

Strathbungo Parish Church Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow

Initiated by:	Southside Housing Association
Completed:	May 2006
Type:	derelict church – conversion for affordable housing
Size and tenure:	28 flats for affordable rent
Builder:	Ashleigh (Scotland) Ltd and CBC restoration
Housing association:	Southside Housing Association
Capital investment:	£2.919M



With its graceful crown tower rising above the tenement grid of Glasgow's southside, [Strathbungo Parish Church](#) on Pollokshaws Road is something of a local landmark. But it had stood empty and derelict for several years before Southside Housing Association converted it to provide affordable homes for rent.

The church had been on the Scottish Civic Trust's buildings at risk register when the Council acquired it by compulsory purchase. Opfer Logan Architects drew up plans to save the bell tower and façade and build new housing behind. The Council agreed to sell the church to the architect's development company on condition it was sold on to [Southside Housing Association](#) for conversion into affordable homes.



'This area is very much in demand by private sector developers,' explains the association's property manager, [Ray Walkinshaw](#). 'The only way we can get brownfield sites is through agreements like this with the local authority.' Southside Housing Association owns much of the tenement housing surrounding the church, and has built around 500 homes in this popular, diverse part of Glasgow. It has over 700 people on its waiting list, no difficult-to-let properties and limited opportunities to build, so it was worth taking on the redevelopment of the church, despite the technical difficulties involved.

The association brought in contractors Ashleigh (Scotland) Ltd which employed its own consultant, Vernon Monaghan Architects, for the construction. The elaborate stonework on the west front and bell tower of the church was painstakingly restored by specialist subcontractor, CBC. Another arch, which originally led into a church hall, was preserved in the enclosed courtyard alongside car parking and landscaped gardens.

Behind the now pristine façade were the nave and ancillary buildings, and the new five-storey building which replaces them and preserves their footprint, is uncompromisingly modern. The project overcame problems such as a coal seam under the site, the need to strengthen the façade and ensuring adequate sewerage capacity.

The new building provides 28 new homes for rent, including five wheel-chair accessible flats for deaf-blind tenants who will be supported by the charity Sense Scotland. Other flats have been earmarked for the Glasgow Homelessness Partnership and for the association's Saffron project which provides housing and support for homeless young black and ethnic minority people.

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