

CAUSEWAYEND SCHOOL ABERDEEN

USE AND ADAPTION OF LISTED SCHOOLS



HISTORIC
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Causewayend school Aberdeen

How the use of a planning brief helped to secure the future of a former school building.

The C-listed Causewayend school is a two and three storey school designed by the architect [William Smith](#) in 1875. It is designed in the Scots Baronial style, which plays to a romantic ideal of Scotland's past and includes a tower with a turret and a balustrade inspired by the North East's tower houses. It is made of granite and as a granite building, it makes an important contribution to the distinctiveness of Aberdeen's traditional buildings.

In 1892, extensions were added by architects [Kelly & Nicol](#).

The school closed in 2008, and by 2010 Aberdeen City Council decided they no longer required the building. To help find a new use for it, the Council commissioned a [planning brief](#).

Planning briefs set out how a Council expects a site to be adapted, developed and used in the future. The brief made clear that any proposal should retain and reuse the main listed school and canteen buildings, but also set out which buildings could be demolished, including the janitor's house, gymnasium block and bike sheds. Finally, the brief identified areas within the site suitable for any new buildings.



View of the converted school with the new additional elements © Aberdeen City Council

Despite the brief being in place, by 2011 the building was still empty and now in a poor state of repair.

A fire caused considerable damage and the building was also becoming a target for vandalism and theft.

[UNITE](#) came forward in 2014 with proposals to convert the site into student accommodation. While the planning brief was by now a few years old, its contents and guidance were still relevant and helped guide the successful repair and refurbishment of the listed building.



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View of the front of the converted school with the additional new flats beside it
© Aberdeen City Council



Above: Before view of school building and extension
© Ross Anderson and below:
View of the building extension after development
© Aberdeen City Council

Redevelopment of the site included the sensitive conversion of the C-listed building providing 60 student bedrooms, comprising a mix of studio and cluster flats.

The former canteen building was fully converted and now provides communal facilities and a central office.

The former gymnasium and janitors house were demolished to make way for new buildings which provide a further 350 student bedrooms.

The student accommodation scheme had advantages including a much lower planning requirement for car parking.

This meant more of the site could be used as open landscaped space, including within the courtyard.

There was also room for large amounts of cycle storage which helped to encourage sustainable means of travel for the students.

The completed development, known as Causeway View, was finished in 2016. It shows how a planning brief can be used to help guide proposals, including giving certainty on of what can be achieved with the listed buildings.

The project has now successfully reused an unused historic school to provide much-needed student accommodation near the city centre of Aberdeen.

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Detailed view of the front elevation of the development
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