

GREENLAW TOWN HALL, SCOTTISH BORDERS

ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY

USE AND ADAPTATION OF LISTED BUILDINGS



HISTORIC
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Greenlaw Town Hall

Using enabling development to bring a town centrepiece back to life.

Greenlaw Town Hall was originally the Court House and County Buildings for Berwickshire. It sits in the centre of the town, surrounded by a small green, and is readily identifiable as the centrepiece of Greenlaw. It was designed by [John Cunningham](#) and built in 1829. With its classical design, central Ionic portico and raised dome it is a symbol of the standing Greenlaw once had as a county town. It is [listed at category A](#).

The Town Hall was caught up in a series of wrangles in the 19th century, as Greenlaw and Duns competed for county town status. Ultimately, Duns won out in 1903 – leaving the Town Hall stripped of its previous role.

Ever since then, the Town Hall has struggled to find a permanent use. It's been used as a home to a Polish tank regiment in World War II, an antiques sales room, and even (briefly) a swimming pool.

When the sales room closed its doors in 1998, the Town Hall stood empty for ten years. It was put on the [Buildings at Risk Register](#) in 2001, because it was vacant with no identified new use. In response, the Greenlaw Townhall Trust was set up.



Roof and cupola restoration ©SHBT

The Scottish Borders Council and the [Scottish Historic Buildings Trust \(SHBT\)](#) agreed to lead on a restoration project.

In 2008, Historic Scotland offered £500,000 in grant funding for the building. The catch was that the Trust could only use it if they could raise £400,000 within nine months of the offer.

To find such a large amount of money, one of the options that is often considered is enabling development.




**GREENLAW
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2011**
Hannah



Above: The multi purpose hall in renovation ©SHBT

Below: The multi purpose hall after the renovation ©SHBT



Enabling development usually involves using land next to an important building or site for housing or other development. But the land next to the Town Hall is the village green, and local policy (and opinion) would not allow for building on it.

A local landowner came to the rescue when a site on the edge of the village was gifted to the SHBT to be used for housing development. Securing planning permission presented the next hurdle. Although planning policy favoured affordable housing, the gifted site was not allocated for development.

However the planning authority was able to bring the site forward outwith the local plan through the use of an exceptions policy whereby land can be so allocated subject to proving need and other significant community benefits. Soon afterwards a registered social landlord secured the funds to purchase the site which SHBT were then able to invest in the town hall project.

Because of the work put in by the Council, the SHBT, and the people of Greenlaw, the building has the prospect of a long-term future for the first time since the beginning of the 20th century.



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