



**Renfrewshire  
Council**

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**To:** **Communities, Housing and Planning Board**

**On:** **17 August 2021**

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**Report by:** **Chief Executive**

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**Heading:** **Listed Buildings and Built Heritage**

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## **1. Summary**

1.1 Renfrewshire Council is committed to safeguarding its built heritage. Most of Renfrewshire's 555 listed buildings are in private ownership and cause no immediate concern for the Council. Nevertheless the circumstances of some properties highlight a need for targeted Council action where wider regeneration benefits are most likely, but where the market has failed. This is suggested for a limited number of properties, the majority of which will be listed on Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) Buildings at Risk Register (BARR). This pragmatic but positive approach will ensure that the number of Renfrewshire properties included on the BARR continues to reduce.

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## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Board members are asked to:

- i. Note progress on the BARR and agree to continued dialogue with HES to ensure that the BARR, as it relates to Renfrewshire, is accurate.
  - ii. Agree the basis of further Council intervention and that the Regeneration Team prioritise work to develop appropriate solutions for properties identified in Table 1.
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## **3. Background**

3.1 Within the Council area there are 555 listed building and structures, with over half of these buildings being privately owned and occupied as homes. A comprehensive database of all listings has been compiled and an analysis of that information is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

- 3.2 In the absolute majority of cases the condition and care of buildings causes no concerns for the Council. Owners have and continue to look after their assets particularly when they are in occupation. It is expected that demands to make alterations to historic properties is likely to grow in response to requirements to tackle climate change and to adapt buildings to new standards of efficiency and new systems for heating.
- 3.3 Where owner and/or market interest exists in the refurbishment / extension / development of listed buildings, the statutory planning system through policies, guidance and advice, works with owners and developers to ensure the appropriate adaptation, restoration and development of buildings.
- 3.4 There are however buildings which have lain vacant or underused and unmaintained for several years. Many of these buildings are documented in the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) held by Historic Environment Scotland. The BARR includes listed and some unlisted buildings (mainly from within conservation areas). There are 30 buildings within Renfrewshire on the register. This figure has reduced from 43 in 2017 as restoration projects such as the Russell Institute, the former Arnotts building, the Grand Fountain and 51 High Street, Paisley have been completed successfully and the buildings brought back into use. The BARR figure will reduce further with the conclusion of ongoing projects such as 2/3 County Place and the former TA Building in Paisley. Council intervention has often been instrumental in reversing these buildings' decline and, through their restoration, wider economic and social regeneration benefits have been delivered.
- 3.5 Detailed monitoring of the BARR will continue to ensure that it remains accurate for Renfrewshire. There are some notable properties not included on the register which are currently vacant and, should their decline continue, would have a negative impact on the local economy and on local amenity. Where there is a lack of market interest, there is merit in suggesting to HES that they be included on the register as this can assist in unlocking very competitive external funding.

#### **4. Council priorities**

- 4.1 The BARR is a useful starting point to consider priorities for further Council intervention. Involvement from the Council is best served on those sites with the greatest potential to reap wider social and economic benefits but where market interest is lacking. Analysis in Appendix 1 highlights properties for the Council to identify as priorities either as they are buildings within the Council's control to resolve or where there is merit in Council action to assist in reversing decline. In addition three properties are identified for addition to the BARR, two of which should be an immediate priority. The eight priority buildings are summarised in Table 1 below.

*Table 1 Buildings at Risk, priorities for Council*

<b>Property</b>	<b>Listing</b>	<b>Reason for prioritisation</b>
1 High Street, Paisley	B	Highly prominent High Street location. Condition deteriorating. No development interests.
Liberal Club, High Street, Paisley	C	Highly prominent historic building, refurbishment is being encouraged through TH/CARS project.
Old Fire Station, Gordon Street, Paisley	B	Restoration stalled, previous Council investment but no conclusion to refurbishment.
Kelvin House, Marshall's Lane with Forbes Place, Paisley	C B	Currently Council owned and a priority to resolve through seeking a developer interest. Options for buildings/site being considered.
Former Royal Alexandra Infirmary, Paisley	B	Building and site architecturally significant. Large site and buildings. Owner is considering options.
Former police station, Renfrew	B	Historically significant 'Common Good' asset requiring considerable adaptation for a new purpose.
24 High Street, Renfrew	B	Former India Tyres Social Club – consented scheme for residential conversion has stalled.
Former Quarrelton schoolhouse, Beith Road, Johnstone	Unlisted	Former schoolhouse dating from the 1830s, last used as a store for town centre Christmas lights. Historically important 'Gordon Square' is adjacent.

- 4.2 Officers are currently looking at other buildings in the Villages and other parts of Renfrewshire and this list will be amended over time as new priorities arise and will work with community, local interest groups and development trusts to identify priority buildings for protection and investment. There is a growing role for organisations such as development trusts to be active in repurposing buildings of historic value.
- 4.3 For those buildings in private ownership the starting point for the Council will be in entering dialogues with owners to understand their positions and aspirations for their buildings. The Council also has powers that it can consider using under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 to ensure that buildings do not become a hazard and under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to serve a notice on the owner of a listed building specifying those works which it considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building. The use of this latter power is rare as it can lead to the compulsory purchase of the building for which a number of legal tests are required to be met.

- 4.4 The Board will also be aware of new powers that are being considered for inclusion in legislation including ‘Compulsory Sales Orders’ that would oblige an unwilling owner to put their property up for sale and to accept the highest offer. This is currently being considered by the Scottish Government for application, as a last resort, to tackle issues such as long-term vacant/derelict land, empty homes and properties on the BARR.
- 4.5 Changes in the business rates system are also being made. At present there is a 100% business rates exemption for non-domestic listed buildings which are vacant. There is therefore little incentive for owners to invest in refurbishment or even, in some cases, seek new tenants. The Scottish Government commissioned Barclay Review (2017) recommended removing this exemption for listed buildings after two years of ownership. This was accepted but has yet to be implemented. Barclay had recommended the change be implemented from April 2020. This was put back by one year initially to April 2021 as the pandemic intervened. The Scottish Government announced in the Programme for Government 2020 that it would make legislation to amend the next non-domestic revaluation date from 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023. There is potential for the change for listed buildings to come to fruition as part of these changes.
- 4.6 The targeted approach proposed by this report will maintain the momentum of recent years of successes in securing Renfrewshire’s built heritage such that it can continue to thrive and the number of BARR entries continue to reduce.

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## **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – Budgets are available for regeneration activity through the Scottish Government’s Place Based Investment Fund or Regeneration Capital Grant Fund as well as through funding made available by the Council relating to town centre regeneration. Details of budgeting will be presented for approval to the Leadership Board.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community Planning** –
  - **Reshaping our place, our economy and our future:** Renfrewshire Council is working with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for regeneration and economic recovery/growth from its heritage assets.
  - **Building strong, safe and resilient communities:** Renfrewshire Council is working with local groups and organisations and individuals to achieve positive outcomes for the area’s heritage.
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – The Council owns three properties recorded on the Buildings at Risk Register, with their potentials being considered in this report.

**6. Information Technology** – None.

**7. Equality & Human Rights**

(a) The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

**8. Health & Safety** – None.

**9. Procurement** – None.

**10. Risk** – None.

**11. Privacy Impact** - None.

**12. COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable.

**13. Climate Risk** – The position and risks to the historic environment caused by climate change and the needs for the historic environment to adapt to that change are key issues for the council to address and have been considered in the recommendations of this report.

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**List of Background Papers**

N/A

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## APPENDIX 1

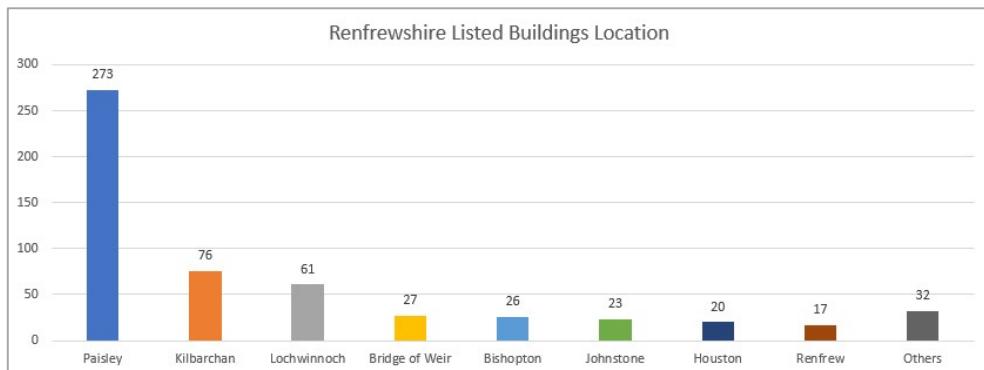
### Overview

This paper summarises key statistics from the database that now exists for all of Renfrewshire's listed buildings. It sets out what help and advice is already available for property owners and developers and suggests new measures. A detailed review of the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) and a summary table for potential intervention is provided.

### Listed Buildings – Key Statistics

#### Location

Renfrewshire has 555 listed buildings. Most (273) are located in Paisley for which 125 are in the Paisley Town Centre Conservation Area (PTCCA). The small, historic villages of Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch have 76 and 61 respectively. The larger towns of Johnstone and Renfrew have 23 and 17 respectively.



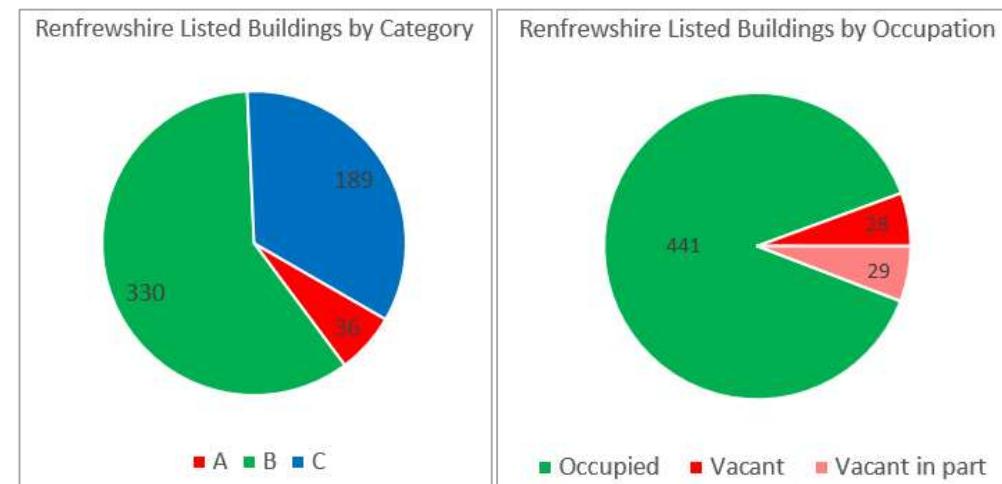
#### Listing Category

The majority of listed buildings fall within Category B (330) or Category C (189). Category A buildings account for the least amount (36). Of Category A listings, all are occupied and only three are vacant in part e.g. to upper floors. No Category A listed buildings are on the BARR list.

#### Occupation

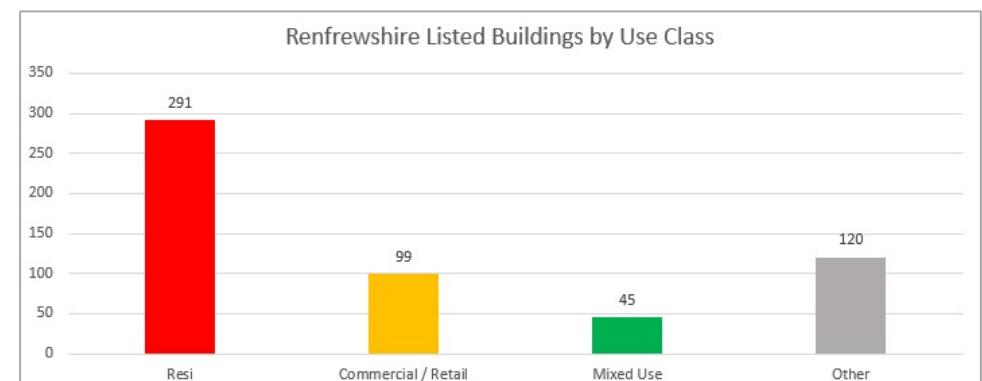
There are 57 listed structures such as statues and bridges. Of the 498 listed buildings which can be occupied, the vast majority, 441 (88%) are in occupation.

Only 28 are vacant and a further 29 are vacant in part with 49 (86%) of these being in Paisley.



#### Council Ownership and Use Class

Only 45 listed buildings are in Council ownership. The Council own 25% of all Category A buildings but only 7% of Category B and C buildings combined. Over half (291) are in private residential use. A quarter (144) are in commercial, retail or mixed use and represent a total aggregate Rateable Value of approximately £11m.



\*Note - residential listed buildings are assumed to be in use and actively maintained.

## Help for owners and developers

With most being in residential use and privately owned, the Council does not have active control over the preservation of the majority of Renfrewshire's listed buildings. Faced with the increasing challenge of climate change and the impact that has on older buildings, coupled with a need to move towards net zero carbon status, it is inevitable that owners of many historic buildings are going to face having to make alterations to their buildings on a scale not experienced previously.

The Council will continue to support private owners and developers to care for our collective built heritage. The statutory planning system is well placed to ensure appropriate development through LDP policies, supplementary guidance and design advice. In promoting best practice, publishing further advice on maintaining historic properties and providing links to external websites can further help owners and developers. In Paisley's TH.CARS2 scheme area additional technical and financial support is available to support owners and occupiers with maintenance and investment in their properties.

## Buildings at Risk Register (BARR)

HES monitors and maintains the BARR – a national register of both listed and unlisted buildings (generally in conservation areas) considered as at risk. A building may be at risk by being vacant, neglected, structurally unsound, fire damaged, under threat of demolition or a combination of such factors.

The BARR generally includes a local authority's most prominent vacant buildings, but anyone can recommend to HES that a particular property be included on the BARR. This leads to a range of structures being included - from nationally important Category A listed buildings to locally valued telephone kiosks.

Entries may be removed from the BARR for two reasons – positive restoration and reuse or because the building has been demolished.



K6 Phonebox, Lochwinnoch



Old Fire Station, Paisley

As of mid-June 2021, HES identified 30 properties in Renfrewshire on the BARR, five of which were described as "restoration in progress". The Council owns three BARR buildings – the Brown Institute and former Police Station in Renfrew and Kelvin House in Paisley. Kelvin House has been marketed for sale and a preferred bidder identified. They are in the process of working up a proposal for investment to present to the Council.

Over recent years, the number of Renfrewshire properties on the BARR has reduced due mainly to positive restoration, of for example Paisley's Grand Fountain, the Russell Institute and the former Arnotts building. Others such as St Joseph's in Lochwinnoch have become so dilapidated that they have become dangerous and had to be demolished.

It is also due to the ongoing detailed review of the BARR and updating by HES. HES welcomes the Council's fact-checking of the BARR. In 2020, 5 Wellmeadow Street and 51 High Street were noted as having been saved while 18 High Street (all Paisley) was updated to "restoration in progress". With work now currently underway at 3 County Place in Paisley, six rather than five of Renfrewshire's current 30 entries should be noted as under restoration.

Review of the BARR and dialogue with HES will continue to ensure that the BARR, as it relates to Renfrewshire, is accurate.

## **Wider regeneration impact of safeguarding historic buildings**

While the BARR provides a good representation of an area's threatened built heritage, it does not tell the whole story. It does however provide a useful basis for Council intervention in attempting to secure the many wider regeneration benefits of restoring historical buildings and structures.

Just as properties with limited regeneration potential may be included on the BARR, conversely landmark buildings of greater import may not. Of note is the former Paisley Liberal Club on the corner of High Street and Church Hill which, if restored successfully, would help Paisley's local economy. Despite planning permission being granted for conversion to residential use, it remains a priority for TH.CARS2 to secure the successful restoration of this building. Suggesting that the Liberal Club be put on the BARR may assist in creating a stronger case for attracting limited and competitive external funding from HES and others.

Other prominent properties may become vacant but, where development interest exists, their restoration, reuse and wider regeneration benefits can be left to the market and the statutory planning system to secure, without the need for further Council intervention.

## **Concerns and focus for intervention**

It is in these variations in market interest as well as apparent anomalies as to what is and what is not included on the BARR that a hierarchy of concern begins to emerge. Coupling this concern with consideration of where there is greatest potential to secure wider regeneration benefits, is where the Council's role can have greatest impact. These will generally be prominent buildings in town centres, but where market interest has failed, and intervention is needed to reverse further decline.

Notable previous successes of Council intervention include the Category A listed Russell Institute on Causeyside Street and Category B listed former Arnott's store on Gauze Street in Paisley. Both properties were previously listed on the BARR but are now back in active use. With the Russell Institute also being an example of where a building was championed and supported by the local community in the form of Paisley Development Trust. The restoration of both buildings has improved the economy and vibrancy of the town centre significantly.

Restoration of historic property will always be considered but, on occasion, intervention may conclude that regeneration benefits are best achieved through the demolition of the building and the unlocking of site redevelopment. On these limited occasions, it would be appropriate that the site's heritage be referenced in any redevelopment proposals.

The table attached summarises this by setting out the development status of each property and suggesting where Council intervention would be best served. Information on location, ownership, category of listing, BARR status and Renfrewshire's opinion on that is also included.

Eight properties are highlighted for intervention. All but two of these are currently on the BARR. An example of where Council intervention is proving successful is 3 County Place. With the help and support of the Council through two funding streams, the redevelopment and restoration of these tenement flats on the southern edge of County Square is underway. Once complete, each will be a positive asset to the local economy. Examples of where the market remains stalled and Council intervention could assist include Paisley's no. 1 High Street and the Liberal Club. A similar property, the long term vacant 24 High Street in Renfrew is also suggested for Council intervention.

The table also includes those BARR properties where, due to various factors including location, ownership and use of building, historical significance and state of dilapidation, further Council intervention is less appropriate. However, where public safety is a concern, the Council's Building Standards service will always respond. On those limited occasions where necessary, enforcement action regarding dangerous buildings can be taken.

**Table A: Buildings at Risk analysis and status**

	Settlement	Property	Cat	Owner	Occupied?	BARR status / RC opinion	Development Status Summary	Council priority?
1	Elderslie	Leethland House, Glenpatrick Road	n/a	unknown	No	At risk / remove	Ruinous structure on private land in green belt location. Removal from BARR would be appropriate.	No
2	Johnstone	83 High Street	n/a	private	No	At risk / agree	Severely dilapidated building. Recent planning app (if constructed) would demolish but provide 35 affordable homes.	No
3	Kilbarchan	West Parish Church Hall, Church Street	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Recent developer interest / planning to convert to private dwelling.	No
4	Lochwinnoch	K6 call box, Church Street	B	unknown	No	At risk / agree	Potential local community asset	No
5	Lochwinnoch	Calderhaugh House Stables, Main Street	B	private	Yes	At risk / agree	Part of private residence	No
6	Lochwinnoch	St Joseph's former dormitory, Kilbirnie Road	C	private	No	At risk / agree	Developer interest and planning application being considered.	No
7	Lochwinnoch	St Joseph's former chapel, Kilbirnie Road	C	private	No	At risk / agree	Potentially single house though unlikely at present time	No
8	Paisley	Former Royal Alexandra Infirmary, Calside	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Building and site architecturally significant. Large site and buildings, owner considering options.	Yes
9	Paisley	1 High Street	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Prominent High St location. Condition deteriorating. No dev. interest.	Yes
10	Paisley	18 High Street	B	private	No	RProg / agree	Significant town centre building, restoration started	No
11	Paisley	20 High Street	B	private	In part	RProg / agree	Significant town centre building, ground floor restored with Council support	No
12	Paisley	Paisley Coats Girls Club, Ferguslie	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Prominent building important to heritage, restoration underway	No
13	Paisley	Castlehead Church	B	private	No	RProg / agree	Landmark building, Restoration works underway	No
14	Paisley	Dykebar Hospital, Villa 20	B	public	No	At risk / agree	Demolition approved. Part of wider masterplan	No
15	Paisley	Dykebar Hospital, Superintendent's House	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Although ruinous, private owner has current consent for restoration	No
16	Paisley	Ross House, Hawkhead Hospital	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Consent granted for demolition and redevelopment	No
17	Paisley	TA Building, High Street	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Prominent building flanked by museum and Coats Church, potential student flats. Recent planning approval granted.	No
18	Paisley	Old Fire Station, Gordon Street	B	private	No	RProg / agree	Restoration in progress, previous Council investment but no conclusion to redevelopment.	Yes
19	Paisley	3 County Place, Upper Floors	B	private	No	At risk / update to RProg	Restoration in progress of prominent tenement in town centre, Council already providing grant assistance.	No
20	Paisley	Hawkhead House Farm Steading, Ben Alder Dr	B	private	No	At risk / agree	Dilapidated condition. No evidence of developer interest.	No
21	Paisley	Hawkhead House Farmhouse, Ben Alder Drive	C	private	No	At risk / agree	Historic building in very poor condition. No developer interest.	No

	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Cat</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Occupied?</b>	<b>BARR status / RC opinion</b>	<b>Development Status Summary</b>	<b>Council priority?</b>
22	Paisley	Kelvin House, Marshall's Lane	C	council	No	RProg / agree	Council owned. Developer interest in wider site – future options for building/site being considered.	Yes
23	Paisley	Former Mannequins, Old Sneddon Street	n/a	private	No	RProg / agree	Prominent building, strategic location, Council supporting restoration as a children's theatre, but further funds required.	No
24	Paisley	44 High Street	n/a	private	In part	At risk / agree	Town centre location. Planning permission granted. Supported by TH.CARS2	No
25	Paisley	44 Causeyside Street	n/a	private	In part	At risk / agree	Prominent building in poor condition, currently marketed for sale.	No
26	Paisley	13 Moss Street	n/a	private	No	At risk / agree	Unlisted, in town centre, in severe disrepair.	No
27	Paisley	11 Lawn Street	n/a	private	In part	At risk / agree	Structurally unsound. Limited developer interest in site.	No
28	Renfrew	Former Police Station, Inchinnan Road	B	council	No	At risk / agree	Council owned. Significant to history of Renfrew, potential for reuse being considered	Yes
29	Renfrew	Brown Institute, Canal Street	B	council	No	At risk / agree	Council owned. Former Renfrew museum, significant structural issues constrain reuse.	No
30	Renfrew	24 High Street (former India Tyres Social Club)	B	multiple	In part	At risk / agree	Prominent town centre building, restoration works granted (in part) never progressed	Yes

**Table B: Potential additions to the Buildings at Risk register**

	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Cat</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Occupied?</b>	<b>BARR status / RC opinion</b>	<b>Development Status Summary</b>	<b>Council priority?</b>
1	Paisley	Liberal Club, High Street	C	private	No	Not on BARR / include	Recommend adding to BARR. Prominent historic building, redevelopment being encouraged through TH/CARS project.	Yes
2	Paisley	Former Burtons Building	B	private	No	Not on BARR / Monitor	Strong and active developer interest. Significant regeneration impact due to location.	No
3	Johnstone	Former Quarrelton schoolhouse	n/a	council	No	Not on BARR / include	Recommend adding to BARR. Historic building and adjacent Gordon Square. Constrained site and access.	Yes