

BRIDGE HOUSE HISTORY ROOM

AN OUTLINE PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE – MAY 2010

BACKGROUND

Mr David Smith, DS Properties, owns Bridge House. Mr Smith bought it from D&G Council in late 2009. Mr Smith plans to renovate the property and return it to residential use.

Bridge House is a category A Historic Scotland Statutory Listed property.

Mr Smith has generously offered to gift a ground floor room to the people of Annan to be used for an agreed community purpose.

The offer represents a unique opportunity to record a significant part of Annan's history both physical and personal.

The room is 4.3m x 4.9m (approx. 14ft 1in x 16ft 1). It would have to be self-contained requiring the making of its own new direct external access in the eastern gable wall.

It might also be possible to include some of the original cellar area in the transfer if a ramped access from the gable end to below ground could be achieved.

Mr Smith would gift the room to an agreed community body.

A legal agreement would be entered into probably based on a long-term lease.

A COMMUNITY BASED GROUP

1. The group would have to be properly constituted.
2. The group would be responsible for all necessary fund-raising.
3. The group would be responsible for the capital cost of creating the self-contained use, and for all other capital and running costs associated with the project.
4. The group would require the active support of the existing local bodies named below, the advice and support of local historians, the advice and support of the Curator of Annandale & Eskdale Museums and of others expert in the decoration and furnishing of a period Georgian room and of the lives referred to before.
5. The group would be responsible for opening the room to visitors.

A PROPOSAL

To re-create the room as it would have been, i.e. decorated and furnished in the style appropriate to its original Georgian period.

To add three elements to the room, namely:

1. A history of Bridge House.
2. The story of Edward Irving's association with Bridge House and Annan, with links to his whole life.
3. The story of Thomas Carlyle's association with Bridge House and the local area, with links to his whole life.

BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL

1. The ability to present to local people and visitors an important part of the Town's history in its correct setting.
2. To reflect general public interest in the Town's history.
3. To reflect visitor interest in the Town's history.
4. To reflect public interest in Family History.

APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE OF PROPOSAL

1. The above proposal is supported in principle by the undernoted community based bodies:
 - Annan Community Council.
 - Annan Initiative.
 - The Friends of Annandale & Eskdale Museums committee.

NEXT STEPS

The support of the wider public both in principle and in the establishment of the necessary community group is now sought.

If that support is forthcoming then more detailed proposals will have to be developed and agreed with Mr Smith.

BACKGROUND NOTE

ANNAN REGENERATION STEERING GROUP

The above proposal was tabled at a meeting of the above on Friday 26th February 2010. The Group welcomed the initiative and looked forward to the response from the community bodies referred to above and to any wider response from the community at large.