

Torwood Hall, Larbert – Planning Brief

1. Purpose of Brief

The purpose of this development brief is to set out the Council's requirements and expectations to be considered when preparing proposals for the site. The brief will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications for the site.

It is not intended to be overly prescriptive but aims to set out the key requirements that developers should consider when working up their bid submission.

2. Site Location

The site extends to 0.7 Hectares (1.7 Acres) and is located within the residential area of South Broomage, Larbert (Figure I). The site is bounded by South Broomage Avenue and Carronvale Road on its north and east sides, with the remainder of the site backing onto gardens of surrounding residential properties. The site is within the Larbert – Main Street/South Broomage Area of Townscape Value (ATV) as well as the Carronvale Road Tree Preservation Order (TPO). ATV's are areas of architectural, historic or townscape merit that Falkirk Council has recognised as forming coherent and interesting groups of buildings. A TPO is made by the Council to protect individual trees, groups of trees or woodlands that have particular amenity value and make a significant contribution to the landscape or townscape.

3. Background / Site Description

The site comprises the historic Torwood Hall and its surrounding mature landscaped garden. Torwood Hall is understood to have been built as a private house in the 1850's and was acquired by Falkirk Council in 1949 and recently used as a Care Home. The site is contained by an attractive stone wall on its frontage to South Broomage Avenue and a rendered brick wall on its Carronvale Road frontage. There are currently two vehicular access points to the site.

Torwood Hall is mostly on two levels though there are rooms built into the roof space on a third level and an attractive polygonal shaped structure at a fourth level.

The building, although not listed, is an attractive villa which features in the Richard Jacques architectural guide to the area. Much of the internal original architectural detailing remains (including decorative plasterwork to ceilings and cornicing, decorative detailing to timber staircases, window shutters and panelling, skirtings, and architraves). However, the building has sustained some adaptations over time, including a substantial flat roofed extension on the east side of the house.

It is situated within the residential area of South Broomage which is a leafy neighbourhood characterised by generous plots with extensive garden ground enhanced by mature trees.

4. Planning Application Submission

It is important that the site is planned in its entirety and not in a piecemeal manner. Any future planning application for the site should cover the whole site and be accompanied by a masterplan, which will be required to conform to this planning brief.

As well as this planning brief, developers should have regard to policies contained Falkirk's Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) approved August 2020 and the Council's suite of Supplementary Guidance.

Falkirk Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and is currently working toward achieving National Net Zero targets as outlined by the Scottish Government. This included provision to decarbonise heat to buildings as well as ensuring buildings located within the Falkirk Area are developed with these objectives in mind. Alongside the carbon impact of future development, the Council has committed to enhancing the biodiversity and ensuring all development is able to cope with a changing climate. Falkirk Council would therefore expect to see these objectives reflected in any new development proposed within the grounds of Torwood Hall. Further guidance is provided by LDP2 Policy IR13 Low and Zero Carbon Development.

5. Planning Status of Site

The site lies within the urban area of Larbert within an established residential area and is a windfall site therefore not covered by a specific land use allocation in LDP2. The immediate surrounding area is residential in character. The site is set within an Area of Townscape Value (ATV) and is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Accordingly, the following LDP2 designations are relevant:

Policy PE09 Area of Townscape Value

This policy recognises the architectural and historic merit of such areas which do not currently have Conservation Area status. Development proposals are required to fit with the character of the area.

Policy PE20 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The entire site is covered by a TPO. This policy recognises the value of such designations and outlines that development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that proposals will not adversely affect the longevity, health or stability of trees, or their landscape, biodiversity or historic value.

A number of more general planning policies contained in Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) may also be relevant to future proposals. LDP2 can be viewed on the Council's website www.falkirk.gov.uk/LDP2

The Council has also produced a suite of Supplementary Guidance which forms a part of the Development Plan. They can be viewed on the Council's website www.falkirk.gov.uk/sg2

The most relevant are:

SG02 Neighbourhood Design

SG10 Trees and Development

SG14 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (Draft)

6. Land Use

There is a presumption in favour of retaining Torwood Hall. It is anticipated that the existing building would be converted, with the more modern extensions removed. Acceptable future uses include conversion to a single house or division into flats. Consideration would be given to other potential uses provided they were compatible with the residential character of the surrounding area and satisfactory access and parking can be provided. (examples of alternative use may include a hotel or children's nursery). Reference should be made to LDP2 Policy HC07 Established Residential Areas,

which seeks to ensure residential amenity is not adversely affected or impacted upon when new proposals come forward.

Given the need to protect the setting of Torwood Hall and the constraints imposed by the mature landscape there is limited opportunity for additional new development within the site boundary. However, it is considered that the scope for an additional single house plot or small flatted block within its curtilage on the south western corner of the site could be explored. The design should respect the setting of Torwood Hall.

As set out in section 4 it is anticipated that the developer will produce a masterplan for the site which will accompany a future planning application for the site

7. Urban Design

General

- Due to its location within an ATV, the proposals should comply with LDP2 Policy PE09 - Areas of Townscape Value, which stipulates that 'Development proposals will be required to fit with the distinctive character of the area, with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings, landscape treatments and boundary features.'
- Careful consideration should be given to the curtilage and design of private gardens if flatted development is proposed. Garden fences can introduce clutter which should be avoided to avoid impacting on the setting of Torwood Hall.

Torwood Hall

- Removal of the flat roofed extension to the east is encouraged and could give scope for a sensitively designed lower scale, contemporary extension for a single dwelling or flats.
- The existing boundary walls should be retained and restored to protect the distinctive landscape character of the setting of the building and the wider setting of the ATV.
- The appearance of the property would benefit from the removal of over coatings to sandstone facings around windows and doors.
- The rainwater goods appear to be life expired. Prospective purchasers will be required to carry out full condition / structural surveys of roofs, external walls, and windows as well as rot, dampness, and woodworm surveys to properly assess requirements for repair and restoration.

Additional House Plot / Flatted Block

- The proposed architectural style, massing and materials of any proposed building should respect the style, materials, and architectural design of Torwood Hall.
- Building height should be kept to a maximum of two storeys to ensure the privacy of surrounding properties is respected.

Refer to Figure 2 which illustrates the above key points.

8. Landscape

The significant mature trees contained within the site contribute towards the landscape setting of Torwood Hall and should be retained. The entire site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). LDP policy PE20 – Trees, woodland and Hedgerows stipulates that 'development will not be

permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, health or stability of the trees or their landscape, biodiversity or historic value’.

A Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist and in accordance with BS5837:2012 will be required at the outset to inform the proposed design. Once the layout proposals for the site have been finalised, a Tree Protection Plan should also be prepared, to ensure the trees are protected during construction.

Further guidance is provided by:

- LDP2 Policy PE20 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- SG10 Trees and Development

9. Site Access

Access, parking, and the internal layout should be designed in accordance with the National Roads Development Guide.

Vehicular access could either be from South Broomage Avenue or Carronvale Road, or potentially both, depending on the site layout.

Parking requirements within the curtilage of the site will be required to meet the National Roads Development Guide.

A surface water drainage strategy may be required, depending on the scale of development proposed. Information to assist in the preparation of the strategy is available on Falkirk Council’s website:

<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/planning-building/development-management/flood-risk-surface-water.aspx>

Figure 1 : Torwood Hall - Site Plan

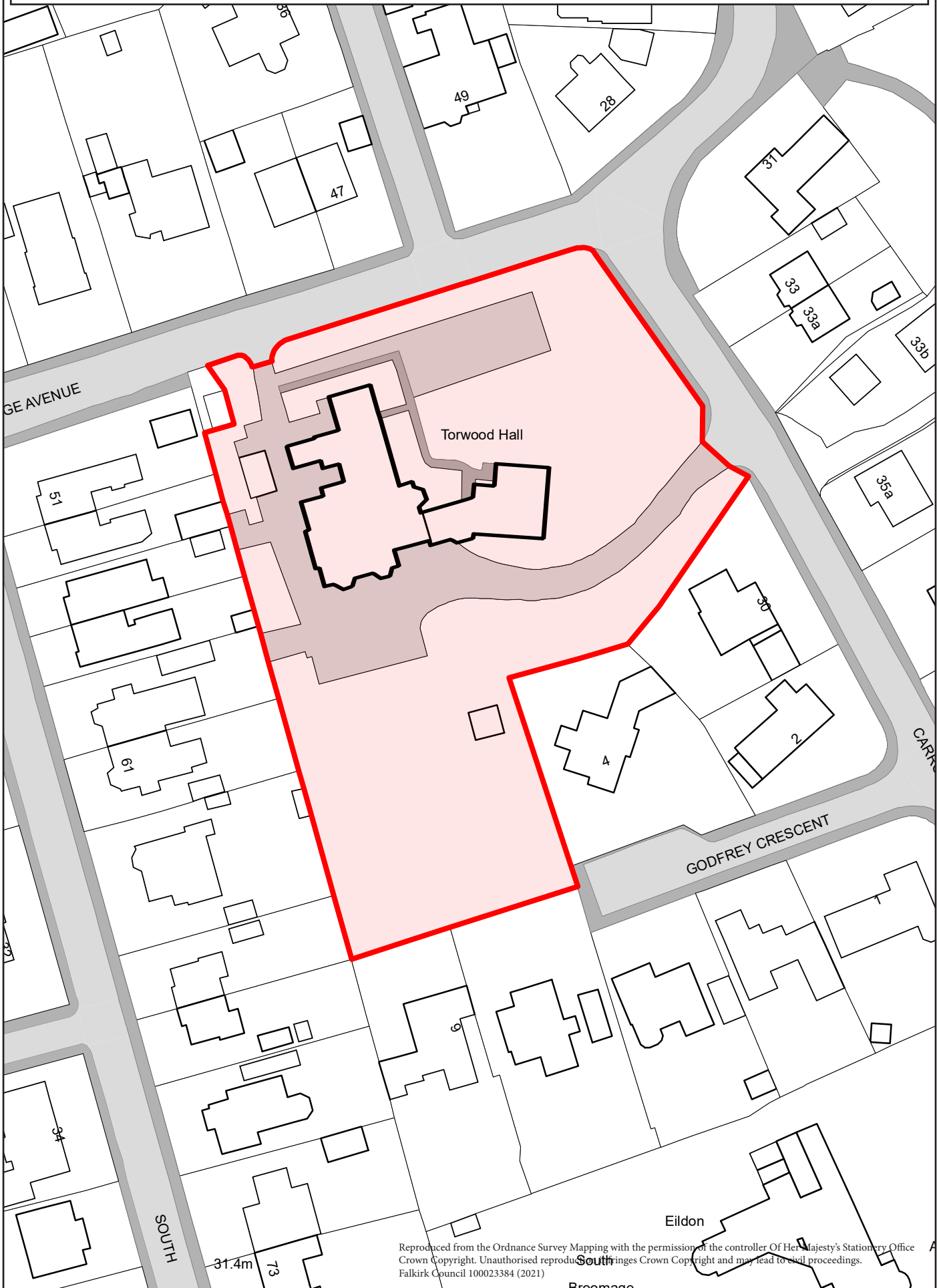
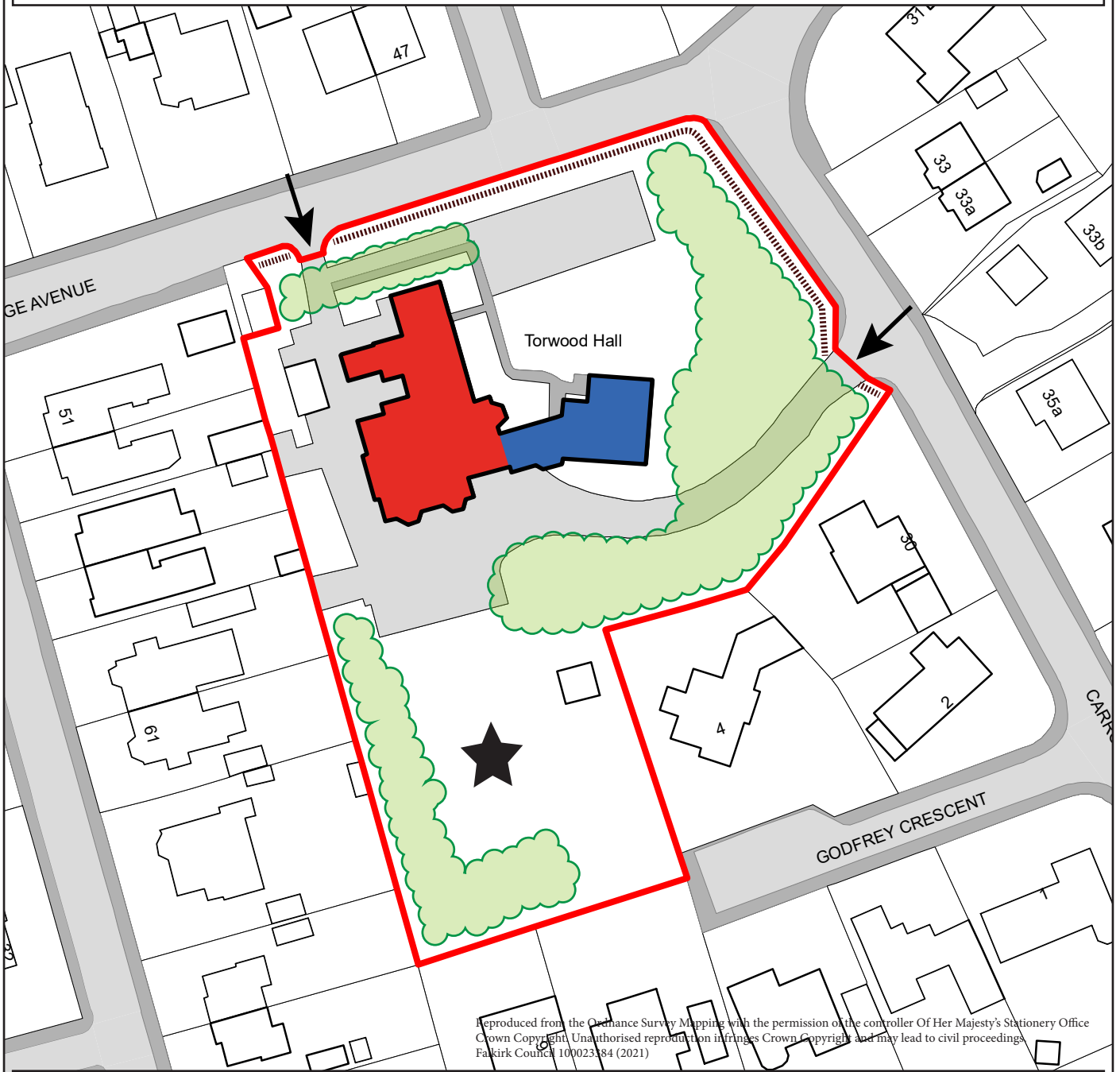


Figure 2 : Torwood Hall - Key Requirements



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 Falkirk Council 100023184 (2021)

Key



Vehicular Access



Retention Boundary Walls



Retention of Building



Removal of Flat Roofed Extension/Potential for Sensitive New Extension



Development Plot



Retention of Tree Cover/Tree Survey Required