

Case information

Case ID	300017434		
File Reference	HGH/B/SG/86		
Name of Site	Whiting Bay Primary School, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran		
Local Authority	North Ayrshire Council		
National Grid Reference	NS 04648 26761		
Designation No. (if any)	LB52379		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Designation		
Received	09/09/2015		
Decision Date	11/04/2016		

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Whiting Bay Primary School is considered to meet the criteria for listing at category C. The building has been designated (listed).

Current Statutory Address	N/A
New Statutory address	Whiting Bay Primary School, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Kilbride Parish where this building is located has not been resurveyed.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Whiting Bay Primary School was visited on 25/11/2015.

The interior and the exterior were seen at the site visit.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out. See **Annex A**.

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

Whiting Bay Primary School, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran

1. Description

Whiting Bay Primary School was designed by Baron Bercott and Associates in 1963-1967 and extended in 1978. It is situated on the east coast of Arran and overlooks the Firth of Clyde towards the mainland. The main entrance is to the rear. It is a single-storey Late Modern school building composed of a row of 3 pitched-roof classrooms interspersed with slightly advanced white triangular sections at ground level. These are linked by a flat-roofed corridor with narrow window openings, to a tall, monopitched-roof section to the north with low horizontal-glazing. The building is concrete rendered with timber boarding decoration at gables and below window openings and with orange coloured metal roof covering to the classrooms. At the south, a right-angled triangular section forms a play-shelter.

The flat-roofed extension to the southwest which contains the library and classroom dates to 1978.

There is a variety of windows, including plate-glass fixed, casement and bottom-opening windows.

The interior was seen in 2015 and the internal room arrangement largely remains as it was conceived in 1967 and 1978. There is a corridor to the rear with classroom entrances off this. The dining hall is situated at the north end of the building. Offices are situated between the classrooms and the dining hall. There is timber boarding to the corridor ceiling with regularly spaced skylights. The dining hall has timber boarding to the serving area and a high, narrow angled area immediately in front of this. The classrooms are irregularly shaped inside, reflecting their external diamond shape. Two of the classrooms have low sinks.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75

Criteria for determining whether a building is of 'special architectural or historic interest' for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents]

To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.

2.1 Age and Rarity

Whiting Bay Primary School was designed from 1963-7 and is by the Glasgow architects practice of Baron Bercott and Associates. It was built to replace an earlier school which had been on the same site and was officially opened on 5th June 1968.

Two further rooms were added to the rear in 1978; one of these is now the library. The entrance porch at the rear has been modified, but the date of this is not known.

After the Second World War, there was a general demand for new schools as a result of the rise in the population and the raising of the school leaving age to 15 in 1947. The designs of these schools were varied, as new materials allowed for more flexibility of space and new philosophies of education led to specific design features being incorporated. These included low windows to allow all the children to see out, small sinks for ease of use, and the ability for spaces to become more flexible as teaching in small groups was encouraged. Colour was often used to brighten internal and external spaces. Internal plan forms moved away from long internal corridors with classrooms off to those with central courtyards with surrounding classrooms, and open-plan rooms with movable screens which could provide spaces of differing sizes. By the 1960s, a variety of designs and plan forms were in use and there was no single preferable plan form in Scotland. Kildrum Primary School, built in 1960-62 by the architects Gillespie, Kidd and Coia (now demolished) was built around a central courtyard, whereas the earlier, 1949 Primary School at Markinch, designed by Fife County Council architects, follows the symmetrical, horizontal Modern Movement design.

The pamphlet 'School Building in Scotland' published by the Scottish Education Department in 1954 shows a number of designs, without advocating a particular one. It notes that 'there can be no standard design for a school', but stresses the importance of meeting the requirements of modern educational aims and taking 'full advantage of the present-day building and engineering techniques'. It encourages looking again at the educational needs of the children and planning the school around these. Classrooms, for example, no longer needed to be south facing, as long as there is sufficient natural light.

Scale was often a factor in the design, with Chirnsyde School in Glasgow (listed at category B) able to provide long, horizontal lines in its teaching block, due to its large size. The Primary School at Whiting Bay only required three classrooms and a single hall. The geometric elements that make up the design are especially effective in this small scale, as only one storey was required. There is no other known primary school in Scotland with this design which suggests the architects took care to design the school specifically for this place.

The building has undergone some alteration to its original design, with the addition of the two rooms to the rear in 1978 and the modification of the entrance door. The windows to the classrooms were replaced around 2013 and the original single expanse of glass has been replaced with smaller panes. The window frames were altered from timber to metal.

In terms of building type and age, the primary school at Whiting Bay is not rare. The geometric design, however, is unusual and is consistent with a move in the late 1960s to architectural designs which consider the user and use of space. This is discussed in more detail below.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The interior was seen in 2015. The timber boarding to the corridor ceiling and within the dining hall echoes the timber cladding used on the exterior of the building and connects the interior and exterior in design terms. This connection is also apparent in the angled corners in the dining hall and in the classrooms with the latter reflecting the pitched roofs. The survival of the 1960s long low sinks in two of the classrooms is of some interest and confirms the attention to detail of the original design.

Plan form

The plan form of the school follows a general linear style plan, with a hall at one end and all the classrooms accessed from a long rear corridor. The classrooms all have large windows which overlook the sea, in contrast to the staff room, which lies to the rear and has a smaller window. The entrance is at the rear of the building. As the building is small in scale, the plan form is not extensive, as only a few rooms were necessary. The placing of the classrooms overlooking the sea, however, is evidence of a considered approach towards the use of space, which is typical of this period of architectural design.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

Whiting Bay Primary School shows significant innovation in terms of its overall design and the combination of materials used.

The distinctive design of the school is unusual, with no known precedent either in other school buildings or in the architects' work. The combination and choice of geometric shapes form a compact and idiosyncratic building and add a playful element appropriate for a primary school building. The series of triangular blocks here evoke the theme of ships sails and is an artistic response to the school's coastal setting. The classrooms are particularly eye-catching with the pitched roofs and triangular shapes. In this element of the building, triangles are the main shape used, and are apparent in the classrooms themselves, in the projecting white sections to the front and in the angled play-shelter to the south. The dining hall uses a more rectangular shape, with its steep, mono-pitched roof and contrasting narrow, clerestory windows. The geometric shapes are continued in the windows to the small linking section between the hall and the classrooms.

In terms of materials used, timber provides a decorative finish to both the interior and exterior. Although timber is not a rare material, its use here shows a unified approach to the design and gives the building a cohesive quality. The 1978 classrooms also use timber as a decorative feature and so blend with the original 1963-7 building.

The use of white concrete render, dark timber, the expanse of glass and orange roof colour suggest that deliberately contrasting colour was a feature in the original design. Primary schools of this date sometimes feature colour to brighten the exterior of its buildings. This can be seen, for example, in the (unlisted) 1962 St Patricks Roman Catholic School in Glasgow, where red and white panels add interest to the exterior. The materials also vary in texture, from the rough concrete to the smooth

metal roof and glass of the windows. This use of different materials is of interest in architectural terms.

Baron Bercott studied at the University of Liverpool and moved to Glasgow in 1985. By 1964, he was practising as Baron Bercott and Associates, and there were 12 architects and technicians working in the practice. He was responsible for a number of other schools in the west of Scotland, some of which have been demolished. None of his other buildings are listed.

Setting

The building is situated on the main road in the village of Whiting Bay with the classrooms overlooking the Firth of Clyde to the east. The geometric form of the building contrasts in style with the more traditional forms of the surrounding buildings. Its low height and colour pattern, however, is appropriate for its small coastal position. The building is distinctive from, but does not dominate the village.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations

2.3 Close Historical Associations

None known at present.

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (SHEP 2011, p76)

In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. special value within building types*
- b. contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Whiting Bay Primary School has particular interest under a and d.

- a. Dating from 1963, Whiting Bay Primary demonstrates innovation in design and in its use of materials. There are no other known similar examples in school design of this date.
- d. There have been some modifications to the original plan-form of the school with the addition of two classrooms and the alteration of the glazing pattern. However, the distinctive street elevation remains clearly evident.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Whiting Bay Primary School dates from 1963 and is by the Glasgow architect firm of Baron Bercott. The distinctive triangular form of the classrooms is an unusual design feature and the overall geometric form of the building adds a playful element suiting its function as a primary school and responding to its coastal location. The variety of

materials and colour demonstrate a considered approach to the design of the building and this is confirmed by the use of some design features both outside and inside the building.

There has been some alteration to the building, but the 1960s form is clearly evident.

In our current state of knowledge it meets the criteria for listing.

5. Category of Listing

Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing

Whiting Bay Primary School has an unusual design and a variety of coloured materials. It is a distinctive example of a prolific building type. There has been minor alteration to the 1960s design. Although unusual, the building is small in size. The building is considered to be of local importance with category C as the most appropriate category.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 292877

Printed Sources:

Close, R. (1992) *Ayrshire & Arran*. Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. p.272.

Close, R. and Riches, A., (2012) *The Buildings of Scotland: Ayrshire and Arran*. New Haven and L Yale University Press. p.724.

Scotland: Building for the Future (2009) Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.

Scottish Education Department, (1954), *School Building in Schools. 1 Primary Schools*. Glasgow: H

Online Sources:

Dictionary of Scottish Architects, *Baron Bercott*,
http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=400478 (accessed 24/11/2015)

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

** A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Environment Scotland list a building' at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist