

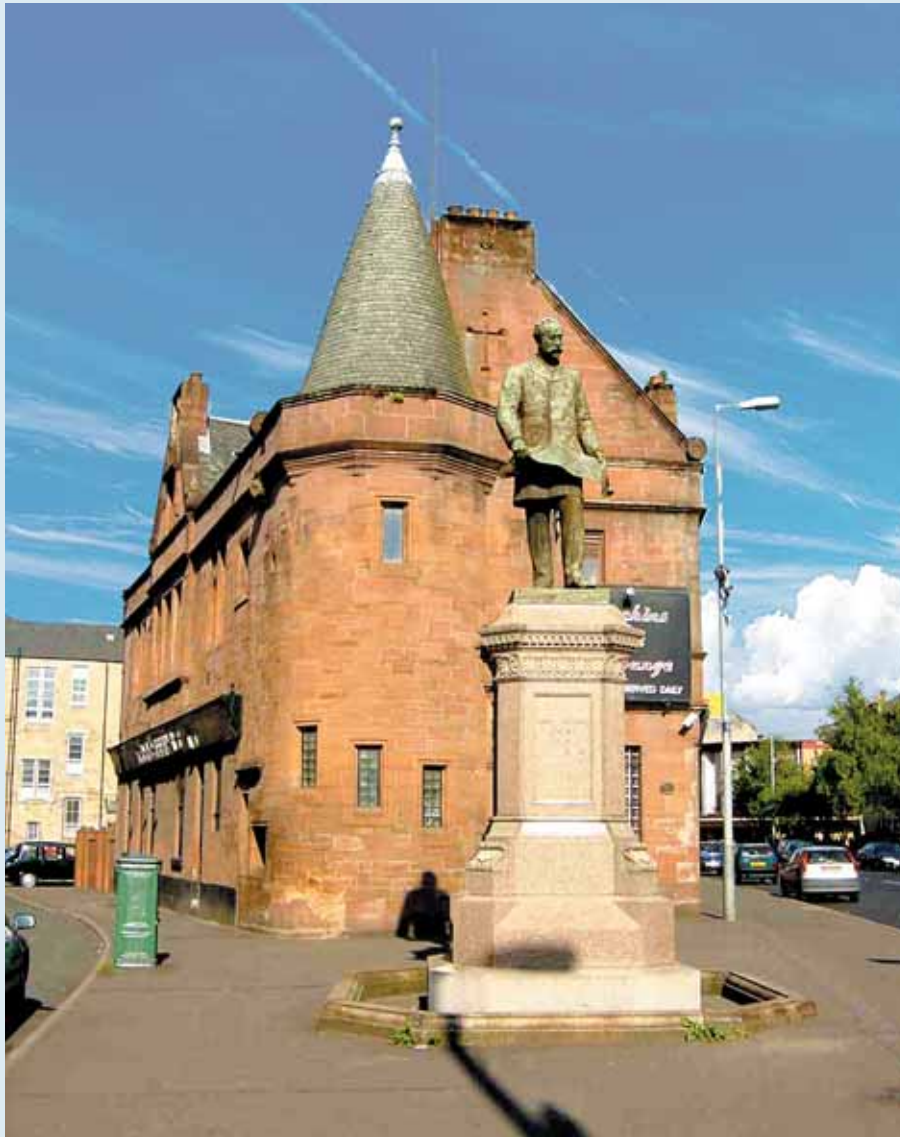
# GOVAN BULLETIN on Conservation

GOVAN WORKSPACE LTD

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2006

FREE INSIDE  
GOVAN - The Scottish  
Burgh Survey

A Broadsheet from  
Historic Scotland



## C O N T E N T S

page 2  
Why a conservation plan  
for Govan?

page 4  
At Risk - Govan's  
Remarkable Heritage

pages 6 - 7  
Heritage - a good starting  
point for Govan's  
regeneration

page 9  
Preparing the Ground for  
Water Row

pages 10 - 11  
The Heart of Govan

page 14  
Crime - a threat to  
Govan's viability as a  
community

page 15  
Give us back our Main  
Street

page 16  
Facelift for Govan Road  
shops & flats

page 18  
Elderpark Lottery Bid fails

GIVE  
US YOUR  
VIEWS

See back page

A FREE PUBLICATION

# WHY a conservation plan for Govan?

We look at how the  
community got involved



**THREE YEARS** ago at the conclusion of one of Govan's most successful local campaigns of recent times, the group involved complained among themselves that community action always seemed to be responding negatively to someone else's proposals.

The campaign had persuaded a developer to withdraw a proposal to build a controversial industrial plant on the riverfront at Linthouse, something they believed would have damaged Govan's environment and economy. Though buoyed by success, the campaigners had spent a long year on the trail and were sufficiently chastened to conclude that the community's energies were at times misplaced. As one member, Dick McGlave, recalls: "Here we were again having to fight against something. Some of us thought it was maybe time more effort went into campaigning positively for something? We hoped the group would continue and move in that direction, building the kind of community we wanted to live in. Unfortunately, for whatever reason that didn't happen."

## GOVAN'S IDENTITY

But in fact things didn't quite end there. Discussions carried on informally between two of the members concerned about some of the big issues facing Govan. Redevelopment was high on the agenda.



The talks were between Govan Workspace and Govan Community Council. Explains Dick Carabine, Chair of the Community Council: "We knew for certain that change was on our doorstep and, whilst we welcome it with open arms, we're also conscious it needs monitoring. Development of the

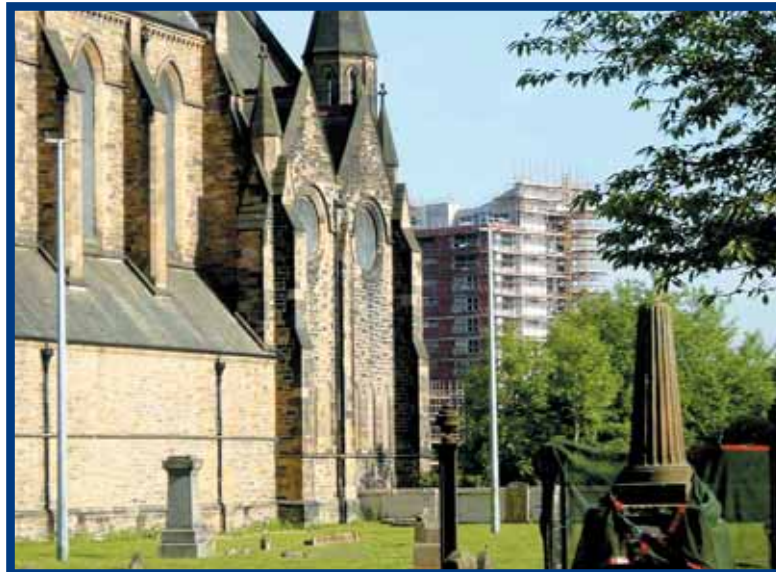
wrong kind could seriously damage Govan. We wouldn't stand by and let that happen. Govan has an identity that's special. One thing's for certain - we don't need a New Govan."

The discussions persuaded Govan Workspace to do some

investigation.

Pat Cassidy, Managing Director, explains: "There was a lot to think about because no one wants to hinder investment. But Govan is not some greenfield site. It's a community with an impressive history and heritage. These need consideration too."

Research soon followed on a study to examine what was meant by Govan's identity. He continues: "We needed to find out what it was that's significant about Govan as a place. We wanted to draw up a statement of those things the community valued from the past, from Govan's early history, to its more acclaimed role in social and economic events of the 150 years, and its rich heritage of buildings, sculptures and monuments."



Talking to the community formed a central part of the work. A year later the first phase of the study was published in a draft report, A Conservation Plan for Govan, researched and written by planning consultant David Robertson.

Pat Cassidy explains that a lot of work remains to be done: "Consulting the community is at the very heart of what we're trying to achieve. It's not easy but it's essential if the final report is to have credibility. Publication of the Conservation Bulletin is part of that process. It's something we were asked to do by the Community Council so that as many people as possible could find out what's going on and air their views."

# National Agency tours Govan Historic Visit

THE KEY role played by heritage assets in regeneration was the focus of attention recently when the Management Board of Historic Scotland toured Govan prior to holding their quarterly meeting there. The visit allowed members an opportunity to view the former Burgh's exceptional range of buildings.

Explains Sarah Govan, HS Inspector of Ancient Monuments: "The visit was very successful and provided an opportunity for the Board to meet local representatives and hear for themselves about the issues associated with Govan's wonderful buildings. What we saw provoked great interest, including the Category B-listed Orkney St Police Station and St Anthony's RC Church. There was an opportunity to see inside the Pearce Institute and admire some of the delightful features of that building. We also took a short detour to Linthouse to view a new development there, the LUV Gallery, which was well worthwhile.

"Of course, an essential stop was at the A-listed Old Parish Church - a wonderful building which also serves as the setting for the nationally important collection of early medieval carved stones dating to the 10th and 11th centuries.



Management Board of Historic Scotland outside House for an Art Lover, Bellahouston Park

The board heard about the significance of the Govan stones which ranks alongside other more recognised sites of St Andrews, Iona and Whithorn."

## Promoting Govan

A Conservation Plan for Govan is an important study by Govan Workspace that seeks to identify the assets and values - physical, cultural and historical - which make Govan what it is as a place and as a community. The ultimate purpose is to promote Govan and to expose the short-sightedness of negative attitudes towards it. Equally, it is to encourage a balanced approach to redevelopment, highlighting the need for good investment that involves no loss of character or identity to Govan.

The Plan puts forward a number of new policies, derived from analysis and consultation, which are designed to secure Govan's heritage and assets. The hope is that these policies will be accepted by developers, planners and others as sensible guidelines when considering future development proposals for Govan.



**FEEDBACK**

*Dick Carabine is Chairman of Govan Community Council.*

*"There's no doubt that what we need - and we need it urgently - is housing. Because without a big increase in population we'll never get the shops and local services the community requires. There's plenty of land around here to accommodate good-quality family homes. And Govan Housing Association proved 10 years ago, when it built the highly successful tenements on Govan Rd at McKechnie Street, that if you put the emphasis on quality, there'll be no lack of demand."*

## did you know...

### Major political centre

"It seems quite likely that Govan was a site of a 'national' assembly, perhaps a place where British kings were popularly acclaimed. It is particularly unusual to be able to identify the key components of a major political centre from this period with such a degree of confidence... Taken as a whole, the complex of Early Historic monuments are potentially amongst the most important of their kind in Scotland."

Source: The Scottish Burgh Survey by Chris Dalglish and Stephen Driscoll.

# At risk - Govan's remarkable heritage

Govan has been seriously undervalued

AS A PLACE Govan has had a remarkable history. Recent archaeology reveals the presence of a Christian settlement there around the 5th century, the earliest known example on the Clyde, and a major ecclesiastical centre by the 8th. In Medieval times, it was the headquarters of a kingdom stretching south as far as Carlisle. Govan's modern history, of course, is more familiar - the cradle of world shipbuilding for 50 years until the early 20th century and an important focal point of radical social movements in recent times.



B-listed statue of Sir William Pearce, Burleigh Street

The Conservation Plan draws our attention to the remarkable legacy each of these eras or events has left - a 5th century burial ground, which is a scheduled ancient monument; 31 Medieval sculptured stones exhibited at present in Govan Old Parish Church; a wide range of fine Victorian properties, one of the largest concentrations of listed buildings in Glasgow; and a shipbuilding industry that has survived despite suffering a thousand cuts.

Yet the great irony and conundrum is that Govan's place in the world today should stand in such stark contrast to its illustrious past. Few communities with a background of this quality have suffered social and economic hardship on a scale like Govan's. Indeed, the former Burgh's fortunes suffered so badly through the 20th century that its name - once a byword for high-quality craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology - was to become synonymous with urban decay. And that, according to the analysis of the Conservation Plan, is the abiding problem: its poor reputation in the modern era means Govan has been seriously undervalued as a place and as a community. Consequently, its marvellous heritage is at risk.

This negative attitude demonstrated itself abundantly in the 1970s when the area was damaged by a succession of planning blunders. Two in particular had far-reaching consequences. First, a programme of comprehensive redevelopment swept away much of Govan's traditional tenements, with little thought given to replacing them. Second, the town centre suffered a serious setback when its main street, Govan Road, was summarily downgraded and replaced by a new 4-lane bypass. The net effect was to set in motion a downward spiral of decline as Govan haemorrhaged population, became blighted by acres of derelict land and saw many surviving shops and services become unsustainable.

## FEEDBACK



*Dick McGlave has been an active member of the Govan Community for more than half a century. He is a founder director of Govan Workspace.*

*"Something needs to be done for the youth because at the moment we're offering them nothing. Everybody's quick to complain about them but few people bother to ask what's being done to provide support and give them an alternative to the streets. We'd pinned a lot of hope on getting new facilities at Elder Park once it was done up but we're not even getting that now. I've been involved in meetings about the park for the past 14 years and I just don't understand how such an important project could be put back yet again."*

# Launching new ideas and policies

## Wake-up call to the authorities



**THE CONSERVATION Plan is intended as a wake-up call to public authorities, reminding them of the significance of Govan's history, character and heritage, and drawing attention to the losses it has endured and the threats it faces. But the Plan is, above all, forward-looking: its aim is to promote Govan and to improve things and so it puts forward a number of positive ideas and policies, including: -**

### **ROADS**

The layout of local roads and streets needs radical reform to meet the needs of residents. The 4-lane highways of Golspie Street and Harmony Row should be downgraded, and Govan Road restored as the town's main street.

### **HOUSING**

The future viability of Govan as a community depends on increasing the population. New housing, of a form and size to match Govan's urban character, should be built along traditional routes to the town centre and on land reclaimed from decommissioned roads. The preservation of Govan's tenements is seen as an important priority if the area's urban character is to be retained.

### **HERITAGE & PLANNING**

The report regrets that Govan's historical significance has never

been properly addressed by post-war planning and is not recognised in the current City Plan. It calls for an early appraisal of the area's historic buildings and for Conservation Area status to be considered for central Govan.

### **SHOPPING**

If retail trading is to survive in Govan there needs to be change and investment. There should be a wide-ranging review of retail facilities, including a possible return to main street shopping and a re-assessment of plans to upgrade the present shopping centre.



**A-listed former British Linen Bank and flats**



**Harmony Row, one of Govan's inappropriate 4-lane highways**

### **GOVAN OLD AND WATER ROW**

The Plan identifies the ancient riverfront site of Govan Old Parish Church and Water Row as the precious jewel in Govan's crown. It opposes new plans for densely packed housing there as bereft of imagination. At the very least, a moratorium is called for to allow archaeological research to reveal more about the history of the site or determine if further Christian or Medieval relics are buried there.

In the longer term, the land should be reclaimed for the public realm, allowing Govan to be reconnected to the riverfront for the first time in a hundred years and making it possible to improve the setting of Govan Old and its ancient burial ground. The report claims that time is needed to research new uses and activities for Water Row. The hope is that if that search is successful and a suitable development emerges, it could become a cornerstone for the rebuilding of the community and restore some of the greatness that once attached to the name of Govan.

# Heritage -

## a good starting point for Govan's regeneration

**THIS IS an appropriate moment to reflect on Govan's past. Not only are we on the verge of major changes to the urban fabric, but we have never been better equipped to appreciate the potential contribution that the buried fragments and forgotten history can make to the process of renewal.**

The recently completed study of Historic Govan is the most detailed and comprehensive study of Govan's heritage ever undertaken. These findings are not just available to planners and heritage professionals, but the important historic issues are highlighted in the free Broadsheet which was prepared for the public as part of the project.

Using the past for guidance about the future shape of Govan may appear backwards looking, however it sits well with the community's deep attachment to the place of Govan. This attachment is widespread, but it is largely instinctive and most would find it difficult to explain where it comes from.



Hogback tombstone, Govan Old Parish Church

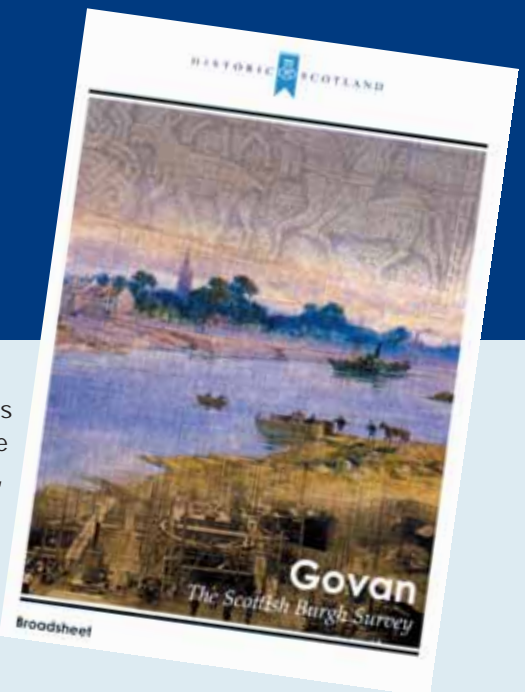
The main aim of the Burgh Survey was to review what survives of Govan's past and to reveal what makes it a special place. At the height of the shipbuilding era a local pride in the awesome achievements was natural, but this is not the whole story of Govan's distinctive character.

The truth lies at a deeper level. Some of this is readily accessible and some can only be revealed through archaeology. A millennium before steamships were dreamt of, Govan was a place of importance. In the centuries when Scotland was still taking shape, Govan was at the heart of the kingdom of Strathclyde. The most impressive evidence of this power is the wonderful collection of sculpture housed within Govan Old parish church, which are almost certainly the gravestones of the ancient kings and monuments erected with royal patronage between AD 900 - 1100. The primitive power of this sculpture can be appreciated by anyone who views the stones. A less

obvious relic of this period is the churchyard itself, laid out perhaps as early as AD 550, just as Christianity was taking hold, and occupied continuously since.

Moving away from the churchyard, other evidence from the middle ages is scarcely visible; it has been buried and is accessible only through archaeology. And yet it is revealed in the very pattern of the streets: Water Row at the river crossing must be the earliest part of the settlement, the open public space at Govan Cross has its origins in a great earthen mound (which towered over the settlement until the 19th century). Known as the Doomster Hill, it served as a place of public assembly, where law courts were convened and, quite possibly, the place where kings were proclaimed. The original link between these two focal points still survives as Pearce Lane.

There are few places in Scotland with comparable collections of sculpture and none of them can claim to have been as politically important as Govan in this crucial period. Medieval Govan was victim of its own success, because when the kingdom of Strathclyde was incorporated into greater Scotland Govan was replaced by Glasgow. This shift of political-religious centres is best explained as a deliberate attempt to distance the new centre of Strathclyde from Govan, because of the strong links to the previous dynasty. Such evidence for this period as survives will be found buried around the ancient core of Govan at Water Row.



Mounts Bay before launch at Govan Shipyard. Image courtesy of BAE Systems

Professor Stephen Driscoll of Glasgow University has recently completed the most detailed and comprehensive study of Govan's heritage ever undertaken. His research formed part of the Scottish Burgh Survey, commissioned by Historic Scotland. Previously, in 1994 and 1996, Professor Driscoll carried out a series of archaeological excavations at Govan Old Parish Church and Water Row. Here he reflects on what archaeology has revealed about Govan and the importance of its heritage. The Burgh Survey provides some of the essential raw materials needed for the regeneration of Govan.

People are more aware of Govan's second period of greatness, but as with all familiarity there is a danger of contempt. Why save redundant shipyards and other industrial relics in the age of the computer? For a start, because Govan didn't just make ships: its industrial and urban origins are more complex and are tied up with the growth of the British Empire and the development of textiles. Another reason is that Govan's most distinctive buildings are products of a period of unprecedented industrial growth and, unlike the ships, are still here.

*“There are few places in Scotland with comparable collections of sculpture and none of them can claim to have been as politically important as Govan in this crucial period”*

It is hoped that the Burgh Survey will make a substantial contribution to the discussions initiated by the Conservation Plan. An awareness of the nature and importance of Govan's past should help to ensure that a distinctive sense of place survives in Govan. The Burgh Survey provides some of the essential raw materials needed for the regeneration of Govan.



## Experts join forces

A GROUP of leading experts has joined forces with Govan Workspace to promote the cause of conservation in Govan. Supplementing the original team of David Robertson, Rosemary Swords and Pat Cassidy are industrial archaeologist and former Historic Scotland Inspector, Professor John Hume; historian and former Minister of Govan Old Parish Church, Rev. Tom Davidson Kelly; and Professor Stephen Driscoll of Glasgow University's Archaeology Department.

Invited a year ago to provide critical comment on the first draft of the Conservation Plan, the new members have since helped work through many aspects of the study. The wider group has now taken responsibility for the



(Left to right) Rev. Tom Davidson Kelly, Pat Cassidy, John Hume, Peter McGowan, Rosemary Swords, David Robertson and Stephen Driscoll

preparation and commissioning of a new study of the Water Row. Said Pat Cassidy: "To have individuals with this level of expertise give of their time freely to the project has been a special bonus, and one we couldn't have paid for. What's more, their endorsement has removed any lack of confidence we ourselves might have had about the historic significance of Govan."



Minister of Govan Old,  
Reverend Dr Norman Shanks

# Water Row study gets underway

AN ARCHITECTURAL study of the historic Water Row site is to be carried out this summer following the appointment of one of the country's leading design practices. The study is the first piece of related research to be commissioned following publication of the Conservation Plan, which identified Water Row as the key element in the regeneration of Govan.

Funded by Govan Workspace, the commission has been awarded to Glasgow-based architects, Austin-Smith:Lord, long-term specialists in conservation and urban design.

The remit is to exploit the outstanding historic and natural attributes of the riverfront site in a way that will bring new life to the town centre and restore a strong, positive identity to Govan. The brief, which has been heavily influenced by local consultations, will be to create the environment of a historic town centre but one in which housing forms an integral part and where there is a balance between privacy and public open space. Housing will be mixed - affordable, to suit the needs of the local population

# Future status of Govan Old unresolved

**AS THE minister responsible for Govan Old Parish Church, the Reverend Dr Norman Shanks is well placed to judge the contribution the church and its ancient burial ground could make to the regeneration of Govan.**

"There's been a number of studies done", he explains, "and with each one it has become increasingly clear that these are not only a central part of Govan's heritage but also important assets which should benefit Govan in the long term. There's no doubt in my own mind they have a very positive role to play."

There have already been discussions about the future of Govan Old, alongside the other Govan churches. The local minister continues: "During the past 18 months we've been carrying out an options appraisal study, which is basically an examination of various possibilities for the future use of this very significant Grade A-listed building. We've learned that the building has great potential for a variety of additional uses, for instance as a flexible meeting space that could accommodate conferences or function as a performance venue."

Norman Shanks believes that development of this kind could only be good for Govan, attracting more people to events in the area and raising its public profile. But there is another important spin-off: "Above all, there would be an opportunity to explore Govan's cultural heritage and exhibit the thousand-year-old

Govan stones in a professional manner, making them more accessible than they are at present and providing a more informative experience for the visitors, who grow in numbers each year. None of this, of course, means Govan Old should cease to function as a place of worship. Indeed, given the ancient history of the site, there are strong arguments for this continuing. It is important to recognise that the various options are not mutually exclusive."

No decision on the future of Govan Old will be taken, however, until a number of important congregational matters have been resolved. These, Dr Shanks explains, must take precedence: "The Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland is currently looking at the future of the three parishes in Govan, where there are at present two vacancies for ministers. The proposal currently under discussion is the possibility of the three local churches coming together to form a single congregation, which would number around 400. In those circumstances, Govan would be served by a pastoral team of four, made up of two ministers, a pastoral worker and youth worker. It would mean, of course, that difficult decisions would then have to be taken about all three church buildings - Govan Old, New Govan and St Kenneth's. None of us finds decisions such as these easy but one way or another I think we all have a duty to face up to them."

and private, to bring new people into the area. The study will be expected to identify suitable locations for non-residential buildings that will relate to the site's new-found status as a focal point for visitors, though the precise use of these facilities will be left undetermined at this stage.

A key element of the design will be deciding a scale and density for new development, so that it sits well alongside the surviving fabric and within the historic town environment. The layout of streets and public spaces will be designed to encourage movement and a strong relationship between town and river, and between other elements on the site. Priority will be given to pedestrian activity over vehicular. Layout will be informed by the known history of the site and will make allowances for future archaeological investigations. The overall treatments to buildings, landscaping and surfaces will be sympathetic to the historic environment.

It is hoped the study will provide the first glimpse of a fresh identity for Govan, building on the strengths and character of the former Burgh's fine heritage and adding a range of impressive new buildings that will help to restore Govan's rightful prominence as one of Glasgow's vibrant town centres.



Govan Old Parish Church and ancient burial ground

## did you know?

*"Govan Old appeared to have started as a Christian site in the 5th or 6th century, to have developed into a major ecclesiastical centre by the 8th, and to have attracted to it a powerful secular elite by the 10th."*

Source: Current Archaeology July/August 2005

# Preparing the ground for Water Row

A central feature is the creation of a new Urban Village



Water Row site at the confluence of the Clyde and Kelvin

A FIRM of specialists in the field of historic towns and landscapes was recruited earlier this year to help prepare a detailed brief for the full architectural study at Water Row. Peter McGowan Associates were asked to carry out a preliminary analysis of the site and to identify the key elements in respect of historical context, archaeological features, landscape setting and natural attributes, which might form the building blocks of the detailed Water Row study.

The results of their input have been highly beneficial. Already a picture is emerging of how a redeveloped Water Row might look, comprising several naturally distinct zones contained within a unified whole. McGowan's analysis pays due respect to the ancient history of the location, with his representation of the "Processional Way", an important link between Govan Old and the Doomster Hill - also re-created in some form. But he builds too on the strength of Water Row's outstanding location on the banks of the Clyde, providing the novel idea of a shingle beach to give the community access to the water's edge and, at the same time, restoring the dilapidated ferry dock in recognition of the river's renewed importance as a means of communication, especially in relation to the new Transport Museum.

A central feature of his vision is the creation of a new "urban village". The regeneration of the Water Row as a historic town centre can only work if there are people living there. Human activity has to be pre-eminent. For without this natural form of security, there would be a serious risk that such an area of open public space would, like others before it, be colonised by anti-social elements and become one more neglected corner of Govan into which few people would venture.

*The following pages show the outline prepared by Peter McGowan Associates, which is now part of the brief for the Water Row Architectural Study.*

# Bringing new life to The Heart of Govan

The plan below by Peter McGowan Associates shows an analysis of the development potential of the Water R some may not. But what this work does demonstrate in robust fashion is the huge potential of the site to contri

**1** Access down to water's edge at newly created shingle beach area on riverside walkway. Relates to greenspace of new urban village and views to parish church from across the river.

**2** Govan's outstanding collection of carved stones to be promoted as a major attraction.

**3** New "urban village" - two / three-storey residential area and possible location for future Galgael project.

**4** Upgrade and interpret burial ground, a scheduled ancient monument.

**5** Various urban spaces to be upgraded in a unified manner.

**6** Comprehensive streetscape improvements in central Govan.






**7** Re-instating Govan Road as the town's main street and former road links south from Govan Cross.

**8** Single-storey landmark building related to Doomster Hill and Govan Cross: potential uses - tourist, commercial, café, restaurant etc.

**9** Doomster Hill: re-creation in some form of this ancient symbol of democratic assembly, also reflecting Govan's modern association with the socialist movement.

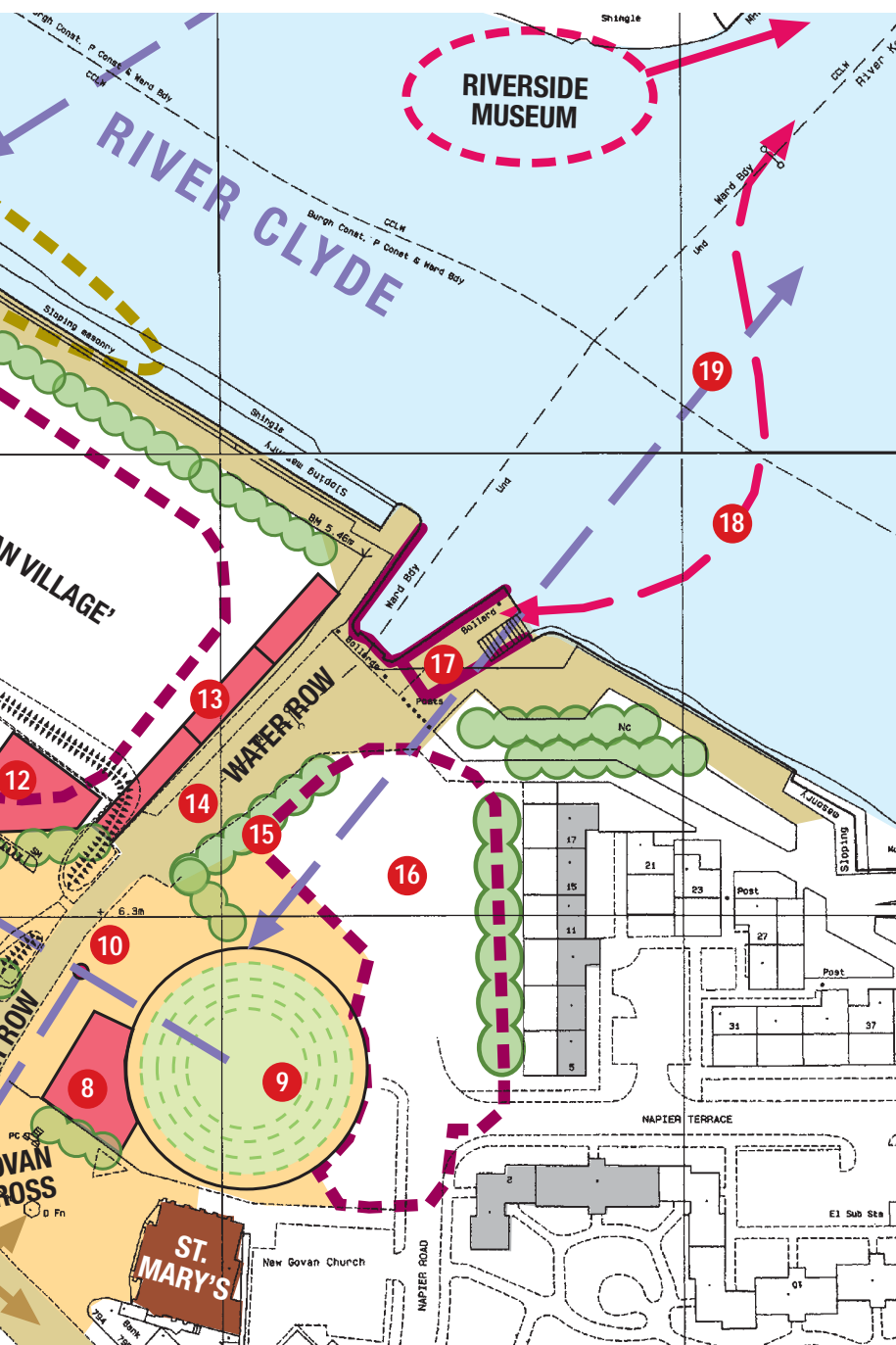
**10** Govan Market - use of public spaces near Govan Cross area.



	Proposed buildings
	Important urban spaces of quality
	Prominent & architecturally significant buildings
	Other buildings contributing to the urban form
	Undistinguished buildings breaking the 19th century or earlier urban form



low site. Clearly, all of the proposals it contains are the very earliest of ideas. Some may happen, but they will contribute to the regeneration of Govan.



Proposed housing



Access to development areas



Visual linkages

©Peter McGowan Associates

**11** High-quality "Processional Way" re-creating ancient links between Doomster Hill and Govan Old; new gateway formed at entrance to burial ground.

**12** Two-storey building at splayed entrance to "Processional Way": potential visitor, commercial or other uses related to Water Row.

**13** New buildings lining Water Row: possible uses - commercial, community, training etc.

**14** Water Row retained as high-quality pedestrian space, with service access for vehicles.

**15** Significant greening at Water Row, large trees reflecting old character.

**16** Two/three-storey residential area relating to Doomster Hill and surrounding views.

**17** Old ferry ramp to be excavated and returned for passenger ferry use; 1912 dock conserved.

**18** Ferry ride to Museum of Transport - a convenient visitor link to city centre via Govan subway station.

**19** Cross-river view of Museum of Transport. From Museum there would be views of Govan landmarks, including the ferry dock, new buildings at Water Row, Govan Old, Doomster Hill, and a variety of new housing contrasting in form and shape with other development along the Clyde.

# City's Regeneration Director tours Water Row

A VISIT by one of Glasgow's most senior officers to the sites at Water Row and Govan Old has been welcomed as a positive sign for future development there.

Steve Inch, Director of Development & Regeneration Services, toured the sites earlier in the year with members of the Conservation Plan team.

Govan Workspace Chairman, Duncan MacLean, said he was pleased the meeting had taken place. "We've invested a significant amount of money in research and are about to commit more to the Water Row study itself. It has been important to have discussions with the Council about this and I'm pleased Mr. Inch has been willing to hear what we have to say. Our aim in all of this is to try to influence things in a positive manner and to get the best possible outcome for Govan."



Professor Stephen Driscoll (left) guides Steve Inch round the Govan burial ground

Mr. Inch commented: "It's quite clear you don't rush into the development of a site as significant as this without proper research and investigation. I consider it very important we get it right."

The findings of the Water Row study will be presented to Mr. Inch in the late summer.

In December 2005, the Council's DRS Committee decided to bring forward "appropriate development proposals for the key riverside site at Water Row, taking account of the outcome of proposed archaeological investigations and the heritage aspects of the site".

## Digging up Govan's past



Remains uncovered during excavations at Govan Old burial ground 1994



FRESH ARCHAEOLOGICAL excavations are planned to begin within the next year at Water Row in advance of decisions being taken about the future development of the historic site. Glasgow City Council's commitment to the

project was recently confirmed when planners finalised a detailed briefing paper that clears the way for tenders being invited for the work.

A spokesperson for the City Council confirmed it was hoped the work would go ahead soon, though there was still uncertainty about the exact time-scale. She explained: "We want it to be sooner rather than later, but some funding matters have still to be resolved and until that happens we can't confirm a date. However, with the brief for the work now finalised, we'll be ready to go out to a number of archaeological consultants as soon as we get the go-ahead.

The excavations are considered necessary because of the archaeological importance of Water Row. It is hoped they will reveal more about the history of the site. The spokesperson continued: "Any future development at Water Row will be affected by what we find there. If we were to discover rich archaeological deposits, these would have to be respected."



# Focal point of early historic Scotland

Professor John Hume is an industrial archaeologist who has researched and written extensively about the development of communities in Scotland. He draws attention to some of the historical factors that determined the shape of Govan.

GOVAN has been densely built up since the 1890s. It is hard to imagine what it was like before that. Until about two hundred years ago the village and its parish church were at the centre of a rich farming area on both banks of the Clyde. Why was Govan established at that particular spot?

There were probably three major reasons. There were a stream to provide water for the village; a ford across the Clyde, uniting the parish, and the river Kelvin, with water power for corn flour mills.

Before about 1100 the ford and the stream were probably the key determinants of the site of the Doomster Hill and of the church and graveyard, as places of assembly, and as symbols of religious faith and of belief in an ordered society. I believe that people living in the area 1200 years ago were no longer in defended settlements, but were a stable farming community, like those which survive today in much of rural Scotland.

The link between the church and the Doomster Hill was probably a critical one, but the Water Row area was also significant as the southern end of the ford, and later of a ferry across the Clyde.



"Govan in 1845" by William Simpson. The sheds of Napier's Shipyard are on the left. Napier launched his first iron ship, the Vanguard, in 1843. The Govan Ferry row boat has just disembarked passengers at the little bay, in the foreground, at the end of Water Row. Govan Parish Church's steeple can be seen beyond the shipyard's sheds.

Reproduced with the permission of Glasgow Museums.




Govan Old as it may have looked in the 10th century. On the left is the church and its famous tomb monuments. On the right is Doomster Hill, a place of popular assembly. Across the river is the possible royal villa at Partick.

There also seems to have been a harbour for trading craft, and the inns which were there in the 17th century, were probably descendants of earlier ones.

The oldest surviving representation of Govan, from the 1750s, shows a hamlet with church, Doomster Hill, and inns, in mature woodland. Though the buildings depicted were then not particularly old, I believe that the character of Govan had changed little over the period of some 900 years since the relationships between church, churchyard, Doomster Hill, and Clyde crossing were first established.

**FEEDBACK**



*Carole Angelini works with her husband Geraldo and sister-in-law, Veliana, at the Lyceum Café in Govan Rd, which the family has owned since before the First World War and which they have run since 1960.*

*"Everyone would like to see the good times return to Govan because it's still full of decent, hard-working people and they deserve better. It's time there was proper action against the menace of crime and drugs. At the moment, the authorities appear clueless, but meanwhile the community suffers. We want more beat policemen on the streets and they need to be more visible. Another thing, it's time to recognise the scale of the drugs problem and for a proper treatment centre to be opened in Govan."*

# Opinion

## Crime - a threat to Govan's viability as a community

THE SINGLE issue uppermost in the minds of many Govan people is that of crime. Go along to any public meeting and the discussion returns time and again to the same concerns - gang fighting, teenage drunkenness, vandalism, hooliganism and drugs. Many people say they won't go out at night because it's not safe.

So what has crime got to do with conservation? Well, everything.

Because when people are confronted with the unhappy experience of having to live with anti-social behaviour or drugs as neighbours, they will simply vote with their feet. And that in itself sets in motion a vicious spiral of decline as properties empty, become neglected and difficult to let or sell. Those with the wherewithal or with the least patience are the first to move. Soon the wider neighbourhood goes into decline and, as it does so, investment quickly dries up.

*In responses to our Conservation Questionnaire, Crime has been identified by local people as the biggest issue threatening Govan's viability as a community. Asked to select from a list of 10 topics, 31% of respondents have placed crime as the number one problem.*

Look no further than the number of listed buildings fallen into disrepair. Or the growing number of boarded-up flats around Govan. If tenement flats can't be let in Govan, what will be their ultimate fate? Which will be found quickest - a strategy to tackle crime, or money to raze buildings to the ground? This is not scare-mongering - it's simply learning from the past.

In the current circumstances, it would be naive of the authorities to plan the regeneration of Govan without attention to the one problem that might scupper it. A fresh initiative is called for, such as a major summit on crime, involving all sections of the community in an open and frank assessment, followed by an agreed plan of action. A genuine partnership between the police and the community is long overdue. Not the past practice of polite get-togethers to "improve communication", but a permanent structured arrangement that will allow police resources and community resources to come together on the ground where it matters.

# People and jobs

Two remarkable statistics highlight Govan's problems:

- Govan suffered a 20% cut in its already declining population between 1991 and 2001
- 51% of adults currently living in Govan are economically inactive

To secure Govan's future as a viable community two things must happen. First, a new, significant house-building programme is required to increase and broaden the population base to a level where it can support local shops, schools and services. Second, business premises need to be built on existing industrial land, which will target employers involved in activities that are likely to provide jobs for local people.



did  
you  
know?

*A millennium before steamships were dreamt of, Govan was a place of importance. In the centuries when Scotland was still taking shape, Govan was at the heart of the kingdom of Strathclyde. The most impressive evidence of this power is the wonderful*

Changes called for in roads layout

# Give us back our main street

GOVAN COMMUNITY Council has called for major changes to be made to the layout of Govan's streets and for Govan Road to be given back its rightful place as the area's main thoroughfare.

The appeal was made in a formal submission to Glasgow City Council, endorsing the Conservation Plan, which also highlighted the need for improvements to Govan's shopping facilities. The community body has asked that :

*"The road system be revised, and the shopping centre reconfigured, to make Govan Road the focus of the town*

*- be used for housing, reinstating the character of the original streets in Govan and rebuilding the density of population."*



Govan Shopping Centre

Finally, the Community Council highlighted the relevance of Govan's history to future redevelopment, arguing that:

*"Water Row and the river frontage be restored as a site of historic and archaeological importance and redeveloped as public space."*



Golspie Street - by-passing local shops and Govan town centre

*centre - specifically Golspie Street to be downgraded to a feeder road, the shopping centre radically reduced in size and the shops encouraged back on to Govan Road as the main thoroughfare."*

In turn, the statement argues for new housing to be built on land recovered from decommissioned roads, urging that:

*"The land released - particularly along Golspie Street, the shopping centre car park and the west side of Harmony Row*

*collection of sculpture housed within Govan Old parish church, which are almost certainly the gravestones of the ancient kings and monuments erected with royal patronage between AD 900 - 1100.*

*Professor Stephen Driscoll*



## FEEDBACK



*Fourteen-year-old Kyle Byrne is in third year at Govan High and is football daft.*

*"There's nowhere for us to play football any more because there's only one small pitch at Napier Drive and it's always full. So there's nothing left for us to do unless we play football in the streets or the car park. That can get you into bother. We can't even go to Elder Park because that's not in our area and you could end up in trouble with the boys who live there. No way would I take a chance doing that. You know, people have been talking about a football park for us for ages but it never comes to anything."*

# Facelift planned for Govan Road shops & flats

Govan Housing Association unveils the Portal Project

A BOLD response to the problem of vacant tenement flats and shops is to be launched by the Govan community. Govan Housing Association has unveiled the Portal Project, a programme of refurbishment and new-build works intended to bring new life into central Govan during the next three years.

Explains Housing Association Director, Germaine Hahn: "This exciting project is all about regenerating our main street and bringing life back to the shops. We've been talking to a lot of arts

projects about their accommodation needs and some are keen to come to Govan.

"The first phase will form two new shops out of three that are lying derelict near the corner with Howat St. I'm pleased we've already agreed to let one to Roots in the Community. The remaining shops between Howat St. and Rathlin St. will be targeted in a second phase in 2007. Again, we'll be amalgamating properties to get better use out of the space and we expect to let them to arts projects."

The Association's third phase in 2008 will focus on the tenements themselves, with a plan to refurbish 20 flats at the corner of Rathlin St. Germaine adds: "These particular properties have had a poor history and need special attention. They'll be refurbished to a high standard and put on the market for sale.

"At the same time, we'll be progressing the fourth and final phase, which will be a new-build development in Rathlin St. The plan is to build 30 flats, 75% let on affordable rents and 25%



Rathlin Street - site for new-build development

## FEEDBACK



Steven Godfrey, 14, is a third year student at Govan High and a keen snooker player.

"I love snooker but don't get the chance to play much because there's no facilities for people of my age. I like football too but again there's no park for us to play in so we end up walking around the streets. There used to be a club between 7 and 9 o'clock on a Friday and Saturday night and it was really good. We got to play the decks, do break dancing, make movies and even learn archery. But that didn't last long. So, apart from the Youth Information Project, there's really nothing now."

## 14 shop-fronts almost complete Trailblazing LUV Project shows the way

THE DRAMATIC impact that simple improvements to the main street environment can have on quality of life has been demonstrated by a Govan community.

Trail-blazing project, the Linthouse Urban Village, is close to completing the refurbishment of 14 shop-fronts on Govan Rd, and members of the community are delighted at the result. They say it has brought brightness, variety and colour into the local area in place of the drabness and dilapidation that once characterised it.

# Thank you...

Govan Workspace wishes to thank the following organisations and individuals for giving time to meet and discuss issues surrounding the Conservation Plan.

Govan Community Council	Glasgow City Council
Govan Reminiscence Group	South West Area Committee and Councillors Stephen Dornan, John Flanagan, Deirdre Gaughan & Alistair Watson
Pearce Institute Management Group	
Galgael	Steve Inch, Director, Development & Regeneration Services
Braendam Link	Alistair MacDonald, Head of Planning
Rev. Dr. Norman Shanks, Govan Old Parish Church	June Bell, Chief Executive's Department
Govan Housing Association	
Lighthouse Housing Association	Rev. Tom Davidson Kelly
Govan SIP	Professor John Hume
McInally Associates	Professor Stephen Driscoll
Glasgow Building Preservation Trust	West of Scotland Archaeological Services
Historic Scotland	

owner-occupied. In the case of both refurbishment and new-build, priority will be given to local people who want to purchase. But we also expect to see increasing outside interest in Govan when the redevelopment of the Southern General starts."

Funding for the Association's projects will come from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Enterprise, Communities Scotland and the Arts Council.



Explains Project Co-ordinator, Ingrid Campbell: "I think it's successful because it has been a team effort benefiting from a whole range of different skills. The approach was arts-focused and involved bringing together artists to work closely with the shop-owners while at the same time listening to other members of the community. Together, they've come up with highly imaginative and individualistic designs that have brought real colour back onto the street. I think we've also shown how physical improvements can raise a community's spirit."

The shop-front scheme is just one aspect of the LUV project launched by Linthouse Housing Association in 2003. LUV also opened a café in July 2004 in response to local people's wish for a place where they could eat or just enjoy a cup of coffee. The café has been highly successful, doubling in size recently to cope with demand. Another project, The LUV Gallery, opened around the same time and provides exhibition space where artists can showcase their work.

"What's central to all of our work" comments Ingrid, "is that we're working with the community and listening to what they have to say. As a result, we find the café and the gallery being heavily used by local people for a whole variety of events."



Ingrid Campbell outside the LUV Gallery

## FEEDBACK



*Jessie Black describes herself as an ordinary housewife but one with a passionate belief in her right to be heard.*

*"There's lots of people in Govan working hard to improve things but we won't get anywhere until the public bodies start listening to us. Look at the school closures. We were told we'd be consulted. Well, it turned out to be a farce. I delivered more than 900 signatures objecting to the site our children were being moved to, and I was totally ignored. We weren't objecting to amalgamation, because everyone knows that's got to happen. What we were against was moving our children to an inferior site outside the area. The perfect site was already available at St Anthony's, with plenty of space and greenery surrounding it.*

*"I'm just an ordinary housewife but even I can see that if you want to build up central Govan, you need a school. Young families won't consider it if children have to travel. For me it's very sad that after more than 100 years Govan town centre won't have a school."*

# Elder Park lottery bid fails

## Local people express dismay as project is shelved

**NEWS THAT** an application for funds to regenerate the Elder Park has failed is being greeted with great disappointment by the Govan community.

The submission was made by Glasgow City Council to the Heritage Lottery Fund and sought to secure a total investment of around £4.5m to upgrade the run-down Govan park. It is understood the application could not meet the necessary criteria for funding and was withdrawn earlier this year by the City Council on the advice of HLF.

The Council has now confirmed the withdrawal but is considering submitting a fresh application within the next year under a new HLF programme. A spokesperson said: "It is disappointing news that this bid failed. However, the Council is committed to the improvement of Elder Park and will be

A spokesperson for Govan Community Council expressed dismay that after such a long - running process, it had all come to nothing. He said: "I find it hard to believe the project's been shelved. Elder Park has always been one of Govan's prize assets but recently we've watched it steadily decline because of cutbacks. There are few facilities

left and many people wouldn't choose to walk through it. Someone needs to tell us why Govan keeps getting relegated. It's even more galling when you look at the huge sums invested in Glasgow Green and Tollcross Park."

Local resident Gordon MacKay, who lives beside the park, commented: "This is very bad news. The park is in need of urgent improvement and we were led to believe it would all happen fairly soon. I'm a member of the Elder Park Forum, a working group of local people and council representatives with an interest in the regeneration of the park, and yet I didn't know about this decision. I sincerely hope a meeting will be called to explain.

"One of my personal concerns is that the status of the park could end up being downgraded to that of a "common", which is really just a place to walk in. Elder Park is much more than that and has traditionally been among the most beautiful in Glasgow. It's important we stop it constantly being put back while other projects in the city move forward. I think the community will have to become much more involved."



Local resident Gordon MacKay



Statue of Sir John Elder, co-founder of what is now the Govan shipyard.

submitting a fresh application under the new Parks for People programme. We understand this may be a more suitable route to go down as it caters for smaller, community park projects. The detail of any new application is still to be decided"

It was not yet known at what level any new application would be pitched. The original submission to HLF was for around £2.5m, matched by funding of £2m from the Council.

## did you know?

*"So Early Medieval Govan, long submerged by Glasgow's 19th and 20th century redevelopment, is perhaps now being revealed as one of the most important places in North Britain a thousand years earlier."*

Source: Current Archaeology July/ August 2005

# Community invests £30,000 in conservation research



Reconnecting to the river - research team members, Pat Cassidy, Rosemary Swords and David Robertson view Govan from the Clyde

INVESTMENT BY the Govan community into research on conservation has now reached more than £30,000 over a two-year period. Made available by Govan Workspace, the funding has made it possible to produce a draft Conservation Plan and to employ various consultants to look at specific issues arising from it.

The Conservation Plan itself was researched and written by planning consultant, David Robertson of Robertson & McIntosh. He describes the work as a voyage of discovery: "It's only since starting the research that I've discovered how seriously Govan has been undervalued. Like many other people I suppose I'd been influenced by the area's association in the press with social problems. But having seen the true Govan I'm convinced about the absolute need to protect it. For me the truly outstanding discovery was Govan Old and Water Row. They're important assets not just for Govan but for Glasgow and for Scotland. I honestly believe their development could help transform this area and restore it to its former greatness.

Govan Workspace Admin Manager, Rosemary Swords, has been a key member of the research team during the two years but describes herself as a late convert to the conservation message: "At the outset we all recognised Govan had some beautiful buildings from its past but we were a long way then from talking about a Conservation Plan. When you consider the problems Govan faces, the idea of focusing on conservation seems on the face of it to be a bit fanciful or irrelevant. But as our work progressed we began to realise the true extent and value of Govan's heritage. When academics and experts told us it was up there along with Iona, Whithorn and St. Andrew's we knew how critical it was to redouble our efforts and to set about promoting Govan. I'm sure many people will take some convincing but it's an education process for us all."

Pat Cassidy, the third member of the team, believes Govan Workspace's investment will bear fruit in the months and years ahead: "The work we've undertaken shouldn't be considered negative or backward looking. On the contrary, it's a forward-thinking process. Conservation can be an integral part of redevelopment and provide a useful key to the future. If Govan gets the right kind of development and holds on to its remarkable character and heritage, then there really is potential for great things to happen here."

## FEEDBACK

*Since retirement, Betty McEachen has devoted much of her life to her community, both as chairperson of Drumoyne Tenants & Residents Association and a member of Govan Community Council. Fellow members describe the 85-year-old as one of Govan's real "fighters".*

*"I feel passionately about the need to get things right for Govan because at the moment we've a golden opportunity to turn this community round. One of my hopes is that the land between Govan Cross and the Clyde should be opened up as public space giving access to the river. But it's also big enough for housing, and I'd like to see low-build properties that would give a traditional look to the approach to the river. I dread to think that what's happened on the north bank of the Clyde could be repeated here. Can you imagine it - our lovely river running through a canyon of concrete yuppie flats?"*

## BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO GOVAN

Creating business space in the old school was considered a bold idea at the time. But it worked so well, we went on to breathe new commercial life into two other redundant properties.

Now more than 100 small firms employing over 400 people work from our premises.

However, industrial regeneration is not just about property, it is about understanding the needs of small businesses.

As a small business ourselves, we think we're good at it. But then, after 25 years, maybe we should be.



GOVAN WORKSPACE LTD  
1981 - 2006



[www.govanworkspace.co.uk](http://www.govanworkspace.co.uk)

## FEEDBACK



Duncan MacLean is  
Chairman of Govan  
Workspace.

"I'm very pleased that Govan Workspace is able to publish this Bulletin on conservation in what is an important year for us - our 25th anniversary. I consider it our great privilege to be able to commit resources to the service of the wider Govan community in this way. Our financial commitment to conservation research has now stretched over a two-year period. Given the heavy demands from our main business activities, that commitment wasn't made lightly. But we recognised Govan was undergoing change and there was an opportunity for the community to try to influence things. Govan Workspace's objective is simple and transparent. We want to influence future development in a way that reflects the needs and aspirations of the community - as expressed by the community itself."

## GIVE US YOUR VIEWS

### & WIN £100 OF GROCERIES

*This Bulletin presents a summary of the Conservation Plan and is part of an information and consultation process that's essential to its success. It was first put forward by Govan Community Council as a means of giving as many people as possible the chance to offer their views.*

*Inside, you will find a questionnaire. Please return it with your opinions clearly stated, arriving no later than 31 October 2006. Your views will form part of our final report.*

*To thank you for your time, all returned questionnaires will be entered into a ballot and £100 of groceries will be awarded to a winning Govan address, courtesy of ASDA STORES.*



GOVAN WORKSPACE LTD

Elderpark Workspace, 100 Elderpark Street, Glasgow G51 3TR.  
Six Harmony Row, Glasgow G51 3BA.  
Alexander Stephen House, 91 Holmfauld, Glasgow G51 4RY.

t: 0141 445 2340 f: 0141 445 3049 [mail@govanworkspace.co.uk](mailto:mail@govanworkspace.co.uk)