

Sketch

NTS.
FRONTAGE TO CAR PARK

Background

The genesis of the project was the threatened loss of the village Post Office late in 2009 when the lease at their premises in the High Street was terminated. The Post Office had operated successfully from these High Street premises for a number of years, combining a small space for retail and a coffee area with the Post Office counter. This precipitated a proactive community effort to retain the Post Office – a vital part of the village infrastructure, and temporary premises in the form of a portacabin were established in the car park at The Square adjacent to the village hall in December following receipt of planning consent and after a short interlude the Post Office opened again for business on 8 February 2010.

As is always necessary where fragile rural infrastructure is concerned, the community effort so far has involved a number of partners, including the Post Office, the Scottish Borders Council, the Postmasters, Coldingham Community Council, the Coldingham Sands Community Company, the Village Hall committee and other interested parties and individuals - most notably Mr David Jones who has ably coordinated the effort to date.

The idea of using the present toilet building site to house the Post Office, together with a group of other village functions was formed, and a sketch scheme was prepared in November 2009 by Bain, Swan Architects to establish its feasibility.

These are being pursued under the heading of the Coldingham Sands Community Company – (originally set up to pursue the possibility of purchasing and running the now defunct Coldingham Youth Hostel) whose charitable status is advantageous in relation to securing grant funding.

It is envisaged the Community Company will assume overall management responsibility for the building when complete.

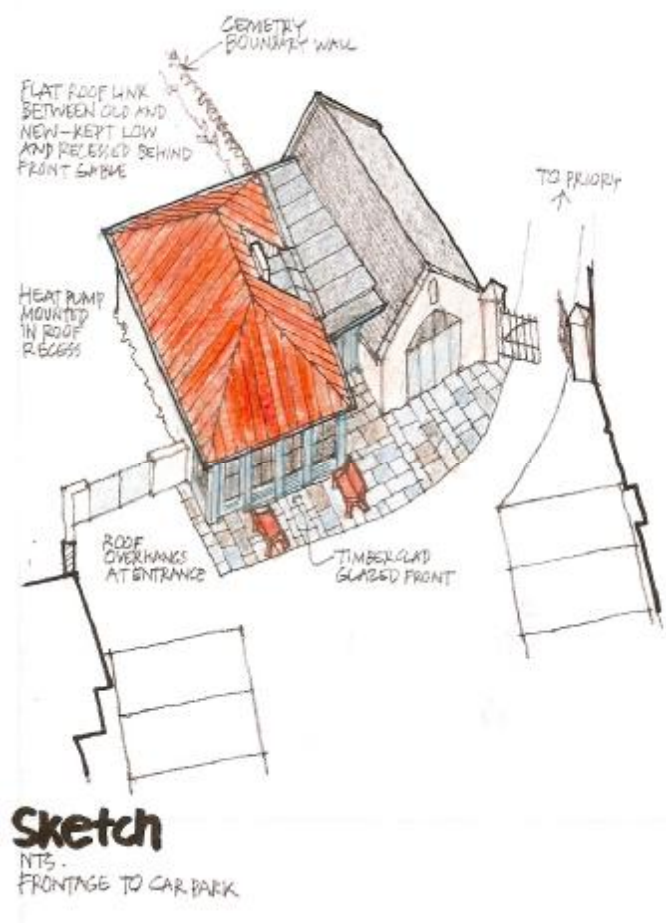
The aim of the project is not only to secure a future for the Post Office, but in recognition of the importance to the village of tourism, by taking advantage of the on site presence of the Post Mistress, to include a range of functions including interpretation, visitor information, retail, a coffee shop and updated public toilets which will provide a focus for visitors and villagers alike.

The Post Office agreed to the temporary premises on the basis that the feasibility of the current proposals, together with the necessary funding could be pursued in more detail.

Project Components

The project includes the following components:

- the presence of vigorous community organisations and individuals to lead the project and access funds unavailable to the Council and
- the track record of these organisations which have already in partnership achieved the successful completion of the adjacent village hall/community theatre and the restoration work on the Priory and community garden,
- the willingness of the Scottish Borders Council to make available the toilet site,
- the opportunity to modernise the toilet facilities to provide a single disabled/unisex unit which will reduce the overall footprint and make space available,



- the opportunity to incorporate interpretation relating to the Scottish Borders Council/Tweed Forum Coldingham Priory Partnership Project, including Community garden which is entering its final year and the desire to create a new focal point for this heritage and community asset,
- the cooperation of the Post Office,
- the willingness of the Postmistress to staff the interpretation space and the public toilets on a daily basis and
- the opportunity to include retail space – necessary to supplement Post Office income – along the lines of the previous premises,
- the opportunity to include a coffee shop, and some outside sitting area necessary to supplement Post Office income – again along the lines of the previous premises,
- the opportunity to include visitor information and be a focal point for events like the Walking Festival,
- the opportunity to provide supplementary meeting space and a base for the Coldingham Sands Community Company and other village organisations,

Funding sources are:

- Scottish Borders Council funds for replacement toilets.
- Cross funding from the Scottish Borders Council Priory Project for interpretation.
- A variety of grant sources available to the Coldingham Sands Community Company due to its charitable status.

Coldingham Luckenbooths

A difficulty arises over what to call the building which is to house a wide range of functions. Clearly the building will be more than just a Post Office, or just an interpretation centre and the name “Luckenbooths” has been mooted. Luckenbooth is an old Scots word for the first enclosed (lockable) shops located in the market place, most notably Edinburgh’s High Street, where merchandise was originally sold from temporary stalls. The first Luckenbooths in Edinburgh were housed in timber structures built in front of the street frontages – analogous to the proposed design. It is suggested the “Coldingham Luckenbooths” will apply to the building group consisting of the village hall store, the Post Office, which itself can be locked up to permit evening activities in the remainder of the floor space, and the second hand bookshop, whose double doors when the shop is operating are thrown open to the public space.



The existing building group from the Square car park

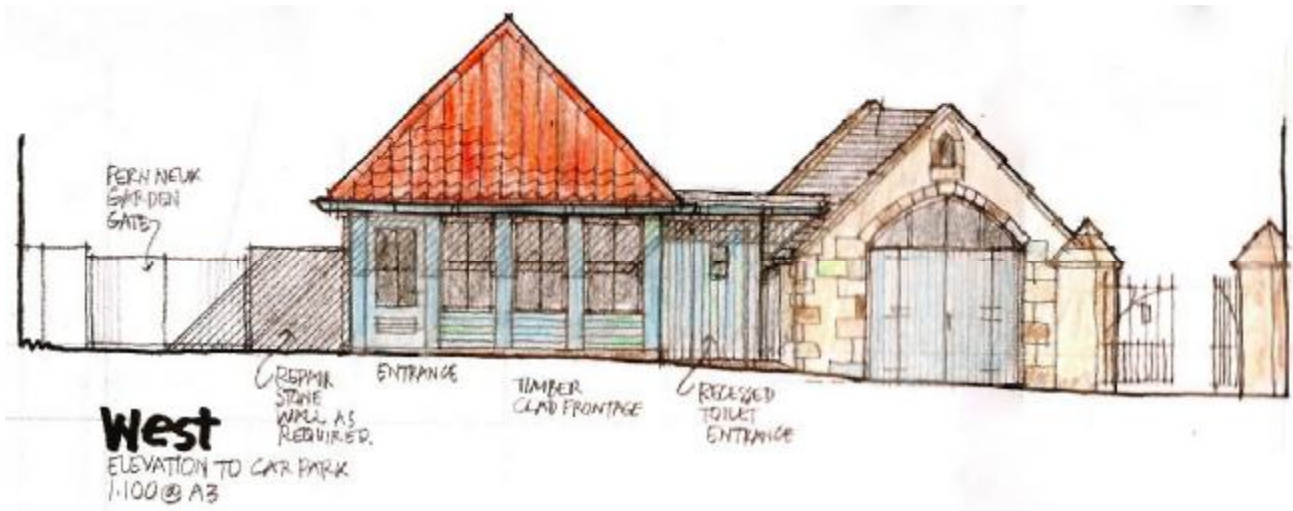
Existing Context

The current building group comprises the present flat roofed toilet building with its moribund bus shelter, now disused, and the original hearse house which now operates as a community run second hand bookshop. To the rear is a store originally used in conjunction with the cemetery, but which now provides important auxiliary storage for the village hall (see sketch 3).

The architectural importance of the group is that it provides closure to the view across the car park which forms part of the general area known as The Square.

The group is bounded on the north and north east by the garden of Fern Neuk. A window from the gent’s toilet overlooks this garden ground whose amenity is further compromised by the adjacent entrance to the female toilet. On the north east and east lies the Priory cemetery, while formal entrance gates to the Priory mark the south corner.

The current electricity pole and overhead lines contribute unsightly visual clutter.



The addition of a third Luckenbooth

The proposed Post Office/visitor facilities building uses roughly the same footprint with a small additional area of garden ground (area 4.5m²) belonging to Fern Neuk, whose owners have agreed in principle to make available.

The main part of the new building is conceived as a simple rectangle with a hipped pantiled roof and blank rendered walls to the rear to improve the privacy of the adjacent garden and ensure Post Office security.

The frontage facing the Square, by contrast, is timber clad and generously glazed allowing the building and its contents to project to the public realm, and with an overhang which gives shelter to the entrance and an opportunity to light the frontage from above.

The old hearse house is set (inconveniently) 450mm lower, so because a pitched roof link would risk overpowering its modest scaled slated roof, the link which houses the public toilet and storage is flat roofed, again with an overhang at the toilet for shelter and lighting.

An area of natural stone paving provides an apron, for sitting, outside events, tying the group together, an effect reinforced by extending the same finish internally.

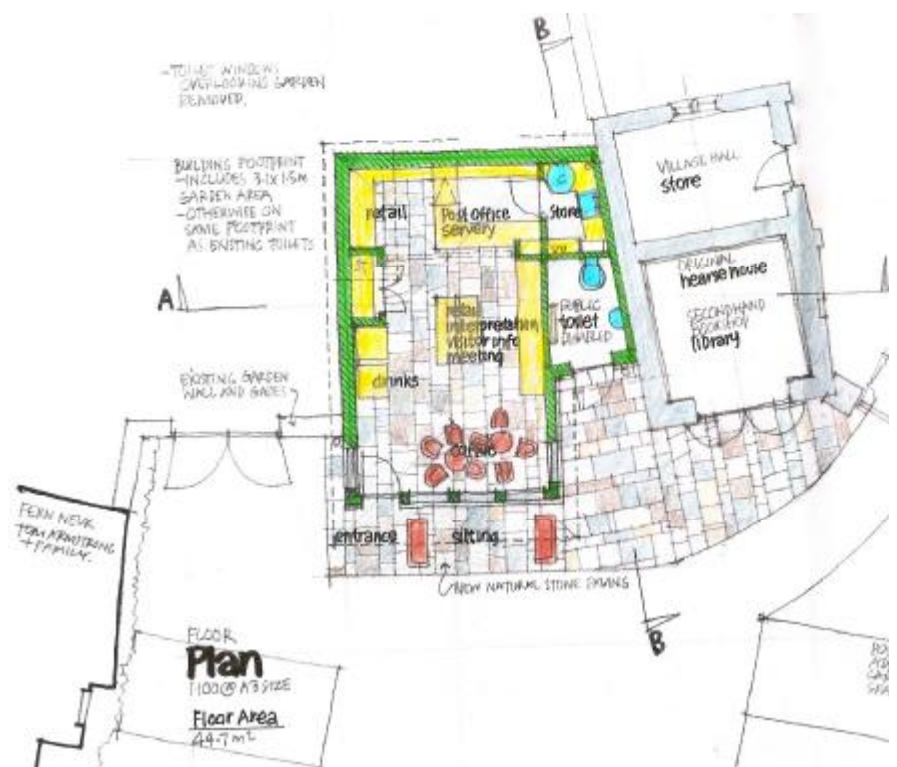
Sustainable energy components

The building will be well insulated with water and space heating provided by an air source heat pump housed neatly out of sight in a recess in the hipped roof.

Access considerations

The building is centrally located in the village with adequate existing car parking facilities (there may be an opportunity to add one further space) and a bus stop at the corner of the Square. These are the same facilities which served the previous Post Office premises – only closer.

The car park is adequately surfaced and there is level access to the entrances from the car park and bus stop. Though space is at a premium, the proposed toilet will be designed for disabled use and will have baby changing facilities.



**Coldingham Luckenbooth Project
Coldingham Community Council**

**DEMOLITION OF PUBLIC TOILETS
Site Photographs**



The building group with the temporary Post Office on the right adjacent to the village hall, and the Priory behind.



The toilet building fronted by the former bus shelter with the old mortuary building on the right – now a community second hand book shop.



The existing gap between the toilet building on the left and the old mortuary building on the right.



The rear of the group with the flat roofed toilet building on the right