

**Lairg Police Station
Main Street
IV27 4DB**



**Bunkhouse Feasibility Study
April 2018**

Summary of brief

The Lairg & District Community Initiatives (LDCI) has commissioned a feasibility study of the former Police Station in Lairg in order to assess its suitability for conversion into a tourist hostel.

Other potential uses of the building which have been suggested include;

- Youth club
- Provision of storage space
- Provision of facilities for cyclists including repairs and maintenance

This study includes an assessment of the condition of the building and a concept design for the optimal conversion of the building

From the initial assessment conversion to a tourist hostel would be an appropriate re-use of the building. The cellular nature of the spaces lend themselves to use as twin and double rooms with the possible inclusion of two larger dormitory style rooms on the upper floor.

Provision of appropriate car parking and cycle parking will need to be considered as part of the change of use planning application.



Lairg Police Station, Main Street, IV27 4DB
Feasibility Study 03.04.18



Interior views



Entrance and Reception



Office / potential room with ensuite



Sound proof room (former interview room)



Former medical room to be converted to an ensuite



Cell door and cell interior



Stair to first floor



Upper large room suitable for dormitory



Upper large room suitable for dormitory



Potential bedroom (note high windows & escape issue)



Potential ensuite to new bedroom



Potential bedroom (note high windows & escape issue)



Male Toilet

Building Analysis

Existing building plans have been requested from Police Scotland but have yet to be provided. In their absence sketch plans have been drafted following a cursory site survey. These may include some inaccuracies however they give sufficient detail to explore the key factors.

An initial visual assessment of the building indicated that it might be possible to accommodate up to 24 beds through a mixture of twin, double and dormitory style rooms with shared male and female toilets and individual showers. However a more detailed examination of the layout, in relation to the current building regulations, indicates that it would be more realistic to work to a maximum number of 18 beds with the majority of rooms designed to have ensuite shower rooms.

There is an increasing expectation that ensuite rooms are provided and it is recommended that although the capital cost of the conversion will be greater, the return is likely to be higher and more reliable.

Should the project proceed it is recommended that early consultation is held with Building Control as there are a number of issues which need to be addressed in order to make the conversion of the building from Police Station to Tourist Hostel fully compliant with the regulations.

A summary of the key Building Control issues have been highlighted below;

1. Fire escape: The existing stair is contained in a blockwork enclosure and has an exit door leading directly to the exterior. It is therefore assumed that this is a protected enclosure and provides a compliant means of escape from the upper floor. This should be checked.
2. Fire detection: The provision of an L2 fire detection system suitable for use in a residential building should be checked and an allowance made for adding this if required.
3. Escape from first floor bedrooms: Provision of a suitable escape route is a priority in residential buildings. It is noted that some of the upstairs rooms have high level velux which would not be compliant escape windows due to their height above floor level. The provision of additional fire detection together with the confirmation that the access stair is contained within a protected enclosure may be considered an acceptable remediation.
4. Self-closing fire doors: Rooms in a residential building which are considered to contain a fire hazard should be enclosed with fire resisting walls and self closing doors. These include the kitchen, dining room / social room, cleaners cupboard, linen store and bedrooms. It is assumed that the existing doors comply but this should be checked.
5. Provision of Sanitary Facilities: The building regulations note that public expectation in residential buildings is for the provision of ensembles. Where this is not possible it is noted that shared bathrooms may only be used by 4 persons and must include either a shower or bath and a WC and wash hand basin. This means that one shower room may

be shared by a maximum of two twin rooms and a separate shower without an integrated toilet is inadequate.

6. Noise reduction: the transmission of noise between rooms should be limited. Disturbance to occupants can occur from other areas within a residential building, therefore the level of sound heard should be reduced in the rooms in which people may sleep. The design performance level for internal walls and intermediate floors should achieve a minimum airborne sound insulation level of 43 dB Rw. It is assumed that because of the former use of the building, this level has already been met but early investigation should be carried out and an allowance made to add acoustic insulation if required.
7. Parking: If there are 18 no. beds provided then it could be argued that 9 no. parking spaces would be required however it has been noted that a large number of hostel users will be walkers and cyclists. It is therefore proposed that 6 no. parking bays are provided on site, one of which will be an accessible bay with a defined and level route to the entrance. Space is limited on site and any additional parking would need to be provided on the road. It is recommended that this issue is raised at an early stage with the planning department to ensure that a reasonable solution can be reached.

Having reviewed the opportunity provided by the building, a sketch layout has been provided showing the possible arrangement of 2 ensuite rooms on the ground floor and one room, the prison cell, provided with a separate shower room.

The unisex disabled toilet adjacent to the prison cell would need to be retained to serve residents and staff.

The existing reception would be appropriate for re-use as the hostel reception as it benefits from an accessible entrance and provides a controlled access point to the building.

The communal space would be best located on the ground floor adjacent to the reception area. 18 no. dining seats could be accommodated using a mix of bench style tables and it is assumed that the space would function as a dining and social space. The adjacent room would provide a good kitchen space. It is noted that storage space could be accommodated in the existing cupboards to enable residents to safely store their provisions. The addition of mechanical ventilation will be required in this area.

A cycle storage and drying facilities could be accommodated in the garage which has a secure mechanised roller door and direct access view the rear entrance.

Two 'novelty' rooms; the prison cell and the sound proof room, could be marketed as special features of the hostel. Each could accommodate

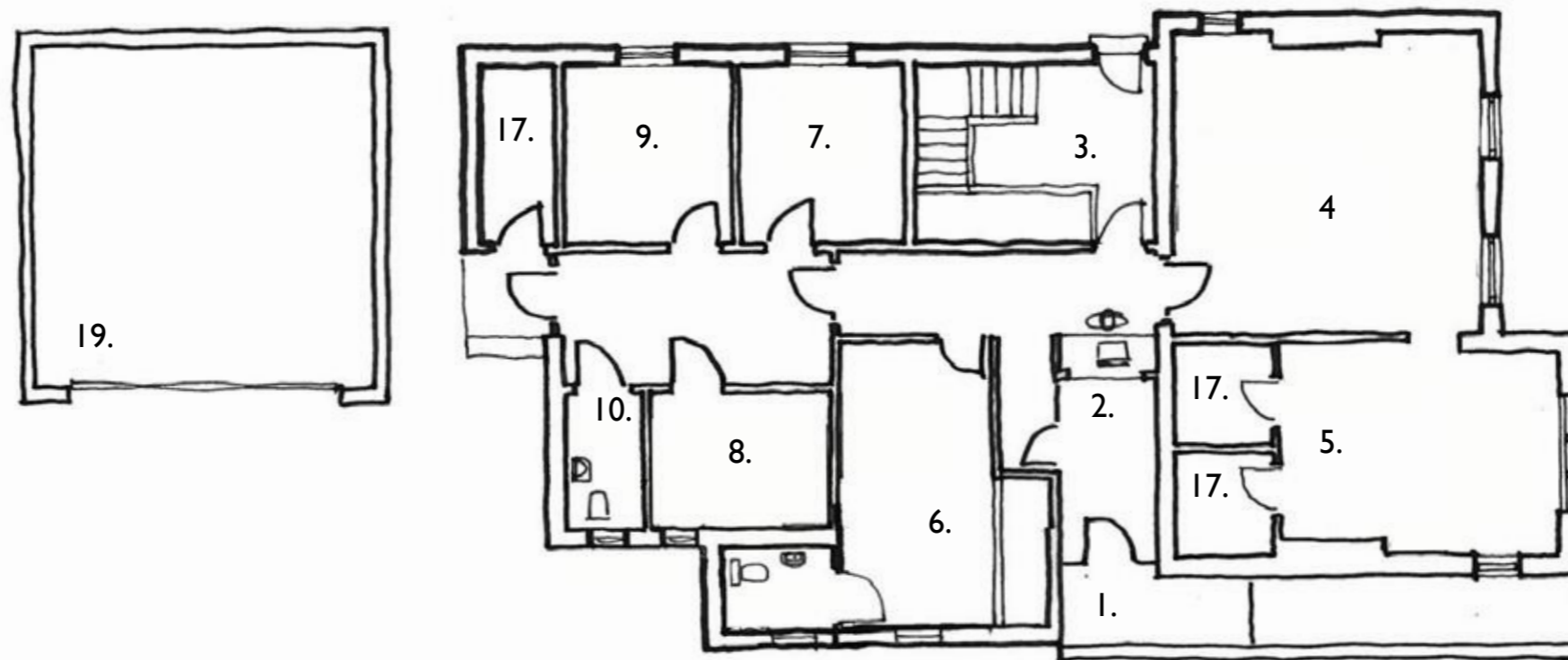
either twin or double beds and as mentioned earlier the sound proof room could have an ensuite if the adjacent room is modified.

On the upper floor it would be possible to convert the two large rooms either into four person dormitories or family rooms. The provision of ensembles for each room would be beneficial.

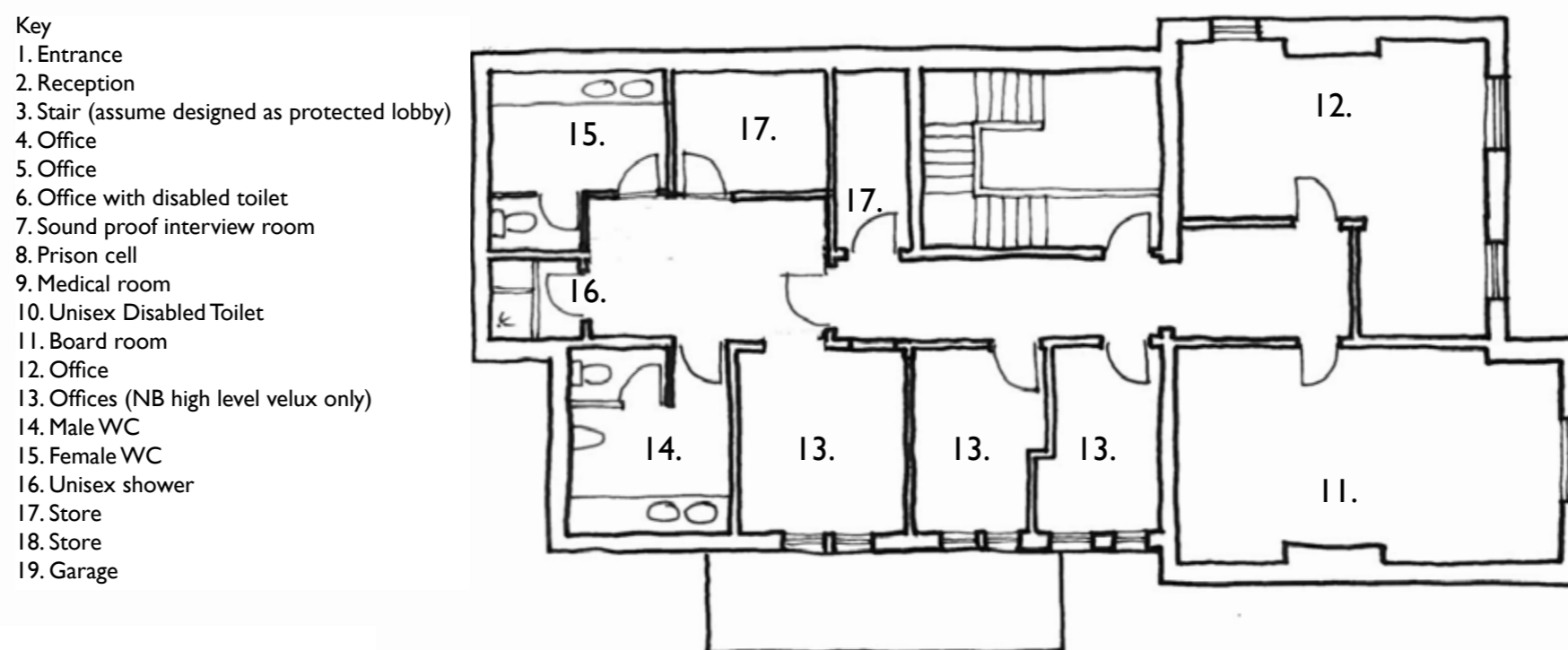
It may be possible to provide two further double rooms with ensembles provided that a suitable solution in relation to the high level velux windows and alternative means of escape route can be agreed.

The existing male and female toilets and shower room have been left intact. It should be pointed out that the shower room lacks an integrated WC and wash hand basin so would therefore not be considered as a primary shower room for the bedrooms. An additional shower is always beneficial given the number of cyclists and walkers anticipated therefore it would be beneficial to retain it.

Existing Plans



Existing Ground Floor Sketch Plan
(existing layout to be confirmed)

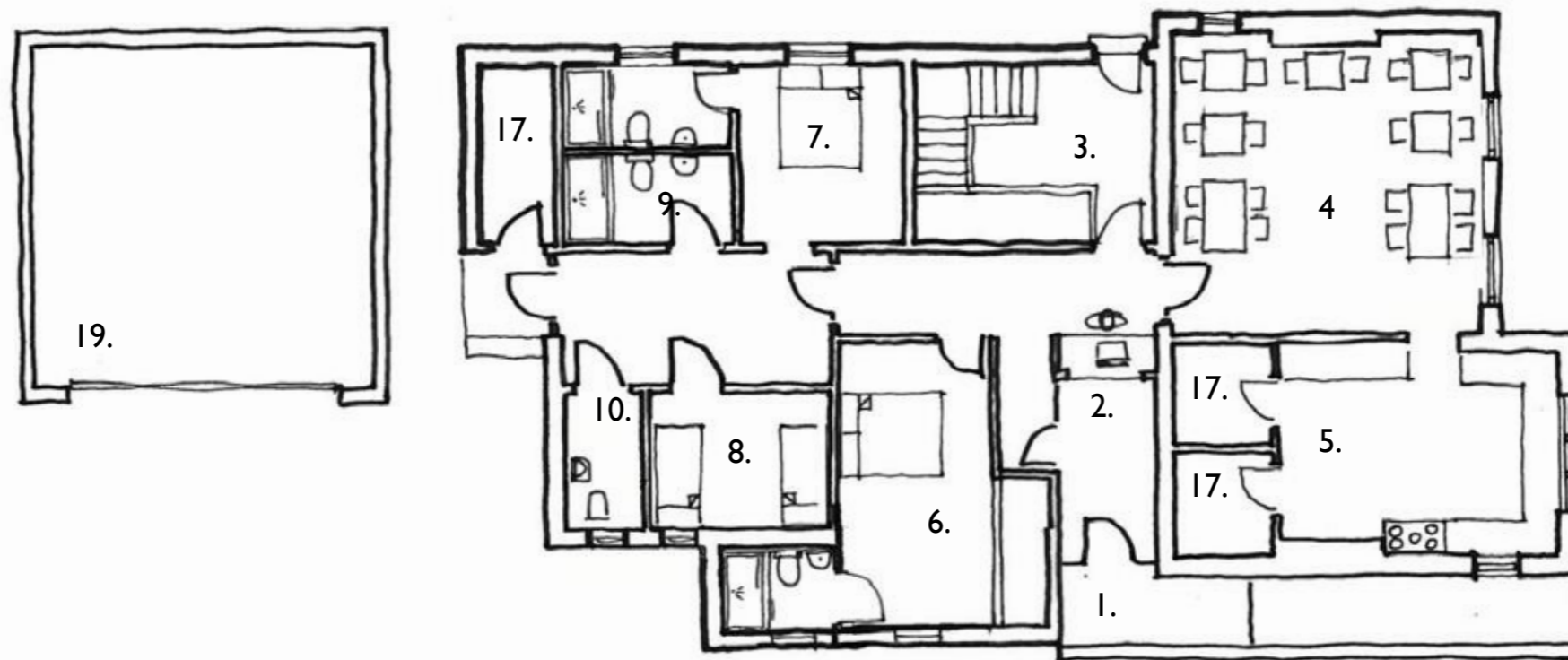


- Key
- 1. Entrance
 - 2. Reception
 - 3. Stair (assume designed as protected lobby)
 - 4. Office
 - 5. Office
 - 6. Office with disabled toilet
 - 7. Sound proof interview room
 - 8. Prison cell
 - 9. Medical room
 - 10. Unisex Disabled Toilet
 - 11. Board room
 - 12. Office
 - 13. Offices (NB high level velux only)
 - 14. Male WC
 - 15. Female WC
 - 16. Unisex shower
 - 17. Store
 - 18. Store
 - 19. Garage

Existing First Floor Sketch Plan
(existing layout to be confirmed)

0 5m

Proposed Plans



Proposed Ground Floor Sketch Plan
(existing layout to be confirmed)

- Key
- 1. Entrance
 - 2. Reception
 - 3. Stair (assume designed as protected lobby)
 - 4. Dining room (18 covers)
 - 5. New kitchen
 - 6. Bedroom with wc converted to ensuite
 - 7. Sound proof room with adjacent ensuite
 - 8. Prison cell with separate shower room
 - 9. Room converted to ensuite & showerroom
 - 10. Unisex Disabled Toilet
 - 11. Male dormitory with ensuite
 - 12. Female dormitory with ensuite
 - 13. Double room with ensuite
 - 14. Male WCs
 - 15. Female WCs
 - 16. Unisex shower
 - 17. Store / cleaners cupboard
 - 18. Separate shower room or store
 - 19. Cycle store and drying room



Proposed First Floor Sketch Plan
(existing layout to be confirmed)

0 5m

Assessment of the Condition of the Building

The fabric of the building is in very good condition and the robust finishes of the doors, windows and wall linings appear to be suitable for reuse as a hostel.

As outlined earlier, it would be useful to establish if the existing doors are fire doors and investigate the level of acoustic insulation in the partition walls.

A full audit of the fire detection and alarm system should be carried out to establish what level of upgrade will be required to convert the building to a hostel.

As an additional 5no. toilets are proposed for the building it would be sensible to examine the connection to the main drains and ascertain if any upgrades are required.

The external works appear to be in reasonable condition. It would be recommended that the security fencing is removed, particularly around the rear of the building, to soften the visual appearance.

It might also be worth allowing for redecoration to remove the police blue and re-brand the building ready for a fresh start.



Building viewed from Main Street



Building viewed from Clash Breac



Front Entrance



Rear Entrance



Potential Cycle store and drying room



On site parking for 6 cars