

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 from The Association of the Friends of St. John's, c/o Rosie Nimmo, 7 Bath Street, Edinburgh, EH15 1EZ.

We have a constitution which will follow separately.

The land to which this application relates is an area of land with the footprint of the main building of St. John's RC Primary School, located on the junction of Hamilton Terrace and Duddingston Road, Edinburgh, EH15 and ancillary space of no more than 5% of the total area designated for the park (which will allow for re-instatement of the demolished toilets and enable a limited amount of - primarily disabled - parking). Shared use of entry.

This application is a request for ownership.

We understand that the council place no monetary value on this building, considering it in fact to be a liability. In which case our proposal is that the negative value of the building negates the value of the ancillary land and offer that we pay an amount of £1 for the building and ancillary land. The council have estimated that it will cost £2,345,000.00 to restore this building to a working building and if our offer is acceptable to the council we can then use all of the capital we can gather to secure and improve the building and create a new and vibrant asset that will be of enormous benefit to the citizens of Edinburgh.

A key condition of this application is that we need free and open access to the buildings through parkland and subject to planning permission. As stated above we do need some of the land around it for ancillary purposes (replacing knocked down toilets etc) and a limited amount of parking for disabled people.

We can supply you with more details in the future.

REASONS for our application

1 The Council is going to demolish a building of historic and architectural importance.

2 It will enable the creation of much needed art space within the community especially in view of the closure of Edinburgh Palette at Meadowbank and the other studio space which is also just being lost at St. Margaret's School, Newington.

3 Some space within the building would be dedicated to part of the archive of Professor Richard Demarco CBE, recipient of the Edinburgh Medal who is a son of Portobello and attended St John's RC primary school, relating to his early life in Portobello. He is internationally acclaimed and both the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao have applied to house his archives, however he is determined to keep them in Edinburgh and envisages this as a dynamic entity, with people who live or have lived in Portobello being invited to add their own experiences and memories to it. This would encourage participation and involvement by the local community and former Portobello residents.

4 To be a resource for the adjacent schools, the newly built St. John's, Duddingston Primary and Portobello High School and the wider community. We already have offers of art groups for children and adults.

5 Portobello Heritage Trust with its large collection of artefacts and products of the famous local Buchan Pottery is needing a home so this could be a possibility.

6 We envisage that this building will be a hub for the people of Portobello but particularly for that part of Duddingston, which currently has no focal point or local centre for activities and meetings. In addition to this, Portobello's population is burgeoning (800 new homes being built) and there is a desperate need for additional community facilities.

7 Professor Demarco (who instigated and developed the Traverse Theatre as well as having been instrumental in shaping the early Edinburgh Festival Fringe) has suggested that this could be a venue for Fringe events, putting Portobello on the map and raising its profile with international visitors. This would bring untold benefits to the local and wider area.

Benefits

Some of the benefits have already been stated in the above list of reasons.

This would be a great resource for the community and would provide a unique focal point where none currently exists.

We are planning to link up with Duddingston Primary school in their endeavour to develop a safe cycle route from the school to the Innocent Railway. We would install cycle rails and encourage people to leave their cars at home. In this way, we will be helping the environment and improving the general health and fitness levels of the building's users.

It will bring the park that is to be created around it, to life and will be a dynamic addition to the 14 hectare Figgate Park that is already adjacent. We envisage that there could be modern sculpture in the surrounding park, creating – on a much smaller but no less important scale - a sense of place and emphasis on the importance of art similar to that of Jupiter Artland or the gardens at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

Eduardo Paolozzi is another famous, Catholic, son of Edinburgh and, like Richard Demarco, is the son of immigrant parents. This introduces an international dimension to our proposal. Currently in the area there are many people who have moved from other countries and their children attend the local schools. We have had great support for our plans from them and from the other locals with whom we have discussed this.

FUNDING

We propose raising the money to fund the **initial costs** that will be involved in restoring this school to a usable condition by applying to several different charities including

The Scottish Land Fund

The National Lottery Fund

Architectural Heritage Fund

The Scottish Government

Resilient Scotland Ltd

Big Fund

Jessica Scotland Trust

In addition to these and whichever other charities we can identify to approach for help, the initial capital investment will be met by a fund raising initiative by Richard Demarco who has already started an appeal to his many, many high profile artist friends to donate one piece of work each to be auctioned at Lyon and Turnbull's.

We are also proposing to raise the initial sum by crowdfunding/by a community share issue/benefit events (Portobello has more than its fair share of musicians, performers, authors, poets and artists)/fundraising through other means.

Out of the Blue are very keen to partner any local organisation who takes this building on and have told us we have their 100% support. We would be able to access funds via them.

FUTURE FUNDING

For the future we calculate that the rental from the, much needed, artists' studios will pay for the ongoing costs involved in maintaining and running an older building and have based this plan on the current rents paid at St. Margaret's House and the number of spaces we could provide at St. John's.

SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

We currently have a petition (with almost 1500 signatures) to save this building from demolition so that it can be re-purposed. [Bit.ly/StJohnsPet](https://www.bit.ly/StJohnsPet)

We have also very recently created a Facebook page to raise awareness [Bit.ly/SaveStJohns](https://www.bit.ly/SaveStJohns)