

# The STIRLING SOCIETY of ARCHITECTS

*The Society for all Architects practising in the Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire areas of central Scotland*  
A CHAPTER OF THE ROYAL INCORPORATION OF ARCHITECTS IN SCOTLAND AFFILIATED TO THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS

## Meeting held at Viewforth – 2pm Thursday 5 July 2007

In attendance:

Mick Stewart – Stirling Council Planning (SCP)  
Peter Morgan – Stirling Council Planning  
Paul Stephen – Stirling Society of Architects (SSA)  
Sandy Dawson – Stirling Society of Architects

Paul Stephen opened the meeting by thanking SCP for taking the time to meet with them, regarding what can be an awkward subject.

SSA passed a summary copy of comments which have been passed to them by members of the Chapter regarding their recent experiences of dealing with SCP.

SCP responded as follows to the points raised by SSA:

- 1 They have a policy for negotiation rather than refusal – this can lead to some delay in determining applications. The aim is to work to ensure that applications are suitable for approval in order that refusal is a last resort.
- 2 Many of the comments noted on the summary provided by SSA related to Conservation and Listed Building applications. SCP advised that there is less scope for negotiation when dealing with Listed Building Applications.
- 3 Their Conservation Officers are currently only consulted on Listed Building Applications – they are no longer consulted on Conservation Area Applications. This should reduce the workload on the Conservation Officers and hopefully allow them to deal with any enquiries and consultations more expeditiously.
- 4 Their Conservation Officers are currently doing their best without another Conservation Officer, which they are unlikely to get in the current climate. The Conservation Officers currently work a “job-share” between 2 part-time members of staff. One of the Officers currently on a 2-day week is to be offered an additional day. Both will now work a 3-day week. It is hoped that this 20% increase in resources combined with the reduced workload (not having to deal with Conservation Area applications) will mean that the Officers can deal with enquiries and consultations more efficiently.
- 5 SCP stated that they have one of the best resourced Planning Departments.
- 6 In order to assist applications, they would always encourage Pre-Application discussions, an initial sketch at this stage would also assist these discussions.
- 7 With regard to the comments noted in relation to Steading Conversions, SCP advised that they were one of the first Authorities to introduce a policy to encourage the re-use of redundant farm buildings for other purposes. One stated requirement is that the building must be worthy of conversion. The aim of Stirling Council Planning policy is to ensure that buildings are preserved and that in order to ensure this, residential use may not always be appropriate (i.e. if additional slappings are required in order to utilise a building as a dwelling this would be deemed to be inappropriate). Implementation of this policy has been tightened a lot in recent years at the instruction of their Elected Members.

- 8 They advised that, as well as dealing with consultations on Listed Building Applications, Conservation Officers also have to deal with Buildings at Risk Register and Character Appraisals.
- 9 It was noted that some applications received are incomplete, although these do not tend to be from members of the Chapter.
- 10 The Department would be willing to attend a Chapter Council meeting, where perhaps a Conservation Officer could give a talk on what they look for in applications in order that members can be aware of this when making an Application. SSA noted that this sounded like a good idea and advised that they may take up SCP on this offer

Paul Stephen closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their time.