

PROPOSED HOUSING, JACKSON STREET, COATBRIDGE  
CONSIDERATION OF ITS AFFECT ON THE NEIGHBOURING CLIFTON CHURCH.

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16/00852/FUL | Erection of 4 No. Two Bedroom Flats | Former Clifton Church Manse Orchard 132  
Muiryhall Street Town Centre Coatbridge North Lanarkshire ML5 3NH

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Strathclyde Group Cases Panel : Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland  
June 2016

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We note that the church building has suffered damage in the past, has been restored and then left unused due to the congregation joining with another. The Future Property Auctions website notes that it is up for sale (again, this time by the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2016). The Buildings at Risk Register records it being in reasonable condition and having been up for sale previously too, but that it was being put to some use. We understand that it currently continues to be put to some use. It remains on the register and is considered still under some degree of risk.

It is listed "B" (as Coats Church), but outwith the Conservation Area. It is a fine building and has important stained glass windows. These and other characteristics are well described in the letter of objection by Mr Fraser MacGregor.

There are three main concerns :

1. Protecting the church building's future, considering that it no longer serves its original purpose, and ongoing sustainability.
2. Ensuring that its most significant attribute, ie its south facing stained glass windows retain suitable natural lighting.
3. Ensuring that its prominence within the changing townscape is optimised.

We have concentrated on these points below:

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1 : Protecting the church building's future.

Continued use, even if not as a church, provides some degree of protection. Alternative uses and imaginative adaptation would be expected and considered acceptable if sensitively done. Unfortunately this may include compromise.

While several changes have been made over recent years, none of these has been major. Although outwith the actual (subdivided) church site boundary, development of the adjoining site can be seen to be utilising the area more fully and indirectly ensuring that the church building is not isolated and could be put to various alternative use in the future.

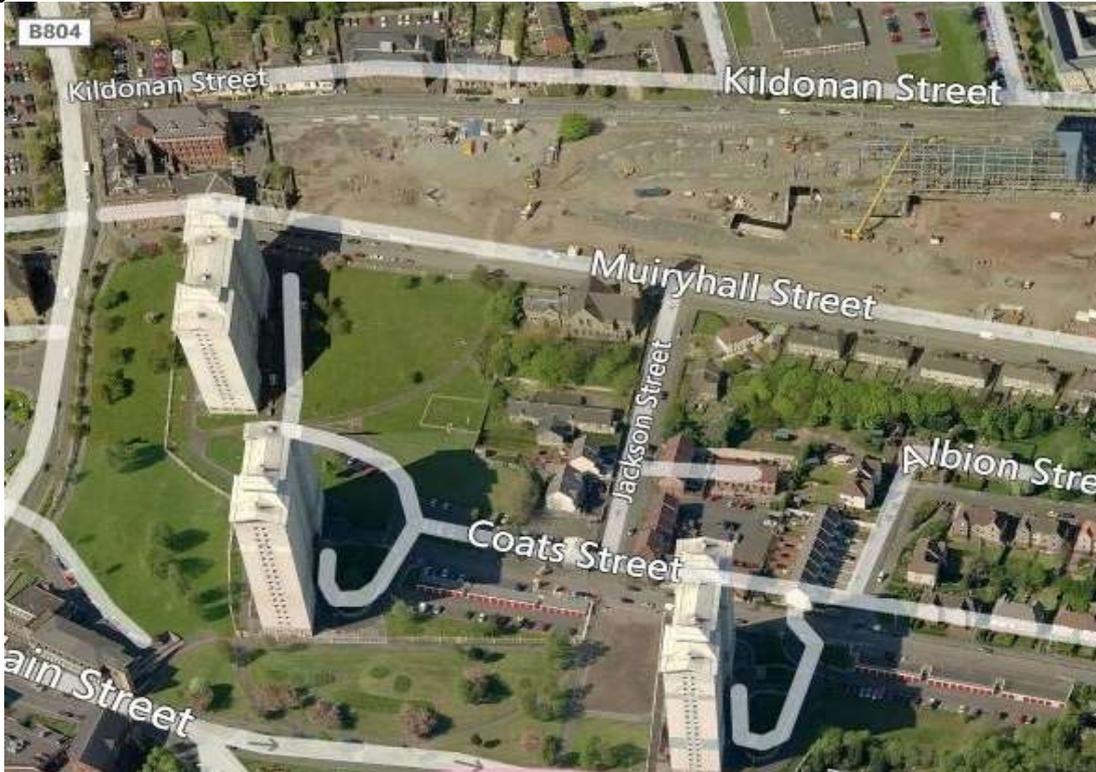
This extract below from the development proposals indicates though that this is very close to the church building itself.



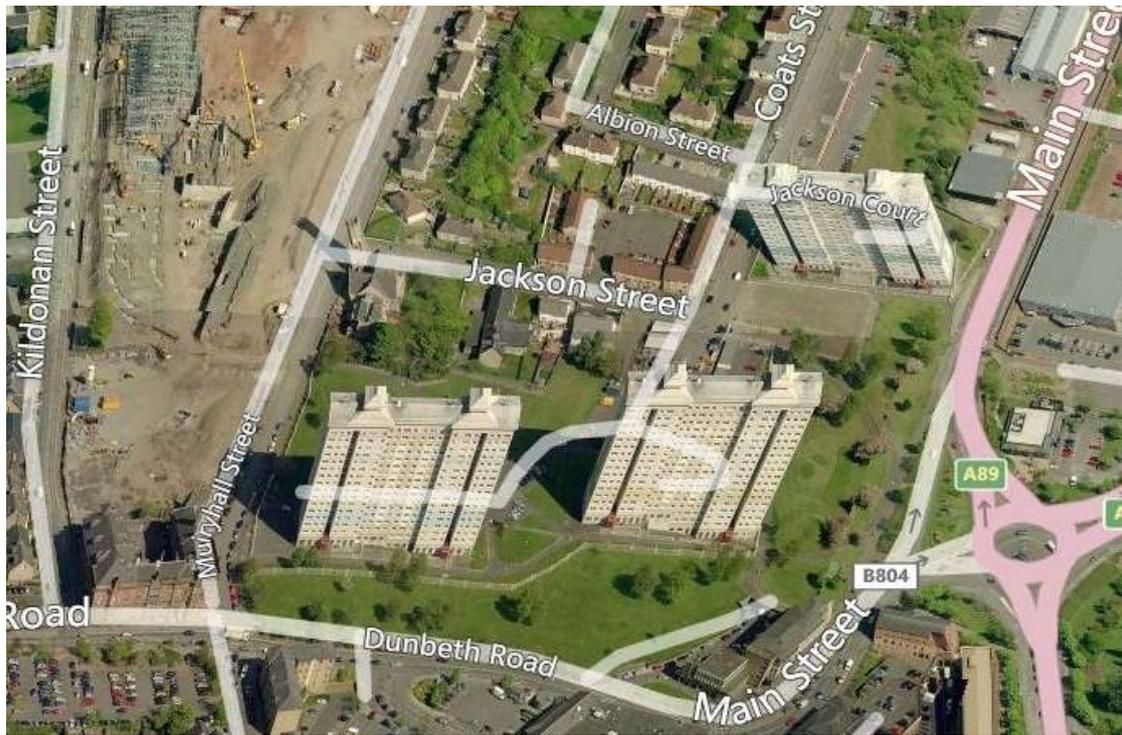
BirdsEye view from the east.



BirdsEye view from the south.



BirdsEye view from the west.



Closer view from the south showing the site, with trees in the photo, on which the housing is proposed.



These BirdsEye views and the photographs provided by Mr MacGregor show how significant the church has been within the urban landscape. Every effort should be made in making the most of this in the ongoing changing development.

#### DAMAGE TO SITE WALL

It has been brought to our notice that part of the stone boundary wall of the church has been demolished. This though is to a section now forming part of the adjoining site. We see this area referred to in correspondence as a “servitude”, but do not find an indication of it having any special

status. It appears to have originally been part of the church site. Listing status is applied to the whole premises including boundary walls. Listing text is a general record and sometimes brief. Lack of description of boundary walls in the text does NOT mean that they are omitted from the listing. As the site of the proposal for housing is a subdivision of the original church site, legal ownership is presumed to have been transferred, but legal obligations under listing would require clarification by Historic Environment Scotland and the planning department. It is not that they cannot be demolished or partially removed, but that such would formally need removal from the listing scope. It is our view that until that is done, changes can only be made through a listed building planning application.

## CONCLUSIONS

Compromise can be expected if specialised buildings such as this church are put to different use and at least allows some degree of sustainability. We sympathise with the objectors to the proposals for the development of the adjoining site, but also recognise that this is within keeping with the surrounding townscape and is within the rights of the new site owner. While not ideal for the church building, its impact is not as great as could happen if a developer with more ambitious ideals were to procure it. We have looked at the overall site layout and note that it narrows on the west side so restricting development there or rearranging what is proposed. We would however advise that this section be incorporated into this site as open amenity space or into the existing parkland. If isolated it will become derelict. (Incorporation into the remaining church site would require change of ownership, but this way it would not).