

Ullapool: Former Library and Doctors' Surgery



Chapter No:

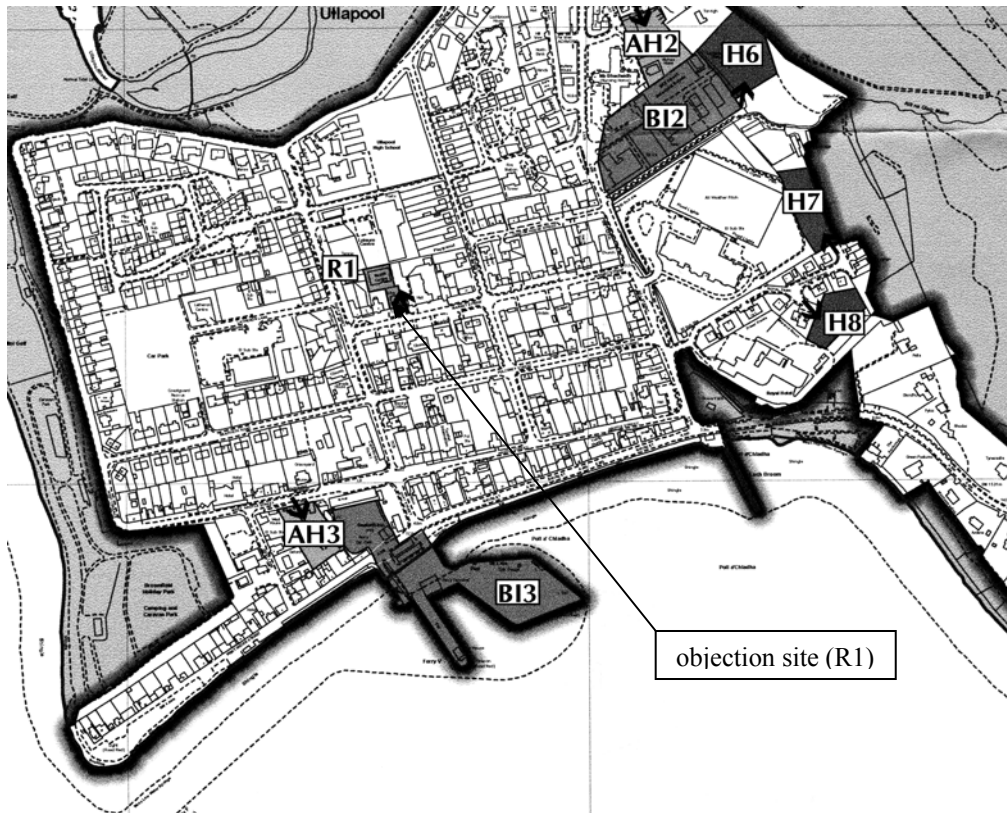
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BACKGROUND

1. The former library (seen to left of above photograph) and doctors' surgery behind it, both now lying disused, are situated centrally to the town of Ullapool, to the rear of the commercial core. On the Proposals Map Ullapool Inset (see extract below), the Land Allocations Table includes the site in the following terms:

Reference	Location	Indicative Capacity	Requirements
R1	Former Library and Doctors' Surgery	8	Potential for affordable housing or community use. Design to reflect conservation area. Allow for continued vehicular access to village hall and swimming pool delivery points. A site history will be required given previous intensive uses.



2. The News Team of the Ullapool News, who submitted the **objection**, considered that there was a pressing need for affordable housing in the town. Housing was a priority and it had to be within the means of young people locally.

3. The **council** confirmed that the

← Extract from Proposals Map, Ullapool Inset, showing the objection site.

site had been allocated in the manner shown above in order to highlight the value of making improvements to the existing fabric of the village and to recognise that it presented opportunities for a number of potential future uses. The requirements set out already indicated that affordable housing or a community use would be appropriate. An art and craft centre would be regarded as a community use by the council and other uses might be equally acceptable to it.

4. The council's Local Housing Strategy identified Ullapool as a priority community for affordable housing investment and its waiting list figures suggested an existing need for over 100 affordable homes – one of the highest levels in Wester Ross. There was therefore a need to identify land for new affordable housing. The council considered that the site was well located to allow easy access to services and facilities, and that it would be possible to accommodate both an element of affordable housing and an art gallery, by redeveloping the surgery area for the former use and converting the library for the latter.

5. This suggestion satisfied the objector.

CONCLUSIONS

6. I agree with parties that a solution involving both affordable housing and the proposed community use would be the best use of the site, although I have doubt that a total of eight houses will be able to be achieved without excessive height. Be that as it may, the figure of eight houses is indicative only and is not definitive.

7. Nevertheless, the requirements column requires adjustment to allow for this solution.

RECOMMENDATION

8. I recommend that in respect of the objection site, the first entry under the Requirements Column be amended as follows (amended text shown underlined):

“Potential for affordable housing and community use.”