

Glendale, Skye

Creating economic growth, environmental benefits
& community resilience from derelict buildings

May 2023



Setting the scene

Scotland currently has a housing shortage, a climate emergency and over 47,000 long term empty homes, many falling into disrepair. The deterioration of unused buildings is having an increasingly negative effect on community confidence and appeal, while the demand for housing is an ongoing issue for communities.

The cost of renovating empty buildings often exceeds that of constructing new homes, while the complexity of retrofitting for the climate crisis adds uncertainty & additional challenges, deterring communities and individuals wishing to re-purpose disused buildings and bring them back into functional use.

Significant work is required to find appropriate ways to encourage renovation projects. By doing so there will be substantial benefits to communities and both local and national government by transforming derelict buildings into climate-friendly assets with varying uses.

This project will tackle skills development, reuse and recycling, environmental benefits, economic growth and positivity amongst struggling communities, while helping to address the housing crisis.

Project proposal

Communities Housing Trust (CHT) propose to renovate the Borrodale School and Schoolhouse at Glendale Skye, using the project as a case study to investigate issues and identify ways to encourage future, similar, renovation projects.

A standard renovation for the Borrodale buildings was found to be unviable, so new and innovative approaches need to be found. This project has two main aims:

- to build on the positive work of other organisations to provide recommendations and solutions for restoring disused buildings to provide much needed housing, bringing significant economic growth, environmental benefits and community resilience from what are currently eyesores;
- to renovate and convert the disused schoolhouse and school into five or six housing units comprising two 2-bedroom units and three/four 1-bedroom units.

For the homes, we will work to develop and pilot new tenures which meet local needs. This will require community engagement work and a detailed Housing Needs Survey.

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Issues to address

Below are ten areas to address in undertaking the renovation project:

1. Turning negative community effects into positive economic outcomes
2. Many communities take on empty properties via Community Asset Transfer but projected plan doesn't come to fruition
3. Building the capacity of small contractors in remote areas to take on challenging and complex projects (skills development)
4. Efficient use of energy and utilities (use of local power)
5. Managing waste, recycling and reuse on rural building projects
6. Complexity and uncertainty of renovation projects
7. Risk involved in renovations/conversions
8. Building regulations
9. SAPs (Standard Assessment Procedure)
10. VAT and taxation issues



Stakeholders and benefits

The renovation of Borrodale School and Schoolhouse, and publication of the study findings, could help address Scotland's housing shortage and climate crisis, providing helpful guidance to key stakeholders:

Scottish Government: will improve opportunities to strategically plan more efficient and cost effective renovations of empty homes, addressing the climate emergency by repurposing derelict buildings and minimising environmental impact

Highland Council: will test new tenure and management models, and address homelessness and housing challenges in the region

Historic Environment Scotland (HES): how to renovate traditional buildings as community-led projects

Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scottish Land Fund, and Rural & Islands Housing Fund.

We expect to identify other stakeholders to join the project in the areas of recycling, energy, materials innovation and skills training.

Long term benefits from carrying out this renovation and conducting this study include:

- Millions of pounds could be added to the **national economy** by converting disused buildings into much needed housing, or other community facilities
- **Community morale** stimulated, as eyesores converted to use for common benefit
- **Rural services improved** due to population increases in fragile communities
- **Environmental benefits** through reduced construction waste and reuse of existing buildings
- Rural communities become more attractive places to **live and visit**
- Increased availability of **affordable homes** in rural communities, addressing issues of **fuel poverty and homelessness**
- **Provide work** for small local contractors and **opportunities to upskill** and build confidence to take on more complex projects
- Provide **opportunities for start up businesses** in construction and maintenance
- Provide **opportunities for local businesses** by providing key worker accommodation