

## FAIRFIELD SHIPYARD OFFICES

Plans to rescue one of Govan's most iconic buildings from an uncertain future have made significant progress following a decision by Historic Scotland to commit funds to secure a new life for the 19<sup>th</sup> century property.

The Fairfield building, which served as the main offices for Govan's shipyard for more than 100 years, has been lying derelict since 2001 and is on Scotland's buildings at risk register. Now, an ambitious proposal by Govan Workspace to create business and heritage space is to receive grant aid of £443,642 from Historic Scotland. Glasgow City Council is also lining up to provide financial support.



### THE BUILDING

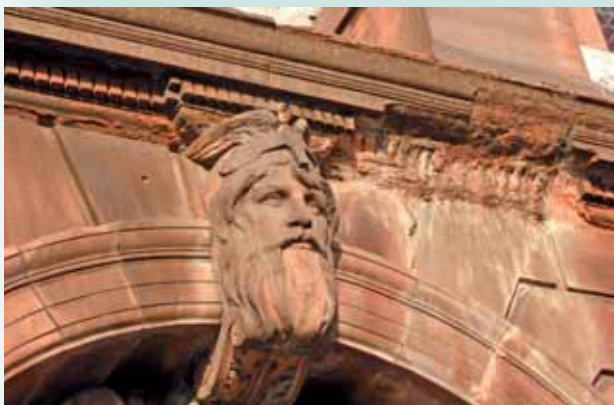
Designed by John Keppie and built around 1890 for then arguably the most prestigious shipbuilding concern in the world, the Fairfield building has been described as architecturally the finest shipbuilding office in Britain. It is certainly and unquestionably the finest in Scotland and has iconic significance not just for Govan but also for Scotland's shipbuilding heritage.

However, the Grade A-listed structure has deteriorated badly and is now seriously at risk. The roof requires complete renewal. There is widespread infestation of wet and dry rot. Water damage is affecting internal plasterwork and external masonry. Much of the building's splendid interior features - ornate plasterwork & timberwork and stained glass - are now threatened by dampness and the spread of dry rot fungus.



### REGENERATION

Govan Workspace believes the Fairfield building has the potential to make an important contribution to regeneration and must be preserved. The case is a compelling one. The redevelopment of the historic, Grade A structure, which stands imposingly on the main approach to Govan, would make a highly visible statement about Govan's physical, economic & environmental renewal. When completed, the project would bring back jobs and economic activity to an important site and provide the community & the city with a permanent heritage asset. The building is located in Govan Conservation Area and features as a priority project in the Council's Town Centre Action Plan.

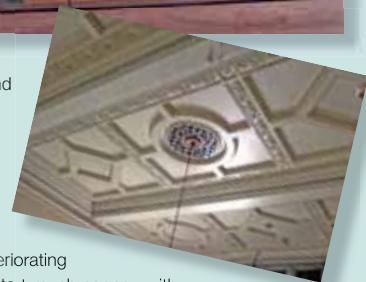


### PHASED STRATEGY

Assembling a funding package to undertake full restoration of the building could take two years. But conditions are deteriorating so rapidly that work needs to start much sooner, with immediate steps taken to make the property wind and watertight. In these circumstances, Govan Workspace proposes a two-stage strategy.

**Phase 1** - would deal with the renewal of the roof, rainwater conductors etc., the remediation of rot, and other measures to halt deterioration of the fabric. Costs will be around £1.1m.

**Phase 2** - full restoration and subdivision of the property to form office and heritage space - is currently estimated at £4.2m. In addition to loan investment by Govan Workspace, approaches will be made for financial contributions to - the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Glasgow City Council, the European Regional Development Fund and Scottish Enterprise.



### OFFICE AND HERITAGE SPACE

The proposal by Govan Workspace involves letting out the main parts of the building as commercial space and providing public access to areas of special architectural merit such as the boardroom with its ornate ceiling, rich paneling and stained glass.

It is also intended to use the heritage space to tell the story of Govan's outstanding achievements in world shipbuilding.



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## SECURING A FUTURE FOR HISTORIC SITE

Following the unification in October 2007 of the three Govan congregations and the decision to make New Govan the principal place of worship, the Church of Scotland and the Kirk Session are keen to identify a use that would both provide future sustainability for Govan Old and respect its historic importance.

The challenge faces particular problems: church buildings are notoriously difficult to adapt for other purposes; Govan Old itself is Grade A-listed and cannot be altered easily; it contains an outstanding collection of one-thousand-year-old stones considered to be a national treasure; a significant body of opinion holds that, because of the site's status as the oldest known place of Christian worship on the Clyde, the church should remain essentially a church.



### OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY

Following extensive discussions with the Glasgow Presbytery and the local congregation, Govan Workspace is planning to undertake an Options Appraisal Study which will seek to identify a sustainable future use for the building. It will examine the feasibility of three options: -

1. Publicly funded museum/visitor centre
2. Museum/visitor centre with facilities for conference/performance events and hostel
3. Museum/visitor centre with lettable business accommodation

Clearly, there will be wide overlap between the options. The objective will be to examine the suitability of proposed uses in relation to the historic site and determine their respective economic viability, including an informed assessment of potential for grant aid.



### HISTORY

The Category A listed Govan Old Parish Church was built in 1884-8 and occupies the site of at least three previous churches.

A collection of 31 medieval carved stones, along with the graveyard from which they were recovered, forms the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as *Govan, carved stones and Old Parish Church graveyard*. The collection, now housed within the former parish church, comprises a sarcophagus, five hogback tombstones, two cross-shafts, two upright cross-slabs and 21 recumbent cross-slabs. This group of carved stones, which dates from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, is recognised as having international significance and is unparalleled in Scotland.

The collection is central to the understanding of the development of Govan as an early Christian centre. The scale of the church's curvilinear enclosure round the graveyard is indicative of the early role of Govan.



### STUDY PROGRAMME

Funding permitting, the study could get underway in July 2008 and take around seven months to complete. Significant time will be needed for enquiries into funding and for consultations with interested parties, including the community.

The study is being carried out by Govan Workspace supported by a team of conservation experts including project managers, Gardiner & Theobald; architects, Page & Park; and heritage consultants, Robertson & McIntosh.



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