, we now had to design for a floor level at least 1.6-2.0m high, potentially more depending on the nature of the floor construction and/or the final assessment of the FRA which effectively ruled out both of those options.

This prompted the decision to raise the floor level further, to about 2.4m high in total or 161.4m AOD, in order to allow sufficient clearance for car parking to be provided underneath the main building. Thus, the finished floor level would be well clear of the maximum calculated flood level.

The FRA confirmed that pedestrian access via Cleland Avenue would not be compromised by flooding. It also suggested some mitigation measures which could be considered on the site.

3.1.3 Heritage

The site adjoins but is outwith the Peebles Conservation Area. It does not contain any listed Heritage Items nor is it in close proximity to any. There is no development history which indicates there may be
structures or archaeology of heritage significance present on the site.

Hence, heritage impact is limited to potential impacts on the significance of the Conservation Area. Comments on this are provided later in the report.

[Image: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1090/peebles_conservation_area]

### 3.1.4 Traffic

Traffic and access to the site is important because of the proposed community use and its potential to attract large numbers of people for individual events. In the discussion with Council’s planning officer it was noted that the original approval in 1989 endorsed Cleland Avenue as the access route, though acknowledging that traffic management has changed significantly in the years since then and any planning application will be assessed against current policy.

In order to encourage access by non-vehicle means as part of a Sustainable Transport Strategy for the site, the design approach has been to comprehensively integrate the site with the established pedestrian and cycle path network and/or encourage use of public transport.

The northern access stairs will provide an obvious entrance point to the building when viewed from the park, to encourage awareness of how readily the site can be accessed by walking through the park rather than driving.

The site is located right at the centre of Peebles’ South Side. All areas of existing or proposed residential development in the South Side are within an 800-1200m radius of the site, which represents a walking time of 10-15 minutes. Walking and cycling routes include some designated paths in close proximity to the site, including the Cross Borders Drove Road, the John Buchan Way, the various paths through Victoria Park (which converge near the site), and the Priorsford pedestrian bridge to the town centre on the north side of the river.

The South Side is well served with public bus routes, with bus stops on both Kingsmeadows and Glen Road within a few hundred metres of the site.

[Image: https://www.bordersbuses.co.uk/images/Borders-Area-Map.pdf]

Upgrading the track off Kingsmeadows Road for vehicle access has been suggested as a vehicle alternative, and preliminary discussions have been held with the Council about this. However, for the sake of this application it is assumed vehicle access will continue to be via Cleland Avenue.
3.1.5 Trees

Trees can be formally protected under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or through their location within a Conservation Area, neither of which applies to this site. However, there are several mature trees on the site and the impact of the development on them has been considered.

A Tree Survey for the site has been prepared by an appropriately qualified specialist, Scottish Woodlands (see separate report).

The layout proposed by this study would require the removal of 1 no. existing tree, which will be compensated for by planting of 3 no. new trees of a similar type. The other 10 no. existing trees will be retained and protected during the works, and the new building is located far enough away from them not to have any significant long term impact on their viability.

3.1.6 Geotechnical & Structural

At the time the church purchased the site a geotechnical report was prepared by Frank Saynor & Associates (Aug.1989). This included site investigations to determine the location and nature of the fill material, and concluded with recommendations for the structural design of a new building. Neither of these would preclude development, but suggest locating the building wholly outwith the fill curtilage if possible.

We have reviewed these recommendations with a structural engineering consultant, Idom Merebrook, which suggests they are essentially still valid. The proposed building is located generally outwith the area of the pond/refuse pit. Ground conditions are included in the Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Report (see above).

3.1.7 Community Consultation

The church has been actively engaging with the local community about potential use of the site for some time. This includes a survey in March 2016 (on-line, door-to-door, and high street questionnaire), and more recently an open day on the site (27.05.18) when plans of the proposed building were on show for comment. In general, there would appear to be broad community support for development of the site if it was to provide facilities for public use which are currently in short supply on the South Side.

The church has also advised neighbours about the proposed development, and made them aware of recent drilling works on the site associated with the Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Report.

The church has consulted with/is in active dialogue with, the following:

- Peebles High School
- Priorsford and Kingsland Primary Schools
- Schools Out after-school club
- Tweeddale Access Panel
- Skate Park Project
- Peebles Community Council
3.2 Planning Policy

3.2.1 Local Development Plan
The Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016 is the primary planning policy for new development in the area. The following points from the Plan are relevant to note.

PMD1 Sustainability
The proposed development is consistent with the sustainability principles identified in the policy, and particularly with regard to:

a) the long term sustainable use and management of land
d) the protection of built and cultural resources
e) the efficient use of energy and resources, particularly non-renewable resources
f) the minimisation of waste, including waste water and encouragement to its sustainable management
g) the encouragement of walking, cycling, and public transport in preference to the private car
j) the support of community services and facilities
l) the involvement of the local community in the design, management and improvement of their environment

Sustainability:
a) in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply, appropriate measures have been taken to maximise the efficient use of energy and resources, including the use of renewable energy.
c) it provides for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
d) it encourages minimal water usage
e) it provides for appropriate internal and external provision for waste storage, with separate provision for waste and recycling, and separate provision for composting facilities
f) it incorporates appropriate hard and soft landscaping works, including structural or screen planning where necessary, to help integrate with its surroundings and the wider environment and to meet open space requirements
g) it considers the long term adaptability of buildings and spaces

Place Making & Design:
h) it creates developments with a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of the context, designed in sympathy with local architectural styles, but which need not exclude appropriate contemporary and/or innovative design
i) it is of a scale, massing, height and density appropriate to its surroundings
j) it is finished externally in materials, the colours and textures of which complement the highest quality of architecture in the locality
k) it is compatible with, and respects the character of the surrounding area, neighbouring uses, and neighbouring built form
l) it can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site
m) it provides appropriate boundary treatments to ensure attractive edges to the development that will help integration with its surroundings

Accessibility:
p) it incorporates, where required, access for those with mobility difficulties
q) it ensures there is no adverse impact on road safety, including but not limited to the site access
r) it provides for linkages with adjoining built up areas including public transport connections and provision of buses, and new paths and cycleways, linking where possible with existing path network; travel plans will be encouraged to support more sustainable travel patterns

s) it includes adequate access and turning space for vehicles including those used for waste collection purposes

Green Space, Open Space & Biodiversity:

t) it provides meaningful open space that wherever possible links to existing open spaces

u) it retains physical or natural features or habitats which are important to the amenity or biodiversity of the area or makes provision for adequate mitigation or replacements

**PMD5 Infill Development**

Whilst aspects of this policy are more relevant to housing than to a community facility as proposed, the proposed development is generally consistent with the criteria identified in the policy, and particularly with regard to:

a) it does not conflict with the established land use in the area

b) it does not detract from the character and amenity of the surrounding area

c) the individual and cumulative effects of the development can be sustained by the social and economic infrastructure and it does not lead to over-development

d) it respects the scale, form, design, materials and density in context of its surroundings

e) adequate access and servicing can be achieved

f) it does not result in any significant loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy to adjoining properties as a result of overshadowing or overlooking

**3.2.2 Peebles Settlement Profile**

The town settlement profiles are part of the Local Development Plan. The following points from the Peebles Settlement Profile are relevant to note.

Place Making Considerations:

- Peebles benefits form a dramatic setting at the convergence of the River Tweed and Eddleston Water.

- The settlement is framed between high hills on all sides and has extensive views both into and out of the settlement.

- The town has a strong landscape framework: the southern portion of Peebles over the Tweed lies within the flatter haughland of the river valley and on the lower slopes of the Cademuir Hill.

- The Conservation Area covers a large part of Peebles, including the entire town centre. In the south side of the Old Town properties tend to be tenements and commercial premises, with an urban character.

- It is evident that within Peebles there is a wide range of building types, styles and periods. These all reflect the history, diversity and development of the town.

- Throughout Peebles and particularly along the River Tweed and Eddleston Water there are substantial areas of green open space.

- Once the allocated sites are fully developed the preferred area for future expansion beyond the period of this Local Development Plan will be to the south east of Peebles.

Infrastructure Considerations:

- If development continues and school capacities are pressured further, a second primary school on the south side of the river in Peebles will be required.

- This settlement is identified within the Council’s Flood Contingency Plan as being at risk of flooding. Any development proposals should therefore be subject to early consultation with the Council’s Flood and Coastal Management Officer, and SEPA, having regard to the Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland).

- The possible requirement for a second vehicular bridge over the River Tweed was subject to investigation by external transport consultants in the period leading up to the publication of the Finalised Local Plan 2005. It is now considered that the time has been reached when development sites in
Peebles need to contribute towards the tackling of congestion and the potential provision of a second crossing.

Development and Safeguarding Proposals:
- The area of housing allocation closest to the site is Dunwhinny Lodge (APEEB026), however this is a relatively small site at 0.5 ha with an indicative capacity of 14 units.
- Less than 1km from the site is Whitehaugh (TP7B), of 9.9ha with an indicative capacity of 106 units with development already well underway.
- All three of the areas identified for longer term housing or mixed use development are within that same area, referred to as South West of Whitehaugh (SPEEB003) of 4.5ha, North West of Hogbridge (SPEEB004) of 2.9ha, and Peebles East (SPEEB005) of 32.3ha. Whilst no indicative capacity is stated it could be reasonably expected to be at least 500 units in total.

Key Greenspace:
- Victoria Park at 6.7ha is the second largest of the 14 key greenspaces identified. The largest area is Hay Lodge Park at 10.6ha, whilst slightly smaller is Whitestone Park at 6.2ha, both located on the north side. The only other comparable space on the south side is the High School Playing fields at 6.3ha.

3.2.3 Response to Planning Policies

Key issues identified by the Local Development Plan and Peebles Settlement Profile, and how the proposal responds to them, may be summarised as follows.

Land Use:
- The proposed development will provide facilities for community use which are currently in short supply on the South Side. The demand for such facilities is set to increase over the coming years given the anticipated scale of residential and mixed use development in the South Side.
- The proposed community use is consistent with the use of the adjacent Victoria Park and Day Care Centre.
- The site is large enough to accommodate the proposed building and its associated car parking etc without significant impacts on the surrounding houses.
- The proposed use was established by the 1989 planning approval.
- The building would be adaptable for other uses in the future should the church no longer remain on the site.
- Residential development is considered the only other use which would be appropriate for the site, and this was considered as an alternative, however the floor level established by the FRA would make this problematic.

Place Making:
- Whilst many areas in the South Side have a strong street presence, whether from older Victorian buildings or Post-War developments, Cleland Avenue does not have a distinct character.
- The most architecturally refined buildings are the units at 1-6 Cleland Avenue arranged in pairs around a curved path and set well back from the street frontage, which look north over the development site.

- Consideration was given to building closer to and aligned with the street, however this would have required removal of many of the existing trees, and it was felt the scale of the building would have a negative impact on the streetscape.
- Rather, by setting the building well back into the site and consolidating the soft landscaping around it, a stronger sense of place could be established by maintaining the visual connection to the

https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@55.6470523,-3.1850352,3a,90y,207.63h,87.45t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sNWeUByYqRcwRrBU9nRUOXA!2e0!7i13312!8i6656
park and open space and the predominant natural setting.

Landscape Setting:
- The strong landscape setting of floodplain surrounded by hills is a dominant part of the town’s character.
- The proposal responds to this by maintaining the open, natural character of the site, with links to surrounding green spaces and tree cover, whilst orientating the building to offer views out to the surrounding hills.

Heritage Setting:
- The Conservation Area covers a large part of the town and so, again, is a dominant part of the town’s character. Whilst this includes Victoria Park the site is outside the designated boundary, and those parts of the Conservation Area near the site are predominantly considered significance for their landscape rather than built heritage.
- The profile recognises that the town comprises a wide range of building types, styles and periods, and this is reflected in the immediate streetscape of the site and its surroundings.
- The proposal responds to this by maintaining the landscape character of the site, with the proposed development being low key and “recessive” visually so as not to compete with the historic character of the Conservation Area or the local context generally.

Future Development:
- Future development potential for Peebles beyond the current Plan is clearly focussed on the south side, especially expansion to the south east. The implication of this is significantly increased housing numbers, new school and second river crossing.
- The proposal responds to this by providing facilities which will be available for community use. These sorts of uses and spaces are currently in short supply on the south side, and demand can be expected to increase as new residential units are occupied over the coming 5-10 years. The phased construction and flexible layout of the space proposed will be able to accommodate uses and respond as needs emerge.

Greenspace Protection:
- Victoria Park is the largest greenspace on the south side, and a key component in the range of greenspaces scattered across the town.
- The proposal responds to this by maintaining the sense of an open boundary between the park and the site, which allows the perception of the open space being extended.
- Early discussions have been held with the Council about how the proposed development of a skate park etc. on the adjoin area of the park could share facilities with the site in some way.

Flood Management:
- The susceptibility of the site to flooding was identified at the outset of this project, and the relevant Council officers have been consulted.
- The main floor level of the build has been set so as to be well above the defined flood levels, and pedestrian access via Cleland Avenue is not compromised by the potential flooding.
- It is understood the proposed building would not meet the classification of vulnerable users for which a higher level of flood risk safety is required, however the main floor level as proposed should meet that requirement should this change in the future.

Accessibility:
- The site is readily accessible by all means whether walking, cycling, public transport or vehicle
- Provision has been made for an at-grade drop-off point for groups of elderly or disabled visitors, as well as several disabled car parking spaces with ramped access to the main floor level.
- The interior has been designed to be fully accessible by all users and disabled, changing places and parents facilities are all included.
Sustainable Development
- Sustainability has been a core driver for all aspects of the proposed development.
- Renewable energy use and production have been maximised, with the potential that the site could be net-zero carbon.
- Water management has been considered by using tanks to capture rainwater for use on site, whilst the extent of hard paving outwith the building footprint has been minimised to reduce run-off.
- The building has been designed to maximise the use of natural light and ventilation with large areas of operable windows and skylights.
- The building will be insulated to high standards to minimise space heating demand.
- Materials and finished will be selected with consideration of their full environmental impacts during their full life cycle of production, use and disposal.
- The site has been laid out to minimise construction impacts and maintain and enhance as much of the natural setting as possible, including the existing mature trees, which will have general environmental benefits for issues like biodiversity.
- The building has been designed to have a flexible internal layout such that it can be readily adapted to different uses over time, ensuring a long life span for the development.

4. Design Statement

4.1 User Requirements

The brief for the project included several requirements which present very specific challenges for the development. These may be defined as follows.

a. Minimise costs
b. Maximise Options
c. Establish Site Presence
d. Look to the Future
e. Sustainability
f. Local Context
g. Sacred Space

a. Minimise costs
As a local community organisation, the church has only limited funds readily available for use on a building project - within the Scottish Baptist Church, each congregation has sole ownership of their facilities, without the larger resources of a central overarching body as for some denominations. External grant funding options are also constrained by their commitment to not use any gambling related sources i.e. the Lottery Fund. Hence, we needed to identify a low cost construction method. Also, as the site up until now has been undeveloped, we needed to ensure that associated costs of utilities connections and roadworks etc. were kept to the essential.

b. Maximise Options
Because the church has been operating from rented premises for many years (currently the Drill Hall in Peebles), the range of activities or external user groups who might use the new facility can only be estimated as there is no current base to project from. Whilst extensive discussions have been held with potential users and we believe the layout as proposed will meet their needs, the layout does need to allow for a high degree of flexibility so that spaces can be adapted as uses evolve and additional funding is available.
c. Establish Site Presence
Having owned the site for almost 3 decades, yet still operating from temporary shared premises, the church leaders believe that if they are going to make a move to the Kings Meadows site they need to establish a site presence as soon as possible, even if only to a limited extent in the first instance, in order to start building their role within the South Side community and with the user groups who have expressed an interest in using the facility. To that end the feasibility study initially considered using temporary or pre-fabricated structures before coming to the conclusion that a permanent structure would be more appropriate.

d. Look to the Future
As the new building would become the main asset of the church, it was important to consider the long term future of the site including ongoing building maintenance and energy costs, potential for change and expansion if demand increases, or adaptability for other uses should the church no longer require the site for any reason.

e. Sustainability
Early in the process sustainability was identified by the church leaders as an important driver for the development. There were no specific requirements for this, but open to possibilities regarding energy efficiency and renewables, sourcing and selection of materials, the health and wellbeing of users, and maintaining the natural amenity of the site.

f. Local Context
As a local community organisation, it was considered essential that any development of the site was respectful of the neighbourhood context, responded to local needs, and provided benefits to the community beyond the immediate needs of the congregation. Maintaining the recently created garden beds, which are now well established as a community space, is an example of this. Ensuring easy access to the site, whether by car, cycle or on foot, was also seen as a way to make the building attractive and open to anyone passing by. Providing for the needs of special user groups, such as the elderly, infirm or disabled, is another example. Also, the location on the edge of Victoria Park provides specific opportunities to work with the Council and community to enhance use of both sites.

g. Sacred Space
Whilst recognising that by the nature of its intended use it will be very much a community facility, and also that Baptists see doing things with and for the community as central to “being” church (i.e. working out the fact that the church is the people, not the building), it was nevertheless felt that the development of both building and grounds should, in some ways or some places, reflect the inherently sacred nature of a church.

4.2 Design Strategy
During the course of the feasibility study and early design development, various practical constraints were also identified (see planning issues). The design strategy that evolved may be defined as follows.

a. Big Shed
b. In the Park not on the Street
c. Accessible
d. Phased construction
e. Platform for life
f. Sustainability as a priority

a. Big Shed
The building is conceived, and will be constructed, as a standard steel portal framed structure, as typically used for agricultural and industrial sheds but also for sports halls and retail parks. This will provide the maximum floor space for the minimum cost, allow speed of construction, and provide flexibility for the internal layout. Externally the building will be clad in a way that provides an appropriate response to its setting, whilst internally the structure and services will be left (as built) with structure and services generally left exposed to view.

b. In the Park not on the Street
The site is unusual in that it reads as an
extension of the park even though it is surrounded on three sides by streets or other buildings. In part this is because there is no consistent character to the street context, with a range of different building types, styles and setbacks. Hence, it was decided that the development should retain and enhance that sense of being "in the park". This involved: setting the building well back from the street boundaries; allowing it to sit askew to the street grid; maintaining an open boundary to the park, and; retaining as many of the existing trees and as much soft landscaped area on the site as possible.

This final point was one of the key reasons for creating an undercroft for the car park. Originally it was envisaged that the car park would be elsewhere on the site, but when the flood report indicated the main floor level would have to be significantly higher than anticipated, the decision was made to raise it slightly more to provide the 2m clearance required for car parking. Whilst some overflow parking will still be provided outwith the building, it will remain as grassed space, and hence the overall "built" area of the site is restricted to just the building footprint and a short length of driveway. With regard to the building, it will be largely screened from view from the surrounding houses by existing or new trees, and there is vertical emphasis to the wall cladding so that it merges with the lines of the tree trunks.

c. Accessible
There are three aspects to being accessible. First, that the site can be easily reached by a variety of means, and hence we will make sure there is good access from existing pedestrian paths, provide cycle parking on site, that there is provision for mini-bus drop-off and an electric car charger.

Second, that entry points to the building are obvious, welcoming and accessible without assistance by the elderly, infirm, disabled or parents-with-prams. Fortuitously the raised main floor level is almost the same as the existing street level, providing direct level access. For access from the lower level car park there will be a graded path meandering through the gardens rather than a "built" ramp to make that journey more enjoyable. The secondary entrance to the north will step down into the gardens with wide tiered seats, and will be an obvious entry point when approached through the park. The required egress stairs will also provide direct access between the car park and main floor which will be desirable during rain and snow.

And thirdly, the building layout should make it easy for people with special needs, and their helpers, to use the space. We have included both an accessible and changing places toilet, ensured there is plenty of circulation space for manoeuvring, and are working through things like being a dementia-friendly building.

d. Phased construction
The building has been designed to allow construction in three phases comprising: 1. central core; 2. main hall; 3. additional meeting rooms. The aspiration is that the whole of the structural frame and cladding will be constructed in the first phase with only the internal fitout to follow in phases, but this will be subject to costs and funding. Phasing will be finalised at the time a building warrant is lodged. The nature of the building as a "big shed" allows for this approach to be practical, and that the internal layout can be adjusted as uses evolve once the first phase is operational.

e. Platform for life
By keeping the layout as simple, neutral and flexible as possible, it was seen that the building could become a "platform" for whatever life issues emerge as important or desirable. Hence there would be loose rather than fixed seating and staging in the main hall. A baptistry pool would be included (a core element of the Baptist faith is baptism by full immersion in water) but set below floor level. Large folding wall systems would allow spaces to be opened up for larger groups when required, such as weddings and funerals. The kitchen would have servery openings direct to both the foyer and the meeting rooms, and be large enough for upgrading to commercial
standards in the future if demand exists. By leaving the structural frame exposed it will be easy to install additional equipment or fittings over time in a "loose fit" way. This is also the basis on which the sacred nature of the church use can be recognised, with elements introduced in subtle ways throughout the building.

f. Sustainability as a priority

If we were to make the building as sustainable as possible, but limit any additional costs in doing so, then we would need to consider every design decision on the basis of whether it contributed to or hindered sustainability. This involved some simple decisions, such as ensuring walls, floor and roof were insulated to a high level, and including tanks to retain rainwater for use on site. However some decisions were more complex.

Because the site is undeveloped, all services will have to be connected from scratch. However, the cost of connecting mains gas was going to be substantial, and given gas is a carbon-intensive fossil fuel, and that the building will have minimal demand for hot water and cooking for which gas is often desirable, it was decided not to connect the gas and instead to go all-electric. This lead to the decision to install solar PV panels at the maximum capacity practical, which in turn dictated installing a 3-phase mains electricity connection (with the added benefit of this over single phase for potential equipment etc.) to get the maximum export capacity, and further to consideration of installing storage batteries. This also dictated that the building should have a large south facing roof aligned to within 30° of true south, which was consistent with the skewed alignment noted above. Space heating will be with air source and/or ground source heat pumps, which will utilise a large proportion of the electricity generated by the solar panels. The full installation will be installed during Phase 1 (see above) to allow maximum benefit from the outset, with the aspiration that the site will have net-zero energy use.

Other decisions to enhance sustainability will be made when specifying the building works based on low carbon and/or responsibly sourced materials.