

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:38:33
Subject: Bonar.D_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:38:33

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
David Bonnar [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 16:10
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall
Objection- HS Member [REDACTED]
Importance: High

Dear Sirs

I understand that today is the deadline for your consultation on the proposals by Perth & Kinross Council for the demolition of Perth City Hall. I trust that it is not too late to make my views as one of your members and as a citizen of Perth.

Perth City Hall is one of a handful of listed buildings in Perth, and St John's Kirk apart, the only building of any architectural distinction whatsoever in the current square in front of the church. To demolish the Hall, and create an open square is just the latest in a saga of poorly handled planning decisions by our local authority. Perth is relatively well served by large open spaces near the town centre, and more intimate open spaces nearby. To create what is being proposed has no historical or environmental argument in its favour, and the economic case being promoted has no sound basis. The current open spaces are underused, and yet another 'open air performance space' will soon be superfluous, irregularly used, and not well maintained or funded in the longer term. I am afraid that the past record of Council ambition set against reality does not inspire one with confidence for the future if these proposals are allowed to go ahead. The case for improving the aspect of St John's Kirk is not supported by the historical street layout of the city, and one of the current delights of the townscape of the city is the tantalising prospects which one gains of this jewel of a church when approached from any direction. To suppose that the Kirk setting, well below its relative original ground level, will be enhanced by a large open space is fanciful.

The reason we are in the situation where we find ourselves

today dates back to the planning of the Concert Hall. No clear or coherent strategy for the provision of arts facilities was drawn up and only vague proposals for the disposal of the City Hall were advanced. The Concert Hall, while admirable in many respects as a replacement for the City Hall, as completed has a number of operational deficiencies, and is clearly unsuitable for many of the purposes fulfilled by its predecessor. Exhibitions, fairs of many kinds, indoor markets, and as an important and affordable space for many amateur arts companies to use now have to take place elsewhere. For decades, plans have been proposed by individuals for the provision of affordable rehearsal and studio space, but the Council have failed to recognise the importance of this aspect of local life. It seems that we are to have around £12m (at today's process) spent on the development of 'community facilities' within the current Perth Theatre site. While the refurbishment of the Theatre auditorium is certainly overdue, the wholesale demolition of much of the rest of the building, with the change of principal entrance to Mill Street seems an unnecessary and expensive development when other options are available. There seems to be a lack of vision or imagination by Officers of the council, compounded by Councillors with what seems like a superficial interest in the whole issue.

The initial development proposed for the Hall fell through after a disgracefully prolonged process of inactivity by the Council, and the failure of the developer to progress the development has been compounded by a blinkered approach to a single agenda – demolition. The Council carried out a superficial consultation, heavily biased towards the demolition as a 'solution' to the 'problem'. The answer one gets to a question is often heavily influenced by how it is asked! If no sensible and economic use can be brought forward by this Council or commercial partners, then we should at least be given the opportunity to make our views known at the ballot box on this and the other local planning disaster (the ongoing incinerator saga) before any action with such finality is permitted. In the meantime, the City Hall should either be mothballed, or opened up for limited use by groups mentioned above.

As the Agency tasked with looking after the best of our built heritage, it is unthinkable that Historic Scotland will agree to demolition.

Yours truly

David J Bonnar, OBE, FRSA



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From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:38:49
Subject: Wilson.S_Represtation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:38:49

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:

Sent: 23 December 2011 15:27
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to formally
object to the plans to demolish Perth City Hall and would urge that
Historic Scotland REFUSE consent to Demolish this iconic building.

My objection is ATTACHED
in full to this email. It has been prepared by Planning Consultant,
Malcolm Smith of TMS Planning Services Ltd.

Mr Smith is a highly
respected figure, having previously been employed in local authority Planning
Departments and also more recently as an Appeal Reporter with the Scottish
Executive, all prior to his current work as a Planning Consultant havng
established his own private practice.



His comments and representations I feel clearly demonstrate the need for Historic Scotland to REFUSE this application to demolish this Listed building which seems to have been rushed through A NORMALLY SLOW PLANNING PROCESS with too much "political" meddling and not enough proper considered factual evidence to back the plan for demolition.

The square surrounding the Hall has many an unsightly and unoccupied array of poor buildings, your eyes are not drawn to the upper levels of them at present, however they would be visually detrimental and very obvious for all to see were the Hall to be demolished.

The property should be re marketed and the building retained and restored for the visual enjoyment and benefit of the people of Perth & Kinross.

Please confirm receipt of this formal objection.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Wilson.



H [REDACTED]

M [REDACTED]

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Heritage Management Directorate,
Historic Scotland,
Longmore House,
Salisbury Place,
Edinburgh EH9 1SH
Email : hs.consultationsperthandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Ms Johnston,

I wish to object to the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish this important listed building. My objection is based on the following grounds.

1. Para 3.50 of your SHEP guidelines states “...it is Scottish Ministers’ policy that no listed building shall be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to save it.”
The Council have not fulfilled this requirement of your policy because:
(a) at the end of the abortive negotiations with Wharfside in 2009 they failed to contact the “reserve bidders” at least one of whom was still interested in acquiring the building.
(b) Instead of re-marketing the building, as required by para 3.50 (d), of your SHEP guidelines, they appointed consultants to advise them on potential alternative uses. This was a technique that was less likely to make contact with restoring purchasers than open marketing and, furthermore, the brief they gave the consultants excluded a requirement to consider “... the symbolic, personal and social value of the City Hall or its importance in the collective memory of the local population and their sense of place.”(see page 53 para4.8 of the Locum Report). They also unnecessarily constrained the brief by requiring the consultants to work within the framework of Best Value and Green Book Treasury guidelines which, if they are relevant at all, apply only to public sector users. Finally, they have refused, within the past month, to consider a scheme lodged by Mr. V Linacre and Simpson and Brown, architects to re-use the entire building as a market, retail and cultural facility.
2. The case for demolition of the building rests on a claim that demolishing it would meet the criterion set out at para 3.50 (d) of your SHEP guidelines, namely “...the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant economic benefits to economic growth and the wider community.” This claim is based only on the guesswork of the Locum consultants that replacing the building with a civic square would generate an extra 210,000 visitors a year. As one example of the “events” that will generate such benefits the consultants suggest that ice skating on the square for 5 weeks each winter will generate a surplus revenue of £50,300. Despite the easily verifiable **fact** that a comparable facility in Edinburgh has accrued losses in the order of £250,000 since 1998, and the George Square Glasgow facility also runs at a loss, these predictions have been accepted unquestioningly by the Council. The economic justification for demolition is, in fact, entirely conjectural and is, I believe, an inadequate basis for the removal of such an important building.
3. Apart from St. John’s Kirk, the buildings around the proposed square are mediocre in terms of their architectural quality and the space created would be windswept and undistinguished in comparison with squares which have genuine visitor appeal. In environmental terms, the loss would be greater than the gain.
4. The proposed square would be relatively small and has a considerable number of residential

properties on its north and south sides and in all the adjacent streets. None of the reports considered by Council's committees since 16th June 2010 – including the Development Control Committee of 16th November – gives a single thought to the issue of whether the events programme, which is integral to the economic case, is compatible with the need to maintain an adequate standard of residential amenity for existing properties.

For the above reasons, I request that the Council's application for consent to demolish the City Hall be refused and that they be instructed to engage in an open, genuine exercise to find a restoring purchaser.

Yours sincerely,

Peter I M Thomson

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:36:34
Subject: ThompsonP_representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:36:34

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 18:23
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: PERTH CITY HALL

Attached is my letter objecting to the
demolition of Perth City Hall.

Peter I M Thomson

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OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF PERTH CITY HALL

This representation sets out the rationale for the retention of Perth City Hall as a key and valued component of the central Perth Conservation Area, and as a significant building of architectural and historic merit of significance to Perth, to its residents and to visitors to the City. The present position of Perth and Kinross Council in seeking to demolish this significant and attractive "B" listed structure is considered to be unsubstantiated as based on a number of poorly justified assumptions, a patent failure to consider sustainable development (as required by primary legislation and established Scottish Planning Policy), and a lack of appreciation of the present and future options for the use of the City Hall, a building in generally good condition and with a potential for beneficial re-use in order to retain it for future generations.

The core principle of sustainable development, as enshrined in primary legislation, relates to the most appropriate use of resources, and underpins decisions on land use planning, including the productive re-use of existing buildings. It is established Scottish Government policy through Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), and as reflected within development plans, that historic environments and the individual buildings and groups of buildings forming these have a special status within the planning process, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic buildings often define the underlying character and distinctiveness of towns and cities which set them apart from others and are valued by local communities and visitors. They often provide (or could provide) facilities of value to local communities and directly contribute towards the attraction of an area for locals and visitors alike.

The Scottish Government emphasises the contribution made to a sustainable Scotland by the repair, maintenance, preservation and reuse of our older buildings. It is national policy that the waste caused by unnecessary demolition and replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials, should be avoided wherever possible. In addition, once lost listed buildings cannot be replaced. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting. Such a presumption is clearly set out in primary legislation, in national policy, and in extant development plans. Additionally, it is accepted that the demolition of even a single building could result in harm to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or part of it and therefore it is not just the loss of the building that requires to be assessed it is the impact of this on the surroundings.

In the case of applications for the demolition of listed buildings it is Scottish Ministers' policy that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. As set out

within the SHEP, decision makers should only approve demolition of listed buildings where they are satisfied that:

- a. the building is not of special interest; or
- b. the building is incapable of repair; or
- c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or
- d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

Against the policy background, which is generally that listed buildings should be retained unless there are clear reasons otherwise, any underlying assessment must satisfy at least one of the SHEP tests. I realise that there are a range of other considerations set out, including the terms of the development plan, but any assessment will return to these fundamental matters and requires to be set against the Scottish Government's position that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. I set out my views on the 4 tests as follows (noting that some overlaps exist): -

a. the building is not of special interest, or

I am unaware of any case being made to this effect. The building is "B" listed with its special points of interest set out in the listing description. I therefore consider that the building remains of special interest and therefore demolition cannot be justified on this basis.

b. the building is incapable of repair, or

I understand that the building is in generally good condition and therefore extensive repairs are not required. I therefore consider that the demolition of the building cannot be justified on this basis.

c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or

This appears to be the basis upon which Perth and Kinross Council is seeking to justify the demolition of this iconic structure. The Council's position appears to be that the building has been marketed for sale and that no purchaser/feasible development has emerged and that following this process an assessment of the economic benefits of a variety of options has

determined that demolition (and a new public square) is in the best interests of the economy and of the wider community. Much of this assessment is based on the results of studies undertaken in 2010/11 which appear concentrated on economic matters, rather than wider historic environment/community issues where the "value" of the such buildings often lie.

The council sponsored reports, and the Council's assessment of these, suggest that retail and cultural uses within the building are not presently viable. How can they possibly conclude this when the last marketing undertaken for the building by Perth and Kinross Council was in 2004, 7 years ago? The fact that a council sponsored report reaches stated conclusions on the basis of certain underlying assumptions (justified or otherwise?) is not a definitive answer to the potential re-use of the building. Without a robust marketing campaign how can interest in the building be judged and the full range of potential uses/interests be harnessed in order to assess/ensure the best outcome for the building and the City. To simply state, as they do, that there are more empty retail units in the City Centre in 2010 than there were in 2006 means absolutely nothing to any meaningful assessment. How many town and city centres in the UK are likely to show a different trend – precious few, if any.

Economic times are difficult for many retailers and it is true that new retail development/conversions etc are presently constrained to some extent by market conditions. However, there is no imperative to make a decision on the City Hall presently before all potential options have been looked at following a further period of marketing. The building remains in good order, is of no threat to the community, and, based on information from other sources, is costing as little as £15,000/year to maintain. The downside of taking more time for a proper market assessment is limited while the "rush to judgment" being promoted by Perth and Kinross Council would see the irretrievable loss of the City Hall. Such an outcome would be unacceptable.

Cultural use was considered as an option and the related figures showed this as potentially viable. Despite this, an option that would further support the attraction of the City Centre has been set aside by Perth and Kinross Council in favour of the demolition/city square proposal. In terms of the latter, the claimed economic benefits appear difficult to substantiate. Based on there being a larger public space, it has been estimated that an additional 60,000 people annually would attend events etc within the proposed square and that the mere formation of this space would also encourage approximately 150,000 people to extend their stay in the centre thereby spending more as a result. In total this would generate an additional £6.8 million albeit it is not clear over what period this estimated spend would occur. While this shows a net benefit of £2.4 million (over the £4.4 million cost figures), even if this was accurate (which is a brave assumption particularly in the troubled economic times which appear to rule out the commercial use of the building in Perth and Kinross Council's view) would this really deliver "*significant*"

benefits to economic growth or the wider community" as required by the stated test? As is more likely, a lower spend level would completely change the arithmetic underpinning the assessment. In short, the estimated economic benefits are far too uncertain to base any robust assessment of the merits of the current proposals.

How Perth and Kinross Council can conclude in its 16th November, 2011 committee report that *"provision of commercial/retail or cultural uses through the re-use of the City Hall will deliver less net benefit to the economy and community given higher development and optional costs"* as compared to the demolition and of the building and the formation of an open area, is open to question.

What if there are other uses for the building that would sufficiently secure its retention and contribution to the City Centre, including the additional patronage and spending, that has not as yet been explored (or evaluated). An historic marketing campaign (2004) is not sufficient to address issue related to this historic structure. At the very least, before any decision was taken supporting the removal of the listed building, in accordance with Scottish Government policy, every effort should be made to retain it. This has not occurred. There is also a case to support the retention of the building on a care and maintenance basis until such time as the commercial market recovers. An annual cost of £15,000 is incidental to the longer term benefits and value to the City that would emerge from the productive re-use of the building.

While the various development plan policies related to Perth City Centre, the retention of listed buildings, the conservation and enhancement of the designated Conservation Area are all assessed by Perth and Kinross Council, this has been done from a position of already promoting the loss of the listed building. The potential for a new square in central Perth in the local plan and other documents is noted but there is nothing to say that the City Hall site is the only option to deliver this. It is also clear that the local plan being relied upon by Perth and Kinross Council to promote their favoured outcome was adopted in 1997, some 14 year ago and therefore its continued relevance and currency is, in real terms, limited. It may still form part of the development plan but it was designed to cover a 5-10 year period (maximum).

d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

No underlying problems with the building are known and therefore no repair issues affect its viable re-use. As outlined above, the building has not been sufficiently marketed since 2004 and therefore, this test has not been satisfactorily addressed.

Other matters

In addition to an assessment related to the listed building, there is an obligation placed on the decision maker through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to ensure that development would conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated Conservation Area. It is noted that Perth City Hall is a key building within the Conservation Area Appraisal, representing a significant part of the City's built heritage and an important focal point within the City centre. The loss of this structure will significantly impact on the existing character of this designated area to its immediate and long term detriment. Additionally, the removal of the City Hall will expose a range of other buildings to prominent view, significantly increasing their contribution to the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area. Many of these buildings are of significantly inferior quality to the City Hall, some are simply not of a standard/design/appearance to enhance the city core. In short, the removal of the City Hall will fundamentally and irrevocably alter the established street pattern, result in the loss of a building which makes a significant and positive contribution to the Conservation Area, and increase the prominence of other inferior (some very poor) buildings within the City Centre, all to the material detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The underlying Conservation Area requirements would therefore not be met by the demolition and re-use of the site as presently proposed by Perth and Kinross Council.

Conclusions

As intimated above, based on the information presently before Historic Scotland it is not possible to conclude that any of the required SHEP tests are satisfied to the extent to justify the demolition of the iconic listed Perth City Hall. There may remain options that have not been properly explored, hardly surprising in light of the extended period since the site was marketed (2004). It is understood that there are interests in retaining the building in productive use that simply cannot be progressed in light of Perth and Kinross Council's stance as the owner (custodian) of this building. By failing to actively and positively market the building Perth and Kinross Council appear to be promoting a self fulfilling prophecy of no alternative viable options. This is unlikely to be the case and it is certainly not been "*clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it*" the requirement underpinning the SHEP assessment.

I have also seen no assessment of the waste caused by the demolition of the City Hall and its replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials. As intimated, such waste should be avoided wherever possible otherwise there is a failure to accord with national sustainability policy.

Therefore, the loss of the building has not be justified as the alternatives for re-use have not been properly explored (marketing failure), the economic case for development has not been substantiated, and the negative impacts on the built environment (including the impact on the designated Conservation Area) has not been robustly assessed. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition this listed building.

The process adopted by Perth and Kinross Council appears to be one of undue haste and untested assumptions. This is clearly a matter that requires full and careful consideration as do the assumptions that underlie any assessment. The assumptions which are relied upon to justify the demolition have not been tested nor have the potential alternatives to retain the building been fully explored as is the fundamental requirement of SHEP.

As a result of the above, how can Historic Scotland have confidence that Perth and Kinross Council's assessment is sufficiently robust to justify their proposed outcome, the removal of an iconic structure at the heart of the City of Perth. In short, it is considered that there is insufficient justification at this stage in accordance with prevailing policy requirements and therefore permission to demolish the listed Perth City Hall should be refused.

TMS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LTD



From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 10:13:09
Subject: FW: Perth City Hall - Objection to Proposed Demolition
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 10:13:09

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Malcolm Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 09:57
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall - Objection to Proposed Demolition

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached an objection to the above on behalf of Mr Simon Wilson,
Broom Road, Kinross.

Grateful if you could confirm receipt.

Regards

Malcolm Smith

TMS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LTD

From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 10:12:56
Subject: SimC_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 10:12:56

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
George Bryson [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 08:43
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Demolition of Perth City Hall, King Edward Street, Perth PH1 5UG

23.12.2011

Dear sirs,

I would like to object strongly to the application to demolish Perth City Hall. It is an impressive ' B ' listed building in sound condition, yet a handful of councillors seem determined to have it knocked down and replaced, at great expense, with a 'city square'.

Surely demolition should be a last resort, but the council do not appear interested in making any effort to find an alternative use.

I have lived in Perth for twenty eight years and I know a lot of people would be sad to see the City Hall lost.

Yours faithfully,

Charles Sim [REDACTED]

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House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Stuart Sharp [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 20:17
To: HS.Consultations Perth & Kinross
Subject: Objection to the
demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Ms.
Johnston

I wish to
object to the proposal for the demolition of Perth City Hall for the following
reasons -

There
has been no real conversation with the people of Perth regarding what they
wish to do with this grand building. Only a small number of councillors actually voted for the demolition and
none of those represented the city itself.
The land
on which the Hall stands was gifted to the people of Perth in 1604 by
Queen Anne, therefore I believe, as above, the citizens of Perth should have
a proper consultation regarding the Hall on which the land stands
The
council is many millions of pounds in debt. The estimate for the project
to demolition the hall and build the square is in excess of 4 million
pound. The hall is costing 15 thousand pounds stood empty and I believe
that should the economy improve the building would become a fantastic

prospect for a developer.

There

are few buildings as architecturally impressive in Perth as the Hall.

The argument that the council put forward that the new square would generate visitors and therefore income for Perth has no basis. No study has been shared with the public to suggest this would be true.

The

initial attempt to market the Hall and the failed venture with the private sector firm appears to have been flawed.

For the above

reasons, I request that the Council's application for consent to demolish the City Hall be refused and that they be instructed to engage in an open, genuine exercise to find a restoring purchaser.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Sharp

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OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF PERTH CITY HALL

This representation sets out the rationale for the retention of Perth City Hall as a key and valued component of the central Perth Conservation Area, and as a significant building of architectural and historic merit of significance to Perth, to its residents and to visitors to the City. The present position of Perth and Kinross Council in seeking to demolish this significant and attractive "B" listed structure is considered to be unsubstantiated as based on a number of poorly justified assumptions, a patent failure to consider sustainable development (as required by primary legislation and established Scottish Planning Policy), and a lack of appreciation of the present and future options for the use of the City Hall, a building in generally good condition and with a potential for beneficial re-use in order to retain it for future generations.

The core principle of sustainable development, as enshrined in primary legislation, relates to the most appropriate use of resources, and underpins decisions on land use planning, including the productive re-use of existing buildings. It is established Scottish Government policy through Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), and as reflected within development plans, that historic environments and the individual buildings and groups of buildings forming these have a special status within the planning process, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic buildings often define the underlying character and distinctiveness of towns and cities which set them apart from others and are valued by local communities and visitors. They often provide (or could provide) facilities of value to local communities and directly contribute towards the attraction of an area for locals and visitors alike.

The Scottish Government emphasises the contribution made to a sustainable Scotland by the repair, maintenance, preservation and reuse of our older buildings. It is national policy that the waste caused by unnecessary demolition and replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials, should be avoided wherever possible. In addition, once lost listed buildings cannot be replaced. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting. Such a presumption is clearly set out in primary legislation, in national policy, and in extant development plans. Additionally, it is accepted that the demolition of even a single building could result in harm to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or part of it and therefore it is not just the loss of the building that requires to be assessed it is the impact of this on the surroundings.

In the case of applications for the demolition of listed buildings it is Scottish Ministers' policy that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. As set out

within the SHEP, decision makers should only approve demolition of listed buildings where they are satisfied that:

- a. the building is not of special interest; or
- b. the building is incapable of repair; or
- c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or
- d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

Against the policy background, which is generally that listed buildings should be retained unless there are clear reasons otherwise, any underlying assessment must satisfy at least one of the SHEP tests. I realise that there are a range of other considerations set out, including the terms of the development plan, but any assessment will return to these fundamental matters and requires to be set against the Scottish Government's position that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. I set out my views on the 4 tests as follows (noting that some overlaps exist): -

a. the building is not of special interest, or

I am unaware of any case being made to this effect. The building is "B" listed with its special points of interest set out in the listing description. I therefore consider that the building remains of special interest and therefore demolition cannot be justified on this basis.

b. the building is incapable of repair, or

I understand that the building is in generally good condition and therefore extensive repairs are not required. I therefore consider that the demolition of the building cannot be justified on this basis.

c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or

This appears to be the basis upon which Perth and Kinross Council is seeking to justify the demolition of this iconic structure. The Council's position appears to be that the building has been marketed for sale and that no purchaser/feasible development has emerged and that following this process an assessment of the economic benefits of a variety of options has

determined that demolition (and a new public square) is in the best interests of the economy and of the wider community. Much of this assessment is based on the results of studies undertaken in 2010/11 which appear concentrated on economic matters, rather than wider historic environment/community issues where the "value" of the such buildings often lie.

The council sponsored reports, and the Council's assessment of these, suggest that retail and cultural uses within the building are not presently viable. How can they possibly conclude this when the last marketing undertaken for the building by Perth and Kinross Council was in 2004, 7 years ago? The fact that a council sponsored report reaches stated conclusions on the basis of certain underlying assumptions (justified or otherwise?) is not a definitive answer to the potential re-use of the building. Without a robust marketing campaign how can interest in the building be judged and the full range of potential uses/interests be harnessed in order to assess/ensure the best outcome for the building and the City. To simply state, as they do, that there are more empty retail units in the City Centre in 2010 than there were in 2006 means absolutely nothing to any meaningful assessment. How many town and city centres in the UK are likely to show a different trend – precious few, if any.

Economic times are difficult for many retailers and it is true that new retail development/conversions etc are presently constrained to some extent by market conditions. However, there is no imperative to make a decision on the City Hall presently before all potential options have been looked at following a further period of marketing. The building remains in good order, is of no threat to the community, and, based on information from other sources, is costing as little as £15,000/year to maintain. The downside of taking more time for a proper market assessment is limited while the "rush to judgment" being promoted by Perth and Kinross Council would see the irretrievable loss of the City Hall. Such an outcome would be unacceptable.

Cultural use was considered as an option and the related figures showed this as potentially viable. Despite this, an option that would further support the attraction of the City Centre has been set aside by Perth and Kinross Council in favour of the demolition/city square proposal. In terms of the latter, the claimed economic benefits appear difficult to substantiate. Based on there being a larger public space, it has been estimated that an additional 60,000 people annually would attend events etc within the proposed square and that the mere formation of this space would also encourage approximately 150,000 people to extend their stay in the centre thereby spending more as a result. In total this would generate an additional £6.8 million albeit it is not clear over what period this estimated spend would occur. While this shows a net benefit of £2.4 million (over the £4.4 million cost figures), even if this was accurate (which is a brave assumption particularly in the troubled economic times which appear to rule out the commercial use of the building in Perth and Kinross Council's view) would this really deliver "*significant*

benefits to economic growth or the wider community" as required by the stated test? As is more likely, a lower spend level would completely change the arithmetic underpinning the assessment. In short, the estimated economic benefits are far too uncertain to base any robust assessment of the merits of the current proposals.

How Perth and Kinross Council can conclude in its 16th November, 2011 committee report that *"provision of commercial/retail or cultural uses through the re-use of the City Hall will deliver less net benefit to the economy and community given higher development and optional costs"* as compared to the demolition and of the building and the formation of an open area, is open to question.

What if there are other uses for the building that would sufficiently secure its retention and contribution to the City Centre, including the additional patronage and spending, that has not as yet been explored (or evaluated). An historic marketing campaign (2004) is not sufficient to address issue related to this historic structure. At the very least, before any decision was taken supporting the removal of the listed building, in accordance with Scottish Government policy, every effort should be made to retain it. This has not occurred. There is also a case to support the retention of the building on a care and maintenance basis until such time as the commercial market recovers. An annual cost of £15,000 is incidental to the longer term benefits and value to the City that would emerge from the productive re-use of the building.

While the various development plan policies related to Perth City Centre, the retention of listed buildings, the conservation and enhancement of the designated Conservation Area are all assessed by Perth and Kinross Council, this has been done from a position of already promoting the loss of the listed building. The potential for a new square in central Perth in the local plan and other documents is noted but there is nothing to say that the City Hall site is the only option to deliver this. It is also clear that the local plan being relied upon by Perth and Kinross Council to promote their favoured outcome was adopted in 1997, some 14 year ago and therefore its continued relevance and currency is, in real terms, limited. It may still form part of the development plan but it was designed to cover a 5-10 year period (maximum).

d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

No underlying problems with the building are known and therefore no repair issues affect its viable re-use. As outlined above, the building has not been sufficiently marketed since 2004 and therefore, this test has not been satisfactorily addressed.

Other matters

In addition to an assessment related to the listed building, there is an obligation placed on the decision maker through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to ensure that development would conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated Conservation Area. It is noted that Perth City Hall is a key building within the Conservation Area Appraisal, representing a significant part of the City's built heritage and an important focal point within the City centre. The loss of this structure will significantly impact on the existing character of this designated area to its immediate and long term detriment. Additionally, the removal of the City Hall will expose a range of other buildings to prominent view, significantly increasing their contribution to the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area. Many of these buildings are of significantly inferior quality to the City Hall, some are simply not of a standard/design/appearance to enhance the city core. In short, the removal of the City Hall will fundamentally and irrevocably alter the established street pattern, result in the loss of a building which makes a significant and positive contribution to the Conservation Area, and increase the prominence of other inferior (some very poor) buildings within the City Centre, all to the material detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The underlying Conservation Area requirements would therefore not be met by the demolition and re-use of the site as presently proposed by Perth and Kinross Council.

Conclusions

As intimated above, based on the information presently before Historic Scotland it is not possible to conclude that any of the required SHEP tests are satisfied to the extent to justify the demolition of the iconic listed Perth City Hall. There may remain options that have not been properly explored, hardly surprising in light of the extended period since the site was marketed (2004). It is understood that there are interests in retaining the building in productive use that simply cannot be progressed in light of Perth and Kinross Council's stance as the owner (custodian) of this building. By failing to actively and positively market the building Perth and Kinross Council appear to be promoting a self fulfilling prophecy of no alternative viable options. This is unlikely to be the case and it is certainly not been "*clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it*" the requirement underpinning the SHEP assessment.

I have also seen no assessment of the waste caused by the demolition of the City Hall and its replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials. As intimated, such waste should be avoided wherever possible otherwise there is a failure to accord with national sustainability policy.

Therefore, the loss of the building has not be justified as the alternatives for re-use have not been properly explored (marketing failure), the economic case for development has not been substantiated, and the negative impacts on the built environment (including the impact on the designated Conservation Area) has not been robustly assessed. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition this listed building.

The process adopted by Perth and Kinross Council appears to be one of undue haste and untested assumptions. This is clearly a matter that requires full and careful consideration as do the assumptions that underlie any assessment. The assumptions which are relied upon to justify the demolition have not been tested nor have the potential alternatives to retain the building been fully explored as is the fundamental requirement of SHEP.

As a result of the above, how can Historic Scotland have confidence that Perth and Kinross Council's assessment is sufficiently robust to justify their proposed outcome, the removal of an iconic structure at the heart of the City of Perth. In short, it is considered that there is insufficient justification at this stage in accordance with prevailing policy requirements and therefore permission to demolish the listed Perth City Hall should be refused.

TMS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LTD

Tel: [REDACTED]

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:38:40
Subject: Proudfoot.S_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:38:40

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:

[REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 15:37
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to strongly formally object to the application to demolish Perth City Hall and my full formal objection statement of fact is attached.

Please acknowledge receipt of my email objection.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Proudfoot.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]



Heritage Management Directorate
Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH
Email : hs.consultationsperthandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

23rd December 2011

Demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Sir / Madam,

We do not typically comment on live planning applications. However, in this unusual circumstance we are pleased to take the additional opportunity to provide comment, primarily on urban and architectural grounds.

In making the case for demolition, the report by Perth and Kinross Council's Development Quality Manager to the Development Control Committee (Ref. No: 11/01083/LBC) states that,

Para 114. SHEP [Scottish Historic Environment Policy] makes no reference to the quality of any scheme for replacement of a listed building either as a balancing factor to be placed against the harm caused by demolition, or as a matter to be considered after the decision has been made. However, the idea and concepts associated with the planning application for the civic square are ultimately intertwined into the assessment of demolition because of the associated economic and community benefits of the replacement scheme.

The report goes on to quote your, "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" guidance,

Para 115. In exceptional circumstances the retention of a building may prevent wider public benefits flowing from the redevelopment of a site. Typically these cases would involve developments of national or regional significance and applicants will need to demonstrate that there is no practical way of realising the benefits without demolishing the building.

This establishes the main justification for the Listed Building Consent application and the proposed new square on the basis that it meets SHEP Test 3.50 (C). The report then goes on to expand on how this test is met.

Of the new square, the following claims for its potential benefits are made with reference to supporting information:

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There is no other site within central Perth that will deliver similar economic and community benefits and that the creation of a high quality, traffic free, informal and formal gathering place on the site of the City Hall will be of regional significance. Para 116

There is no major tourist attraction in the Central Area and the development of such a facility would add greatly to the attractiveness of the city for visitors and therefore benefit the city centre as a whole. Para 117

In terms of benefits to the townscape of the conservation area a well designed public square would provide enhanced views of St John's Kirk and enhance the setting for properties on St John's Place and South St John's Place, several of which are Listed Buildings. Para 121

The farmers market is currently constrained and that it would be possible to increase its size from a maximum of 40 stalls at present to over 90 stalls if the building is demolished. Para 126

Potential events and activities include markets, food festivals, concerts, sports, Christmas fairs and a seasonal ice skating rink. There will also be the opportunity for further al fresco cafe/restaurant seating. Para 128

A well designed civic square in the centre of Perth, with the proposed uses, has the potential to increase visitor numbers, increase visitor dwell times, stimulate private sector investment, and increase turnover for businesses in the immediate area. It will also provide a space for social interaction and the promotion of civic and cultural life in Perth and its surrounding hinterland. Para 130

Firstly, with regard to alternative gathering places, from a preliminary overview, three potential alternatives appear worthy of consideration. Immediately to the North and South of the historic core are the two public parks, the Inches. The South Inch is approximately 400m from South Street and the North Inch is approximately 300m from the High Street; both within easy walking distance from the main shopping area (as a rule of thumb a 'walkable catchment' has a radius of 400m). We note that historically the Inches have been used for outdoor markets and cultural events, they offer considerable flexibility in terms of space and usage, and are easily accessible from the wider region. The variety of functions that the Meadows in Edinburgh plays host to is perhaps worthy of comparison.

Alternatively, in a more enclosed, urban location, Murray Street, between Kinnoull Street and Methven Street, already presents a broad space that with adaptation is capable of playing a number of roles. It currently accommodates a bus hub with a central reservation, which is used for waiting, amenity seating, etc. A 1901 plan of the town indicates that there was once a narrow range of buildings that ran down the middle of the street- since removed- that explains the widening within the urban grid. Occupying the north side of this space is the category B listed Playhouse Cinema, whilst opposite is the decorated Romanesque C19th Perth North Church. A variety of pubs and cafes also front the space, with the Council's offices to the east on Kinnoull Street. "Murray Square" measures approximately 110m x 25m, this is closely comparable in proportion, scale and orientation to the example of Breukelyn (or Breukelen) in Holland, which is illustrated in the "Perth City Hall Options

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Appraisal, June 2010”, Exhibit 11. The Breukelyn square measures approximately 120m x 25m. Whilst Murray Street may not have precisely the same centrality and historic importance of the precinct around St John’s Kirk and the City Hall, it is only one block removed from the High Street (100m). A design study might consider how the edges of the space can be improved and also explore alternative arrangements for buses and traffic. Any abatement of benefits associated with the utilisation of this space for events versus St John’s would need to be offset against the loss of a regionally important category B listed building.

Exhibit 12 of the, “Perth City Hall Options Appraisal, June 2010”, illustrates that the space on St John’s Place is already well utilised by outdoor cafes and stalls, recalling similar usage around Royal Exchange Square and the former Sheriff Court building in Glasgow. St John’s Place and South St John’s Place either side of the City Hall are each approximately 15m x 95m in length from the west side of King Edward Street to the west front of St John’s Kirk. It is stated that the existing farmers market is constrained and has a present capacity of 40 stalls. By comparison, the weekly farmers market in Edinburgh accommodates a maximum of 46 stalls along Castle Terrace on a strip that measures approximately 14m x 120m (1680m²). The total surface area immediately around the City Hall including the contiguous sections of King Edward Street and Kirkside is approximately 3500m². This is without consideration of the seemingly plausible proposal by Simpson and Brown Architects that the City Hall could itself be converted into a covered market.

With regard to the proposed square and the supposed benefits to the townscape of the conservation area, we have considered it in terms of historical evolution and the urban and architectural context of the conservation area. In a number of the documents supporting the planning application, the proposed square is sometimes advocated as a reestablishment of St John’s Kirk’s original context, with particular reference to a market square. The 1901 plan shows this earlier market square to the west of St John’s although it was rather more intimate in scale (approx 25m x 25m, or 625m²) and self-contained (the proposed square is approx 5300m²). Before this the building line of Kirkside to the west of the church appears to have followed Fleshers Vennel continuously from the C14th, prior to which there may have been fields to the west, although the fabric of the building today was rebuilt from the C15th onwards. It is certainly possible to argue that St John’s Kirk is the most important building in the city, and its fine tower was clearly designed to be seen from afar, however, the more intimate scale of detail at street level suggests that it was not intended to sit in an exposed setting on the axis of a formal square. Colin McWilliam notes in, “Scottish Townscape”, that in contrast with some of the more dramatically sited medieval burgh kirks such as the Holy Rude in Stirling, those of Perth and St Andrews, ‘are fitted more prosaically into regular burgh plans’.

Although it may not be germane to the SHEP test, and whilst the category B status of the building has not been questioned, we have seen little in terms of an appreciation of the architectural and cultural value of City Hall amongst the planning documents, other than the inclusion of your Listed Building report. Rather, surprisingly from an external perspective, there appears to have been some doubt cast over the attractiveness and design quality of the building, including in some consultation comments from the business community and residents. In case there is any doubt as to the ability of our own generation to assess and value the merits of the building, we should refer to its own cultural context for guidance.

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It is widely maintained, even now, that the Edwardian period represents a high point of architectural achievement in the UK and it was a phase in which Scottish architects played a leading role. The competition that was held for the design of the City Hall attracted over 40 entries from the leading Scottish architects of the day. Notably, Sir John James Burnet was the assessor of the competition, who had one of the most influential practices in the UK in the early C20th. He was later awarded the RIBA Gold Medal for the promotion of British architecture, an honour bestowed upon the leaders of C19th and C20th world architecture from Sir Edwin Lutyens to Alvar Aalto and Sir Norman Foster. As you note, the competition winning designs by H.E. Clifford and Lunan were exhibited and published in professional journals as representative works of Scottish architecture, followed by photographs of it in its complete state after commencement of WWI. One of H.E. Clifford's domestic designs was published in Hermann Muthesius' seminal work, "Das Englische Haus", which also featured work by CR Mackintosh. The City Hall aspires to city status in both name and physical expression, and is resonant with a deep reservoir of European culture. There are other assured examples of Edwardian architecture in Perth, which collectively contribute to a distinctive, urbane 'layer' of the city's identity and formation.

The streets around the City Hall are products of the same improving era. The invitation to tender for the laying out of King Edward Street was issued in 1905 in order to forge a new link between South Street and the High Street; the competition advert for the City Hall was posted in 1907. Trams were introduced around the same time, including on the new King Edward Street. Our conclusion here is that Perth City Hall was designed for its context, whilst St John's Kirk was not designed to sit within such an open, formal expanse as that which is proposed.

The success or otherwise of formal, urban squares and wide, straight streets, depends to a considerable degree upon the quality and scale of their perimeter architecture. The only proposed view of the proposed square that we have located is from the south west corner of the site with the St John's Place frontage and St John's Kirk in view. In order to properly consider the proposed square from all angles, a variety of views are needed, including from besides St John's Kirk looking east towards the St John's Shopping Centre and the South St John's Place frontage. We are not convinced that the more informal and modest architecture of South St John's Place and the St John's Centre are of enough scale and interest to give the new square sufficient definition and character to become a regional focus.

It was noted by an author, R.S. Morrison, writing about the city in 1943 that, 'Kinnoull Street was continued right through to Scott Street and King Edward Street was opened linking High Street to South Street. The erection of a new City Hall, fronting one side of the street, together with gardens on the other side, greatly improved the centre of the town and gave more space around the Church of St John.*' The same author actually goes on to propose the creation of a new civic square between King Edward Street and Meal Vennel, which with St John's Kirk and the City Hall would together symbolise, 'the religious, civic, cultural, educational and business life of the community.' This refers to the site now occupied by the St John's shopping centre, which does provide a vestigial square around the War Memorial, if not to the extent conceived by the author. The essential sentiment here is that the City Hall forms a complementary relationship with St John's Kirk, symbolically and urbanistically.

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With regard to other SHEP tests such economic viability, there are others with greater expertise, including our sister charity The Prince's Regeneration Trust. In summary, from a spatial point of view we consider that there are additional possibilities for events spaces that are worthy of further exploration; we do not believe that removal of the City Hall will enhance the conservation area or provide sufficient amenity over and above the alternatives to justify its demolition.

Yours faithfully,



Edward Taylor RIAS RIBA
Representative in Scotland

* *Perth- The Development of a Scottish City*, "The Quarterly"- the Journal of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland" Prize Essay, R.S. Morrison, 1943



Heritage Management Directorate,
Historic Scotland,
Longmore House,
Salisbury Place,
Edinburgh EH9 1SH
Email : hs.consultationsperthandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Ms Johnston,

I wish to object to the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish this important listed building. My objection is based on the following grounds.

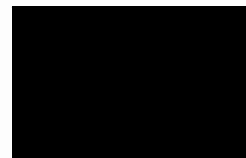
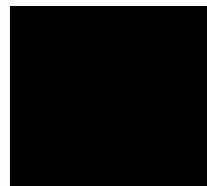
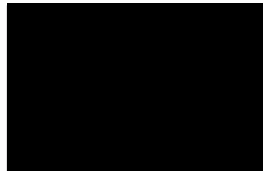
1. Para 3.50 of your SHEP guidelines states "*...it is Scottish Ministers' policy that no listed building shall be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to save it.*"
The Council have not fulfilled this requirement of your policy because:
(a) at the end of the abortive negotiations with Wharfside in 2009 they failed to contact the "reserve bidders" at least one of whom was still interested in acquiring the building.
(b) Instead of re-marketing the building, as required by para 3.50 (d), of your SHEP guidelines, they appointed consultants to advise them on potential alternative uses. This was a technique that was less likely to make contact with restoring purchasers than open marketing and, furthermore, the brief they gave the consultants excluded a requirement to consider "*...the symbolic, personal and social value of the City Hall or its importance in the collective memory of the local population and their sense of place.*" (see page 53 para 4.8 of the Locum Report). They also unnecessarily constrained the brief by requiring the consultants to work within the framework of Best Value and Green Book Treasury guidelines which, if they are relevant at all, apply only to public sector users. Finally, they have refused, within the past month, to consider a scheme lodged by Mr. V Linacre and Simpson and Brown, architects to re-use the entire building as a market, retail and cultural facility.
2. The case for demolition of the building rests on a claim that demolishing it would meet the criterion set out at para 3.50 (d) of your SHEP guidelines, namely "*...the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant economic benefits to economic growth and the wider community.*" This claim is based only on the guesswork of the Locum consultants that replacing the building with a civic square would generate an extra 210,000 visitors a year. As one example of the "events" that will generate such benefits the consultants suggest that ice skating on the square for 5 weeks each winter will generate a surplus revenue of £50,300. Despite the easily verifiable **fact** that a comparable facility in Edinburgh has accrued losses in the order of £250,000 since 1998, and the George Square Glasgow facility also runs at a loss, these predictions have been accepted unquestioningly by the Council. The economic

justification for demolition is, in fact, entirely conjectural and is, I believe, an inadequate basis for the removal of such an important building.

3. Apart from St. John's Kirk, the buildings around the proposed square are mediocre in terms of their architectural quality and the space created would be windswept and undistinguished in comparison with squares which have genuine visitor appeal. In environmental terms, the loss would be greater than the gain.
4. The proposed square would be relatively small and has a considerable number of residential properties on its north and south sides and in all the adjacent streets. None of the reports considered by Council's committees since 16th June 2010 – including the Development Control Committee of 16th November – gives a single thought to the issue of whether the events programme, which is integral to the economic case, is compatible with the need to maintain an adequate standard of residential amenity for existing properties.

For the above reasons, I request that the Council's application for consent to demolish the City Hall be refused and that they be instructed to engage in an open, genuine exercise to find a restoring purchaser.

Yours sincerely,



P.S. My suggestion for the City Hall would be an indoor market and/or craft workshops + outlets. Elsecar in Yorkshire is a good example of a building divided into small units for artisans and specialists. Huddersfield has an indoor market as do many other towns + cities. The central location of the hall makes it ideal for such a purpose. It would attract locals and tourists into the area.

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
 Received: 28/12/2011 09:38:22
 Subject: Pelling.R_Representation
 To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
 Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:38:22

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
 Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
 t| 0131 668 8707
 e| yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard Pelling [REDACTED]
 Sent: 23 December 2011 16:12
 To: HS.Consultations Perth & Kinross
 Subject: Objection to demolition of Perth City Hall

Heritage Management Directorate,
 Historic Scotland,
 Longmore House,
 Salisbury Place,
 Edinburgh EH9 1SH
 Email : hs.consultationsperthandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Ms Johnston,

I wish to object to the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish this important listed building.

My objection is based on the following grounds.

1. Para 3.50 of your SHEP guidelines states "...it is Scottish Ministers' policy that no listed building shall be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to save it."

The Council have not fulfilled this requirement of your policy because:

- (a) at the end of the abortive negotiations with Wharfside in 2009 they failed to contact the "reserve bidders" at least one of whom was still interested in acquiring the building.
- (b) Instead of re-marketing the building, as required by para 3.50 (d), of your SHEP guidelines, they appointed consultants to advise them on potential alternative uses. This was a technique that was less likely to make contact with restoring purchasers than open marketing and, furthermore, the brief they gave the consultants excluded a requirement to consider "...the symbolic, personal and social value of the City Hall or its importance in the collective memory of the local population and their sense of place." (see page 53 para4.8 of the Locum Report). They also unnecessarily constrained the brief by requiring the consultants to work within the framework of Best Value and Green Book Treasury guidelines which, if they are relevant at all, apply only to public sector users. Finally, they have refused, within the past month, to consider a scheme lodged by Mr. V Linacre and Simpson and Brown, architects to re-use the entire building as a market, retail and cultural facility.

2. The case for demolition of the building rests on a claim that demolishing it would meet the criterion set out at para 3.50 (d) of your SHEP guidelines, namely "...the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant economic benefits to economic growth and the wider community." This claim is based only on the guesswork of the Locum consultants that replacing the building with a civic square would generate an extra 210,000 visitors a year. As one example of the "events" that will generate such benefits the consultants suggest that ice skating on the square for 5 weeks each winter will generate a surplus revenue of £50,300. Despite the easily verifiable fact that a comparable facility in Edinburgh has accrued losses in the order of £250,000 since 1998, and the George Square Glasgow facility also runs at a loss, these predictions have been accepted unquestioningly by the Council. The economic justification for demolition is, in fact, entirely conjectural and is, I believe, an inadequate basis for the removal of such an important building.

3. Apart from St. John's Kirk, the buildings around the proposed square are mediocre in terms of their architectural quality and the space created would be windswept and undistinguished in comparison with squares which have genuine visitor appeal. In environmental terms, the loss would be greater than the gain.

4. The proposed square would be relatively small and has a considerable number of residential properties on its north and south sides and in all the adjacent streets. None of the reports considered by Council's committees since 16th June 2010 - including the Development Control Committee of 16th November - gives a single thought to the issue of whether the events programme, which is integral to the economic case, is compatible with the need to maintain an adequate standard of residential amenity for existing properties.

For the above reasons, I request that the Council's application for consent to demolish the City Hall be refused and that they be instructed to engage in an open, genuine exercise to find a restoring purchaser.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Richard Pelling.



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- 2 -

Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH 12 1SH

Attention of Barbara Cummins

23 December 2011

Dear Sirs

PERTH CITY HALL

I write to object to the Listed Building application by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish the Listed B Perth City Hall. It is clear that the Council's decision is contrary to the SHEP principles approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2009.

If the application is supported by Historic Scotland the future protection of listed buildings in Perth and Kinross, and further afield, will be vulnerable to erosion. It is the wrong example for a local authority to set in caring for the heritage of Perth and the historic environment. How can they then refuse an application to demolish Listed buildings in the ownership of other parties. The decision flies in the face of the SHEP principles which in the introduction paragraph at 1.1 sets out the Scottish Ministers' policy for the environment; provides a framework that informs day to day work for ...local authorities ...with an interest in managing the historic environment; and is a relevant document in statutory planning.

At 1.9 SHEP recognises the challenges to the environment from short term vision for development of place and inappropriate change that reduces the cultural significance or detracts from the appreciation or quality of conservation areas. This short term approach has been taken for the City Hall.

At 1.13 SHEP states that a key outcome is the protection of the historic environment for future generations by securing economic benefits of valuing our historic environment. A decision to demolish a well maintained building does not support this guideline.

SHEP sets out how authorities should proceed to achieve the objectives which Scottish Ministers have stated. They recognise the need for change and that economic concerns may affect the historic environment and decisions for the future of listed buildings.

In this case it appears that the Council have been poorly advised by officers. As a consequence they are not adhering to the SHEP guidelines as expected by Ministers. The Scottish Historic Environment Policy lays down clear conditions to be satisfied before demolition of a listed building is approved. The council has not followed these conditions. This was, in effect, admitted by the Depute Chief Executive, Jim Irons, in his report to the council in June 2010 when he stated "Alternatively, the Council may take the view that regardless of any potential re-use of the building, the consultation and appraisal provide sufficient evidence of significant benefit to the economy and wider community to justify consideration of demolition and the creation of a new civic square/public space". SHEP does not require economic benefit of a listed building to be compared with an alternative use unless there is substantial repair work required to the building which may require demolition. An inspection today will confirm that the City Hall is in remarkably good order given its lack of use for five years.

That the building has not been made available for public use is a deliberate decision by the Council to argue that it has not been used in applying for demolition. The Council has made no effort to market the building in the last six years. Efforts by interested parties to acquire the building have been deliberately ignored by the Council. As the Consultants were unable to meet me on a visit to Perth, and I was not invited to the workshop held by the Council's consultants reviewing options for the future use of the building in November 2009, I travelled to London to meet the consultants to present a scheme by Heritage Solutions. Reference to the Heritage Solutions interest is mentioned in the consultants' report so the Council can not argue, as they do, that there was no material interest from third parties. The financing of the scheme would require public sector in put but less than the current proposal. The elongated process adopted by the Council has inevitably antagonised the public to the extent that the proposal to demolish is attractive only because it demonstrates action not because they support demolition.

The Council has failed to satisfy the SHEP requirements without justification. Historic Scotland must in the circumstances resolve to refuse Listed Building Consent to demolition. The Council should be required to advertise for alternative operators for economic uses. I urge Historic Scotland to safeguard the heritage of Perth.

For ease of reference I attach letter of Objection to the Council.

Yours faithfully



David MacLehose



- 2 -

Nick Brian Esq
Perth & Kinross Council
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
Perth
PH1 5GD

27 July 2011

Dear Sir

**Planning Application 11/01082 and Application 11/01083/LBC
Demolition of Perth City Hall & Construction of New City Square**

I have a long standing interest and involvement in conserving the built heritage of Scotland and believe it generates significant economic benefits locally and nationally. The Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS) estimated the annual contribution to the national GVA to be £2.3 billion (2.6%) and generates 2.5% of Scottish employment. HEACS was the advisory Non-Departmental Public Body providing Scottish Ministers with strategic advice on issues affecting the historic environment. See the link at <http://www.heacs.org.uk/documents/2009/economicimpact.pdf>

I write to **object** to the above application.

It is unfortunate that the Council has not held an open meeting to present and discuss the thinking behind the proposal to create an open square at the cost of demolishing a Listed Building. There are many unanswered questions that could have been discussed in a positive manner through an open forum. There is a presumption against demolition in the Scottish Planning Policy.

The importance of the built heritage in Scotland is emphasised in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 where the Planning Authority or Scottish Ministers, are required to “have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses” as at Section 14(2)

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) published by the Scottish Government in July 2009 sets out the requirements for the care of Listed Buildings in Scotland. There is a clear duty placed on Local Authorities at paragraph 1.19 that Local Authorities are key agents in protecting the historic environment and in harnessing the potential of the historic environment, to contribute to Scotland’s economic and social success. Scottish Ministers require Local Authorities to play a full role in achieving their objectives for the historic environment.

The policy continues that Scottish Ministers believe that the people of Scotland are entitled to expect the historic environment to be protected, cared for and to be used sustainably, so that it can be passed on for the benefit of future generations. This expectation is developed at paragraph 1.13 where it is written that the people of Scotland and visitors to the country value, understand and enjoy the historic environment so generating economic benefit. The policy continues at paragraph 1.14. There should be a presumption in favour of individual historic assets and also the pattern of the wider historic environment; no historic asset should be lost or radically changed without adequate consideration of its significance and of all the means available to manage and conserve it. There is no assessment in the application of the conservation benefits of the City Hall. Neither was this issue assessed by the Colliers Locum Consulting Report.

At paragraph 5.12 of SHEP the Scottish Government is required to set a good example in the care of their historic estate. The City Hall is listed B – of regional significance. The Perth Central Conservation Plan refers to the City Hall as a “key building”. The area is rightly reported as popular with tourists for its unique character and appearance. The Council recognise and applaud the city’s heritage as a unique advantage. The former City Hall development is reported as intending to enhance the city’s retail offer, while utilising its unique historic character. All of this justifies retention and re-use and certainly not demolition even in today’s economic climate, which in the life of a Listed building is but a short period.

It would appear therefore that the current Council propose to ignore the basis of the Conservation Plan contrary to the Scottish Government’s recent published policy. It seems inconceivable that a Policy introduced only 2 years ago should be ignored by the same Government Ministers who introduced the policy. It could be that the Council believes the “reluctant” support of the Perth Civic Trust is of greater weight. The Civic Trust’s primary objective is advertised as to ‘bring together those concerned about Perth’s fine buildings, amenities and the quality of proposed developments’ and displays the City Hall prominently on its website. Their support for demolition remains incomprehensible. The RIAs have recently objected to the application referring to the architectural importance of the building as recognised by the B listing.

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy provides the opportunity to substantially alter and, even demolish, the historic environment and individual buildings but under strict guidelines as at paragraph 3.44 and restated at 3.50. The policy requires that where an application for Listed Building Consent proposes the demolition of a listed building, applicants will be expected to provide evidence to show that:

a) *The building is not of special interest.*

Scottish Government authorities clearly believe the building is special. The building is Listed B. Perth and Kinross Council record it as a ‘key’ building of unique advantage and character and appearance. This is hardly a statement of limited or nil interest. As far as I am aware neither Historic Scotland nor Perth & Kinross Council has not sought to remove or downgrade the listing.

b) *The building is incapable of repair.*

The Council can rightly claim credit for maintaining the building in surprisingly good condition since its closure as a public building. On a recent visit it was found to be in excellent condition, dry throughout in the loft space and in the foundations despite the wet spring weather. Externally the stonework remains generally satisfactory. With a small amount of housework the building could be made available for public use in short time.

c) *The demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to the economic growth or the wider community.*

The Council finds in the application on the Collier Locum Consulting Report to justify the economic benefits for demolition. The Green Book rules have been applied. At best these are subjective and must be influenced by an owner’s determination on the delivery an over arching policy. In this case the provision of a new City Square. The uses suggested by the applicant for the square may be perceived as providing economic benefit but it is hard to imagine how the £8 million potential income will be achieved. Clearly there is an adequate footfall into the area to encourage the new owners of the St John’s Centre to acquire and invest in the existing city centre. How a substantial uplift will be provided by an open square is hard to quantify and the Locum report does not go into detail on this aspect. It surely can not be an accurate assertion that the demolition of the Hall is essential to achieving these

contentious targets. Desirable may be in the applicant's view and their supporters, but hardly essential.

The Chamber of Commerce and others support the demolition not because of economic benefit but in the hope implementing of a solution to the future use of a prominent building in the centre of the city. All ratepayers would concur with that aspiration after nearly a decade of uncertainty, dithering and wasted opportunity in letting out the building. The non use of the building in recent years has been a deliberate policy by the Council and is now stated as a reason for demolition. That is not a reason to drive forward a solution that fails to carry significant economic benefit or enjoys popular support, and will have far reaching consequences for future generations.

- d) *The repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential purchasers for a reasonable period.*

The building is in good repair and capable of immediate use. An application can not found on this condition to apply for demolition.

There has been no effort by the owner to advertise the property for sale or lease since 2004 as evidenced by the appendix to the application. The only marketing exercise produced an unfortunate outcome which has been used as justification for the current application. The Council is well aware of other proposals as are mentioned in the Locum report. Despite the knowledge of these proposals by senior officers and Councillors, applicants have not been invited to discuss their proposals in detail by the Council. The suggestion that the proposals do not merit consideration as they are not privately funded seems bizarre given that the Council is using public funds for the current application. It can not therefore be accurate that building has been marketed for a reasonable period.

Conditions of the SHEP must be Scottish Government policy which remains to be met for the application to succeed. With the just conceivable but doubtful compliance of condition c of Para 3.50 as above, the remaining conditions have clearly not been met by any independent assessment. Should Historic Scotland and Scottish Ministers accede to the Council's application they must be prepared to knowingly set aside the SHEP conditions introduced only two years ago.

The Council may believe in need to demolish the Listed building. It has recently rightly supported the refurbishment of Taymouth Castle an important listed A building. There are other listed buildings currently economically redundant in Perth including St Paul's Church, and the Caledonian School. The application to demolish a key significant land mark building in the city centre sends all the wrong signals to owners of listed buildings who are required to maintain them to Government standards at their cost. The current Government policy and guidelines must be followed.

The Council is well aware of alternative proposals some of which will provide a public square while retaining the arguably most important section of the City Hall, others which provide exciting opportunities within the current footprint and envelope with changes to the elevation, and others no doubt to the building as it stands. The current application fails to address one obvious requirement to create economic benefit. A retractable cover over the open space is surely essential in periods of adverse weather which would permit activities to continue whatever weather. Most of these options generate income in addition to or as an alternative to those identified in the Locum Report for the open Square. The Report appears to be weighted towards the Open Square but without detailing the uses except in a conceptual way. By contrast the Locum Report records no benefits of a partially altered City Hall re-used for Cultural.

It is of great concern that the Council's Development Control Committee on 20 January 2010 voted by 6 to 5 votes to permit demolition of the Elcho and Birnam Wards at the Murray Royal Hospital

contrary to your advice. In this case the Reporter's Decision published on 22 July 2011, recommended refusal which was fortunately accepted by Scottish Ministers. The two villa buildings were listed only as they are in the curtilage of a B Listed building hospital. The two wards are stated as being in use which might have influenced the Reporter's decision. The City Hall is B listed in its own right. The City Hall is not used at present. It could and should be. That it is not and should not be a reason to permit demolition. This example less than a mile from the City Hall should serve as a precedent for the retention and re-use of the City Hall and indicate to the applicant that the application should be withdrawn now.

It is hard to imagine that the Council or the Development Control Committee can consider the application from an impartial position. Members of the Council have publically stated their preference to demolish and in the circumstances it would be perverse for a sub committee of the Council to refuse the application. In these circumstances surely the application should pass to Historic Scotland or the Scottish Reporters Unit for determination.

I believe that listed buildings wherever possible should be reused for the economic benefit of their location. I refer you to the Parliamentary Select Committee's report of 2004 looking into the role of Historic Buildings in Urban Regeneration: "Historic buildings provide a foundation for the regeneration of many of our towns and cities. Regenerating these buildings can reinforce a sense of community, make improvements to the wider area. They should not be retained as artefacts, relics of a bygone age. New uses should be allowed in the buildings and sensitive adaptations facilitated, when the original use of a historic building is no longer relevant or viable, Councils need to incorporate in their regeneration strategies a clear role for their historic buildings and to establish multidisciplinary teams to implement them."

Perth has already seen the successful conversion of historic buildings to contemporary use including the Ferguson Gallery, the Sandeman Library, the Education Department, Pullar House, the Fair Maid's house, and Stanley Mills. The Council should lead the way in creating an imaginative and contemporary use of the City Hall in promoting economic generation for the whole of Perthshire.

The evidence of the Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS15) from the Department of Communities and Local Government in July 2009 mirrors the Scottish Government's approach: "The historic environment is central to our cultural heritage. It contributes to our sense of national, local and community identity, through the memories of events and phases in our history that it holds. It has aesthetic value and provides local distinctiveness that is so important to a sense of place. It can help us support the economic development and regeneration of our communities, particularly through leisure and recreation. Through all this it enhances the quality of our daily lives.

The historic environment has a unique potential to contribute to a sense of place by helping to define the history and character of a particular area. People care about and want to protect those physical remains of the past that are vital to appreciation of our heritage. By understanding our past, we are better able to plan for our future and pass on those elements of the historic environment that we value to future generations".

As a positive contribution to the debate having objected to the Council's application I again suggest an alternative to the Council's proposal to demolition. The City Hall should be adapted to provide all weather facilities in a re-ordered ground floor with glazed opening side elevations at ground level permitting light vehicular access from the adjacent external road surface. The space could be used for markets, concerts, parades, exhibitions in association with the concert hall, public shows, and so much more – all under cover. The West section could be converted to offices including the Tourist Information Centre promoting tourist attractions throughout Perthshire in association with the private sector. Such uses will attract regular footfall to the centre of Perth, generate real economic benefit to local traders and throughout Perthshire. Current indicative estimates are less than £3 million for these works.

Should the Council wish to pursue the concept of an open square for other events the existing open space in Murray Square could be adapted as a Civic Square. For the limited periods it is required for such uses the buses could be diverted. This area is already dedicated to leisure use with pubs and restaurants, the city's cinema, and has fewer residents likely to be disturbed, and is close to the Council's administrative offices for civic purposes. It also includes a public convenience apparently not considered necessary in the Council's application.

The Council with Historic Scotland, should invite third parties through a marketing exercise, to submit proposals to lease, adapt and use the City Hall and manage the refurbished facility. To attract realistic proposals the Council should offer the successful bidder the capital sums set aside by the Council to demolish the City Hall and create the City Square. Additional funds could be provided by the private sector. By partnering with the successful bidder the Council will ensure that the funds are efficiently deployed in creating real economic advantage and retaining the whole or majority of the City Hall. This suggested marketing process will attract wider interest than the last exercise in 2004 which the Council proposes as adequate marketing to meet paragraph 3.50 of SHEP. This suggestion certainly meets SHEP's criteria. The 2004 exercise may have sufficed in 2004 but it can not remain a valid marketing exercise in 2011. If Perth and Kinross Council is allowed to demolish the City Hall how can they then require other applicants to the Council with similar aspirations to conserve their buildings? If the City Hall is a special case the arguments in support of the application are weak at best and not apparent. If the current application is called in by Ministers and/or Historic Scotland it may take many months before the final determination is known. The alternative proposal above could be passed speedily through the planning and Listed Building process with the support of Historic Scotland as the building will be adapted and not demolished and meet all SHEP's criteria. The building works could be completed with twelve months or less.

Perth Council must deploy 21st century vision for the whole of Perth City Centre. The current application falls short by a long margin. Locum Consulting Report repeatedly warned that demolition is against current regulations for historic buildings but the Council appears to have sidelined this warning. The application concerns an important building which can be saved and used for the economic and historic benefit of Perth in line with Government guidance and policy. It should be now as it should have been during the last five years. The Council should lead by example and offer the residents of Perth and visitors to the Fair City a heritage of which we can all be proud. The current application fails that test and should be rejected.

John Knox will surely be turning in his pulpit in the grave at the thought of the Council's proposal for the use of the square so close to St John's Kirk.

Yours faithfully

David MacLehose

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:36:51
Subject: MacLehose_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:36:51

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
David MacLehose [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 16:56
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall Objection

Please
find attached a letter of objection to the Listed Building Application
for the Perth City Hall.

Regards

David MacLehose BSc FRICS FRSA
Chairman
Heritage Solutions,
[REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Heritage Management Directorate,
Historic Scotland,
Longmore House,
Salisbury Place,
Edinburgh EH9 1SH
Email : hs.consultationsperthandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Demolition of Perth City Hall

Dear Ms Johnston,

I wish to object to the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish this important listed building. My objection is based on the following grounds.

1. Para 3.50 of your SHEP guidelines states “...it is Scottish Ministers’ policy that no listed building shall be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to save it.”
The Council have not fulfilled this requirement of your policy because:
(a) at the end of the abortive negotiations with Wharfside in 2009 they failed to contact the “reserve bidders” at least one of whom was still interested in acquiring the building.
(b) Instead of re-marketing the building, as required by para 3.50 (d), of your SHEP guidelines, they appointed consultants to advise them on potential alternative uses. This was a technique that was less likely to make contact with restoring purchasers than open marketing and, furthermore, the brief they gave the consultants excluded a requirement to consider “... the symbolic, personal and social value of the City Hall or its importance in the collective memory of the local population and their sense of place.”(see page 53 para4.8 of the Locum Report). They also unnecessarily constrained the brief by requiring the consultants to work within the framework of Best Value and Green Book Treasury guidelines which, if they are relevant at all, apply only to public sector users. Finally, they have refused, within the past month, to consider a scheme lodged by Mr. V Linacre and Simpson and Brown, architects to re-use the entire building as a market, retail and cultural facility.
2. The case for demolition of the building rests on a claim that demolishing it would meet the criterion set out at para 3.50 (d) of your SHEP guidelines, namely “...the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant economic benefits to economic growth and the wider community.” This claim is based only on the guesswork of the Locum consultants that replacing the building with a civic square would generate an extra 210,000 visitors a year. As one example of the “events” that will generate such benefits the consultants suggest that ice skating on the square for 5 weeks each winter will generate a surplus revenue of £50,300. Despite the easily verifiable **fact** that a comparable facility in Edinburgh has accrued losses in the order of £250,000 since 1998, and the George Square Glasgow facility also runs at a loss, these predictions have been accepted unquestioningly by the Council. The economic justification for demolition is, in fact, entirely conjectural and is, I believe, an inadequate basis for the removal of such an important building.
3. Apart from St. John’s Kirk, the buildings around the proposed square are mediocre in terms of their architectural quality and the space created would be windswept and undistinguished in comparison with squares which have genuine visitor appeal. In environmental terms, the loss would be greater than the gain.
4. The proposed square would be relatively small and has a considerable number of residential

properties on its north and south sides and in all the adjacent streets. None of the reports considered by Council's committees since 16th June 2010 – including the Development Control Committee of 16th November – gives a single thought to the issue of whether the events programme, which is integral to the economic case, is compatible with the need to maintain an adequate standard of residential amenity for existing properties.

For the above reasons, I request that the Council's application for consent to demolish the City Hall be refused and that they be instructed to engage in an open, genuine exercise to find a restoring purchaser.

Yours sincerely,

M A Hope

I object to the demolition of Perth City Hall. This to my mind would be vandalism of a perfectly sound important historic building. Perth should be grateful it has a City Hall, other towns would die for a lovely building as this. Use the hall for what it was intended which was for the benefit of the public. Why should we close the bowling and ice rinks for events such as Political conferences, Model Railway Exhibitions or Ceilidhs which could be and were formerly held in the City Hall. These events at present are denying curlers, skaters and bowlers the use of their purpose built arenas. We are applying for City Status yet we are hell bent on removing our City Hall. The Hall could be used for countless uses some of which are as follows. Holding Farmers Markets, (throughout the year), Antique Sales, General Market Stalls, Book Sales, Conferences, Model Rail Exhibitions, Wedding Fairs, Ballroom Dancing, Amateur Dramatics, Darts / Snooker Competitions. The list is endless. Bringing these attractions would also attract visitors who would stay in our hotels and guest houses and spend money in our shops which is much needed business. The tourists are not going to come just to sit in the "Plazza" for half an hour (if its not raining) with a coffee in possibly a 12 week summer window. They want to see attractions. If we need a public square knock down the unsightly 60's built row of shops in Scots St. That is Pound Stretcher to Concord record shop. Then open up this area for the public square. Move the current retailers into the empty shops which are plentiful. You have then solved three problems.

1/ Perth would have a new square.

2/ Current empty shops would be brought back to use.

3 Perth would still have the city hall as an all year in door public venue.

Old buildings have character and attract tourists. Once they are gone they are gone forever. Perth Council have not given the hall a fair chance to survive. They have not properly made any attempt to attract other users to the hall. To do this Perth Council need to advertise the City Hall and Lesser City Hall with reasonable daily hire rate charges in the local press and at the City Hall. This could be trialled for a year or so just to see what organisations would be attracted to the venue, and after this time reconsider the situation. Also within that year have a trial moving of the Tourist Information office to the City Hall foyer to give a better Tourist information presence than now. The information office could also assist in the managing of the hall.

Give the City Hall a chance instead of knocking down a perfectly sound historic building. I am also sure the cafes and eateries around the hall would benefit far more by having an all year venue on their door step. Rather than weather dependant open square.

D Graham



From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:36:41
Subject: GrahamD_representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:36:41

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
DOUGLAS GRAHAM [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: 23 December 2011 16:57
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall Objection
to Demolition

Dear Sir

Please find my attached objections to the demolition of Perth City Hall.

Regards

Douglas Graham

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 11:45:23
Subject: GavinJ_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 11:45:23

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
John Gavin [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 10:32
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Re: city hall

From: John
Gavin
To: "hs.consultationsperthhandkinross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk"

Sent: Friday, 23 December 2011,
10:28
Subject: city hall

Dear Sir,

I am 71 years
old a ex building contractor as far as im concerened the city hall is one off
the best building in perth and kinross.

I dont see
how they cant make the city hall into perth theatre instead of spending lost

off money doing up the theatre.

I know that the Johns Kirk is a lovely building and the history off the Kirk unfortunately the history off the Kirk split the people off Perth and of most of Scotland with the man who preached in it. But the City Hall was built for the people and brought them together.

Your
proposable of a square I think would be another place for drunks to hang out and would look very untidy.

Kind regards

Mr John Gavin

retired
builder)

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 11:46:15
Subject: EdwardsF_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 11:46:15

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 11:46
To: HS.Consultations Perth & Kinross
Subject: Proposed Demolition of Perth City Hall - An Objection.

Dear Ms Johnston,

I wish to object to the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to demolish this important listed building.

My family and I have lived in Perth - the place of my wife's birth and upbringing - for 22 years. In that time Perth City Hall has been the site of several significant events for our family. Our daughter achieved first place in two music competitions there, and second place in another. We attended a prize-giving evening there for Perth High School where our son featured amongst the prize winners, and we enjoyed rousing live orchestral music played by the School's Orchestra. I had the hairs stand up on the back of my neck when we attended a Queen tribute band played there, in a moment where I swear the singer on stage was Freddy Mercury, so good was his body language. I also bought presents at the Christmas craft fair, the like and variety of which I would have found nowhere else in Perth under one roof.

The Concert Hall may have taken over the City Hall's role in providing a live music venue. But as new and bright-and-shiny as the Concert Hall is, it lacks a certain warmth and charm that the layout and architecture of the City Hall still has.

I am not au fait with the politics and machinations of situations such as these. For me, the arguments for retaining the City Hall are these:

The climate in Perth simply is not conducive to outdoor activities, such as relaxing and 'promenading', for a large proportion of the year. This is not the Mediterranean. I can recall only two occasions when it was warm enough for me to enjoy a cup of coffee sitting outdoors in that area. The presence of outdoor heaters - a rather un-ecological device - outside the cafes there is proof of that. Perth could well do with an enclosed, centrally-located, multi-purpose volume that retains the best features of the current City Hall, sensitively updated in a way that would make it a natural place to congregate, rendezvous, eat, purchase, browse, and be

informed of local amenities, for locals and tourists alike. No other single venue in Perth currently performs that function. The triumvirate of Perth Theatre, Concert Hall and City Hall would complement each other very well.

If I am informed correctly, it would cost more to demolish the City Hall in order to create an open, wind-swept space than it does simply to maintain the building in its unused state. In which case, would it not be better to spend the time (and money) to keep the City Hall standing until all avenues for re-vamping have been exhausted, and it becomes economically more pressing to remove it forever? Once it has gone, it will be gone forever.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Edwards



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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 11/01/2012 08:53:28
Subject: DundasA_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 11/01/2012 08:53:28

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Johnston L (Leigh)
Sent: 10 January 2012 10:26
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: FW: Perth City Hall
Importance: High

Lynn etc

Please can you send out our standard
Barbara response to Mr Dundas as he made the representation deadline.

Thanks,

Leigh

From:
Andrew Dundas [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 14:18
To: Johnston L (Leigh)
Subject: Re: Perth City Hall

Hello Leigh Johnston,

Thank you for this policy reference, which clarifies the
matter for me. [I note that PKC's summary of your policy introduces novel
arguments: notably opening up a vista and supporting the shopping
environment]. I'm therefore able to better align my cause to your policy,
and as follows:

The PKC 'consultation' paper & questionnaire I sent you earlier makes clear that retaining the City Hall is a viable option.

That option is shown as Option 5 in their questionnaires and at the bottom of the list. If it were not a viable option - and we now know that it has been maintained for only £15k pa for six years it has been unused - it would not have been included in that long list of choices.

Even if the rationale for removal of this Scheduled building were some sort of popularity contest, that was flawed. It's notable that none of the consultees was told of the costs of each option - only the supposed benefits. Moreover, consultees were 'led' by the preamble towards the central option PKC preferred.

Perth has plenty of open spaces close to its town centre, and the traffic-free area in front of the City Hall is already much larger than the 'sidewalk' areas in the middle of Times Square in New York. Moving the Edward VII memorial to a less central position would free up even more space, if that were required.

As I wrote in my earlier email, no attempt has been made to find real commercial development opportunities such as flats or office space. There are usually large and unmet demands for such uses in town centres. PKC has an above average sized and growing population of elderly people many of whom would welcome a small flat close to shops & public transport. And Call Centres are often operated from town centre locations because their shift-workers appreciate such convenient locations.

True, a conversion might require some initial subsidy from PKC, but very much less than the £4.4millions now proposed to remove the City Hall. No such subsidy was offered in support of retention, and no real attempt to align the City Hall with market opportunities has been attempted.

Historic Scotland has a policy of ONLY recommending demolition to the Minister (or Secretary of State) where there is no viable alternative or some powerful public need for removal. If SH were to agree with PKC and recommend demolition, many people might believe Historic Scotland was rejecting its very own policy of retaining our Scottish Heritage.

Andrew Dundas

----- Original Message -----

From: Leigh.Johnston@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2011 3:33 PM

Subject: RE: Perth City Hall

Dear Mr Dundas,

I just wanted to follow up on some of your email queries now that you have our standard response of 7 December:

Each listed building consent case is tested on its own merits and we provide more detailed guidance in our managing change guidance note on demolition – <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/demolition-2.pdf>

Re your 'viable alternative' clarification, we are not aware of this being challenged in court but there have been a number of instances where Scottish Ministers or planning authorities have refused listed building consent because it has not been fully demonstrated that there is no viable alternative for a listed building.

The planning process for the Perth City Hall applications started back in June 2011 when the Council submitted their scheme to the planning service and it went through the normal public consultation procedures and timings. Historic Scotland has provided a further opportunity for representations in line with normal planning timescales of 21 days on receipt of an application. Further information and updates can be found

on our webpage –
<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/indepth/perthcityhall.htm>

Regards,

Leigh

Leigh
Johnston | Heritage Management Team
Leader, Historic Buildings North

Historic Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| 0131 668 8919
m| 07825682838
e| leigh.johnston@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

** Please note that I do not work on
Wednesdays **

From:
Andrew Dundas [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 December 2011 11:43
To: Johnston L (Leigh)
Subject: Re: Perth City Hall

Hello Leigh,

It might be worth keeping open for more submissions at least
until mid-January.

Andrew Dundas

----- Original Message -----

From: Leigh.Johnston@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, December

15, 2011 4:49 PM

Subject: RE: Perth City Hall

Dear Mr Dundas,

I just wanted to acknowledge receipt of your 12, 14 and 15 December emails. We will provide a response next week but regret that this will be the standard one which we have been sending to all correspondents as we are actively considering the case on behalf of Scottish Ministers. All submissions being made to us are being read and will form part of our assessment process.

Regards,

Leigh

Leigh
Johnston | Heritage Management Team
Leader, Historic Buildings North

Historic Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| 0131 668 8919
m| 07825682838
e| leigh.johnston@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

** Please note that I do not work on
Wednesdays **

From:
Andrew Dundas [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 December 2011 16:25
To: Johnston L (Leigh)
Subject: Perth City Hall

Hello Leigh Johnston

There is additional reasons why understanding the law and/or approved policy about demolition is so important. I have this day been sent important documents about the consultations. Which I append.

There's a clear difference between the policy described in

your documents and that which PKC has published when carrying out public consultations. Which policy is correct?

This is how PKC describes your policy about the demolition of scheduled buildings in public consultations:

"Listed

Buildings are protected and they cannot generally be demolished, unless it can be proven that it is not possible to repair or re-use them or their demolition would provide significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community.

I can't find 'cannot generally be demolished' or the 'economic growth or wider community' rational in your policy. Are those conditions part of the Scottish Heritage policy?

There is evidence that PKC has sought an 'indoor market' use for City Hall - but no others, such as conversion in to flats or office uses. There is a large elderly population in the district who would like to find accommodation close to shops and public transport. Offices & call centres are not unusual in the centres of Scottish towns. Neither of those options was considered.

This is how PKC has described its search for alternative uses in its consultations:

"The Council has attempted to find a new use for the City Hall but to date have been unsuccessful. In the past the Council has also said it would consider demolition if no use could be found or if evidence suggested that a public space or demolition and redevelopment would improve the use or setting of St John's Kirk and/or be of greater benefit to the economy and community".

Is the provision of urban open space part of Scottish Heritage's policy for permitting the demolition of a scheduled building?

There are no descriptions of any costs related to the 'options' proposed to respondents of its questionnaire by PKC. It is always hard to understand how people can make up their minds about alternatives when the clear differences in cost for each are not revealed.

It is reasonable to conclude that Councillors would have been informed of PKC's version of your policy about demolitions - that's why it is now critical to understand exactly what your policy really is?

Andrew Dundas

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From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 28/12/2011 09:37:27
Subject: Cormie.J_representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 28/12/2011 09:37:27

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
James Cormie [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 16:52
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Demolition of Perth City
Hall

Perth City Hall – Ulterior Motives
and Hidden Agendas

Dear Ms Cummins,

As we arrive at the final day on which objections to the demolition of Perth City Hall must be sent, I should like to draw the attention of Historic Scotland, protector of our heritage, to several matters which I regard as important and which have not so far, and surprisingly, been covered in the local press.

A great deal has been said for and against the demolition and I have no doubt all these views have already been sent to you, or you have seen them in the press. Three matters have, however, been puzzling to many people.

The first, which does not puzzle me and which makes me very angry indeed, is the position taken by Perth Civic Trust, which is in direct contradiction to the views of the Scottish Civic Trust. Perth Civic Trust has meekly gone along with the Council's determination to demolish the Hall, stating that they accepted the Council's claims that "no viable business plan had been put forward for the re-use of the Hall", so it might as well be demolished. One of the main purposes of Perth Civic Trust, as stated on its Membership Card, is "keeps a constant watch on buildings of architectural or historical interest and pays particular attention to any proposed alterations to them" – I take this to include demolition! No mention of architectural merit or historic value or contribution to our built heritage has been made by Perth Civic Trust. My husband and I were appalled by this pathetic response. We are long-standing members of Perth Civic

Trust, and former committee members, so my husband contacted the Secretary and asked that a questionnaire be sent to all members to ascertain their views. He was told that, as a meeting on the subject had been held some time previously, there was no need for a questionnaire – end of story. This meeting, which we were unable to attend, was according to the press a very heated one.

The real reason behind Perth Civic Trust's attitude is, of course, that influential members of the Trust are also influential members of St. John's Kirk, and we know that these members desperately want to "open up" the Kirk.

Years ago, I attended a Civic Trust committee meeting at the time when plans for our new concert hall appeared in the press. The chairman, who was also the session clerk of the Kirk, was literally rubbing his hands with glee. "Now we'll get rid of the City Hall", he said. My heart sank, as I realised at that moment that there would be a battle to save the Hall. If we knocked down every listed building which stood beside another, we'd have hardly any built heritage left!

The second puzzling view was that of Mr. John Bullough, owner of McEwens of Perth – a fine old department store in St. John Street, beloved of many generations of Perth citizens. Some months ago, a photograph appeared in the Courier showing him standing in front of the beautiful, imposing City Hall, while he announced that it should be demolished as soon as possible to aid the economic recovery of Perth town centre. He said the same thing more recently on Scottish television, suggesting we could have classical concerts in the new empty "civic square" – even though we have a new Concert Hall and St John's Kirk, with its dwindling congregation, has been refurbished inside and set up for classical concerts. This did not make sense and for some time I was puzzled as to how this empty square, with occasional events such as pop concerts, big wheels, "blast trucks", etc. would benefit a classy store like McEwens.

On 2nd December, in the Perthshire Advertiser, came the answer. In that newspaper there appeared a large full-page feature/advert about McEwens recently opened second restaurant and "a newly opened Food Hall". Of course, the attractive plan of Messrs. Simpson & Brown, Architects of Edinburgh and Mr. Vivian Linacre of Perth for re-use of the Hall as a covered market/food hall, with tourist office, heritage centre and restaurant, would be in direct competition with McEwens and if the Hall were to be demolished, the noise, disturbance, dust of demolition, followed by an archaeological dig and laying out of the square over several years, would most likely put the surrounding small cafés out of business – an added bonus for McEwens, which is a little farther away. Is this all coincidental? My question is, since Perth Civic Trust and Mr. Bullough have vested interests in the demolition, should their views be considered?

The third puzzle concerns the removal of the Merkat Cross/King Edward VII Memorial. Perth & Kinross Council is looking at options for moving it to another location where "it can be fully appreciated". Pull the other one! I understand this "other location" is in a narrow street between the Kirk and another building. At the moment, as can be seen from many photographs, it stands in an excellent, prominent position, between the Hall and the St. John's Centre, with plenty of space all round it. Therefore, one has to ask the question, why move it to a worse position? Is it to do with the new owners of the Centre wishing to expand? The Council vehemently deny this.

It is very sad that this project has divided the citizens of Perth, caused such bitterness, anger and distress among those who wish to keep this fine, substantial and imposing building at the heart of their town. It is built of solid warm pinkish-brown stone, with lovely architectural features around its windows, which in turn decorate all its walls. It is not "grey, bare-walled, run down and derelict" as stated by one Scotsman reporter, who has obviously never seen it, but it is in an excellent

state of repair, almost as good as the day it was built one hundred years ago, and it looks as if it could last a few hundred years more. Many citizens are saying that we have lost so much since it was closed. There are two halls, and they used to accommodate flower shows, craft fairs, WRIs, jumble sales, Rotary Fayres, dances, school music exams and festivals, all kinds of fund-raising and charity events. The new "glass tub" Concert Hall cannot accommodate these and organisations have had to find venues in churches and cramped church halls all over the place. It is absolutely disgraceful that this comfortable, watertight Hall has been closed and unused for the past six years. I'm quite sure that with a market hall, being flexible, some at least of these local events could be accommodated on certain days.

One councillor has said in the press, "It (the Hall) is just a concrete box". Really? This sums up exactly the attitude of Perth & Kinross Council which has not once, to my knowledge, shown any concern at all about architectural merit or heritage. Their sole concern appears to be "economics" as their constant chant is "No viable business plan has been submitted. Why? Because the Council has deliberately not marketed the property since the Wharfeside debacle six years ago. Nevertheless, they themselves produce no business plan for the success of this new magnificent "civic square". We are supposed to take this on trust.

In the press, there are many more letters in favour of preserving the Hall than of demolishing it. The latter few which do appear are usually quite venomous in their description of and feelings for it – "this monstrosity", etc. - so it usually comes down to a personal dislike. One letter writer (Perthshire Advertiser 25th November) states, "Traditionally, it is the angry who more readily put pen to paper". Well, of course, that's because they have something to be angry about, and if they had expressed their anger more loudly in the 60s, we should have had more of our heritage around us today. Scotland needs tourists, Perth as much as any, who visit as much for our history as for our landscape. Is this kind of vandalism not "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs"?

In fact, this present Council has no interest whatsoever in local culture, history or the arts. We have no arts centre, which was promised years ago, as they sell off every suitable building as it becomes available – yet they think we should have our city status returned to us. It is a tragedy that the heart has been torn out of our wonderful historic town – and therefore out of our community. It is surely sensible to make every effort to find a use for the Hall, to exhaust all possibilities and try them out, rather than start off by demolishing it and then finding out, after it's gone, that an empty square isn't successful. Let's have some honesty and common sense – this is too important a matter for anything else.

Yours sincerely,

Stella A. Cormie

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 10:12:30
Subject: CockburnW_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 10:12:30

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
william cockburn [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 01:00
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: demolition of the City
Halls

Dear Leigh Johnston,

I
write following Perth and Kinross Council's short-sighted decision to demolish
the City Halls, to add my protest to the many who have shown their disbelief,
frustration and strong opposition since the proposal was first mooted,
and hope you will not allow this irrevocable step.

I have taken p

I have, myself written to the PA and Courier since hearing of the proposed demolition and, while not as anti-Perth and Kinross Council as some other correspondents, I feel it really has shot itself in the foot with this one and would urge you to try and make its members take a deep breath and start again. they have obviously taken some pretty bad decisions regarding this situation over the last few years and now is surely the time for them to throw up their hands and say we got this wrong . I think this Council does some excellent work and myself and family have been recipients of their organisations' very well resourced and efficiently-run departments, but this debacle is another matter.

Yes, it is probably true that they don't have the money to pay for the up-keep of the building as it stands, but allowing the demolition of a listed building just because you don't have the money is sure!

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 10:12:43
Subject: CockburnMA_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 10:12:43

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
william cockburn [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2011 04:29
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Demolition of the City
Halls

Dear Leigh
Johnston,

I write to object most strongly to the demolition of the City Halls in Perth City centre and urge you to do all in your power to prevent that from happening.

I have taken part in the Council's consultation procedure, and was as disappointed as many when it was publicised that 'a majority' had been in favour of demolition. It now seems these were, to be polite, misleading statements, and there are all sorts of questions being asked regarding the actual decision-makers and decision-making processes at the 'demolition meeting'. No doubt these, seemingly now untrue, statements were designed to knock the stuffing out of opponents to demolition, and yet, correspondence columns of the papers have been full of letters taking the Council to task for the decision, and seriously questioning their motives, figures and procedures, more than for any other subject I have ever seen, signalling the deep emotions and strong opposition to this vandalism of our built inheritance.

While I have much praise for the Council in certain departments, and have no axe to grind, I am appalled at its inept handling of this affair, and hope you can pull its members back from the brink of this ridiculous and irrevocable step.

It seems you have certain criteria and guidelines to be followed if a listed building is to have permission to be demolished, and I would submit the Council has failed to deliver on these.

They certainly can't show that 'every effort has been made to save it', when it seems very clear the opposite is true, they are determined to demolish it come what may, not even deigning to glance at the latest, pretty convincing economically, proposal to re-use it, and treating all the others with derision, dismissing them out of hand. It is also true to say that there has been much talk of and lots written about the so-called real economic benefits which will be derived from a large empty space at the heart of the city, but the PR stuff in the press about the new square is very short on information .

What ARE these so-called 'benefits' to Perth which we're continually reading about? Perth city centre has a very unusually high proportion of residents, especially around that area, 'Events' are generally noisy, with PA systems 'wired-up to the max.', [recently experienced in the shopping precinct, where decibel levels bombasted the ears and reached, I'm sure, extremely illegal levels for aural health]. What 'benefits' will these residents gain from having that sort of noise level blaring out to their homes late into the night? What 'benefits' will any cafe proprietors gain from yet more empty, wet and dripping tables and chairs, when there's a perfectly excellent BUILDING there, able to be used to shelter from the wind and rain and drink in comfort?

The decision to demolish is bad enough, but the decision to demolish in order to make a Continental-style piazza for 'events' and such-like, in its place, is ludicrous.

There are tables and chairs out-side all the cafes and bars which already line the sides of the square, utilised about 5 days in the year! Our weather is simply not

Continental; likewise 'events' under the kind of relentless, power-shower rain we are seeing more and more of, will be nothing but wash-outs.

The 'artist's impression' of the square was hilarious, with azure-blue skies smiling down on a carefree multitude, going hither and thither, -when the likelihood is, there'll be three street-drinkers and a dog sitting there, and everyone else desperately dashing to cover, huddled into their anoraks, trying to escape the driving rain, while holding onto their brollies as the wind howls and swirls through the wild open space.

There are things wrong with the building, in my opinion; I think for instance the cherubs are really rather grotesque and in strange proportion, and all those steps up to the front entrance in this day and age, are anathema, [tho' I hated what Wharfedale were planning to do there, which would have been sacrilege!] so any re-use will require extremely sensitive re-thinking and respect of the architecture, but the quality of the majority of stonemasonry outside and the acoustics, wood and fixtures and fittings inside, are wonderful and surely must make it worth preserving for another age?

Has the Council really explored fully all other options for re-use ? To an outsider it seems definitely not. The latest proposal I saw includes re-locating The Information Centre, fantastic idea, right in the centre where it should be; also market stalls, arts and crafts as well as the artisan individual farmers' markets etc COVERED, with our weather-essential; a tea room/cafe, brilliant,-under cover, where it needs to be in our climate, art gallery, perfectly logical-loads of stuff never seen in the present building -too small; it seems the Council hardly glanced at this proposal. whereas in its place, a space that's not really big enough to accommodate huge crowds for events, but not small enough to be a nice neat al fresco 'sit-ooterie', has nothing to recommend it to visitors, they certainly ain't gonna flock in in enough droves to justify, nor recoup, the supposed 4million it's all going to cost!

Having travelled up and down the U.K. I am sick to the back teeth of seeing the same high streets in every town/city; Perth has a unique townscape, so many really interesting historical frontages have survived 'modernisation', it means it has a very different feel, a really 'sellable 'quality for visitors, including street information about historical events where you can still find the buildings and with the grand imposing City Halls at its heart.

Can it really be that the Councillors are bowing to pressure from the shopping-centre owners and want to expand that over the Merkat Cross and onto the City Halls site? Surely they can see, that just more anodyne chainstores will bring very little to the city centre, -and any extension's architecture will be dross compared to that already 'in residence',- while selling unique arts/crafts/local produce will, because people will know their item is one-off, individual and where groups of 'makers' are gathered, it becomes a draw; When Artists' Open Studio days come round, and one can see the amount of artists who live within a few miles of Perth, it's astonishing, unique,..... and sellable as a real, not imagined, 'economic benefit'.

It seems the City Fathers are pinning much of their hopes on the latest fad, an ice rink in the winter....have they not heard of the debts run up by the 'big boys' Edinburgh and Glasgow, with their 'winter under-fundedlands'? Huge up-front costs, never recouped, saddled with more debt...Here that would be on top of the 4-5 million they've 'planned' to spend, and let's face it these things never come in costing less than twice the estimate.....

The fact remains, when, in a few years, they discover they're going to need some other building there for whatever reason, it will not be anything LIKE the quality which we have at present, and building it will be far more expensive than preserving what we have;too late they'll realise, what a waste.Unless you can stop them!

This is what people wanted to do to Manchester's, now-internationally-recognised-as-priceless, Town Hall in the 60s! Their brutal short-term-ism and determination must not be allowed to deprive our city of its majestic heart, to give way to a bare one, or worse, in a few more years to find ourselves saddled with a ghastly car-park or cheap, every-chain-store's concrete breeze-block box.

Hoping you can find, amongst all your rules, a way to stop this and compel them to open their eyes and see sense.

yours,

all worked-up!

Mary-Ann Co'burn

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OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF PERTH CITY HALL

This representation sets out the rationale for the retention of Perth City Hall as a key and valued component of the central Perth Conservation Area, and as a significant building of architectural and historic merit of significance to Perth, to its residents and to visitors to the City. The present position of Perth and Kinross Council in seeking to demolish this significant and attractive "B" listed structure is considered to be unsubstantiated as based on a number of poorly justified assumptions, a patent failure to consider sustainable development (as required by primary legislation and established Scottish Planning Policy), and a lack of appreciation of the present and future options for the use of the City Hall, a building in generally good condition and with a potential for beneficial re-use in order to retain it for future generations.

The core principle of sustainable development, as enshrined in primary legislation, relates to the most appropriate use of resources, and underpins decisions on land use planning, including the productive re-use of existing buildings. It is established Scottish Government policy through Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), and as reflected within development plans, that historic environments and the individual buildings and groups of buildings forming these have a special status within the planning process, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic buildings often define the underlying character and distinctiveness of towns and cities which set them apart from others and are valued by local communities and visitors. They often provide (or could provide) facilities of value to local communities and directly contribute towards the attraction of an area for locals and visitors alike.

The Scottish Government emphasises the contribution made to a sustainable Scotland by the repair, maintenance, preservation and reuse of our older buildings. It is national policy that the waste caused by unnecessary demolition and replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials, should be avoided wherever possible. In addition, once lost listed buildings cannot be replaced. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting. Such a presumption is clearly set out in primary legislation, in national policy, and in extant development plans. Additionally, it is accepted that the demolition of even a single building could result in harm to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or part of it and therefore it is not just the loss of the building that requires to be assessed it is the impact of this on the surroundings.

In the case of applications for the demolition of listed buildings it is Scottish Ministers' policy that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. As set out

within the SHEP, decision makers should only approve demolition of listed buildings where they are satisfied that:

- a. the building is not of special interest; or
- b. the building is incapable of repair; or
- c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or
- d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

Against the policy background, which is generally that listed buildings should be retained unless there are clear reasons otherwise, any underlying assessment must satisfy at least one of the SHEP tests. I realise that there are a range of other considerations set out, including the terms of the development plan, but any assessment will return to these fundamental matters and requires to be set against the Scottish Government's position that no listed building should be demolished unless it can be clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it. I set out my views on the 4 tests as follows (noting that some overlaps exist): -

a. the building is not of special interest, or

I am unaware of any case being made to this effect. The building is "B" listed with its special points of interest set out in the listing description. I therefore consider that the building remains of special interest and therefore demolition cannot be justified on this basis.

b. the building is incapable of repair, or

I understand that the building is in generally good condition and therefore extensive repairs are not required. I therefore consider that the demolition of the building cannot be justified on this basis.

c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or

This appears to be the basis upon which Perth and Kinross Council is seeking to justify the demolition of this iconic structure. The Council's position appears to be that the building has been marketed for sale and that no purchaser/feasible development has emerged and that following this process an assessment of the economic benefits of a variety of options has

determined that demolition (and a new public square) is in the best interests of the economy and of the wider community. Much of this assessment is based on the results of studies undertaken in 2010/11 which appear concentrated on economic matters, rather than wider historic environment/community issues where the "value" of the such buildings often lie.

The council sponsored reports, and the Council's assessment of these, suggest that retail and cultural uses within the building are not presently viable. How can they possibly conclude this when the last marketing undertaken for the building by Perth and Kinross Council was in 2004, 7 years ago? The fact that a council sponsored report reaches stated conclusions on the basis of certain underlying assumptions (justified or otherwise?) is not a definitive answer to the potential re-use of the building. Without a robust marketing campaign how can interest in the building be judged and the full range of potential uses/interests be harnessed in order to assess/ensure the best outcome for the building and the City. To simply state, as they do, that there are more empty retail units in the City Centre in 2010 than there were in 2006 means absolutely nothing to any meaningful assessment. How many town and city centres in the UK are likely to show a different trend – precious few, if any.

Economic times are difficult for many retailers and it is true that new retail development/conversions etc are presently constrained to some extent by market conditions. However, there is no imperative to make a decision on the City Hall presently before all potential options have been looked at following a further period of marketing. The building remains in good order, is of no threat to the community, and, based on information from other sources, is costing as little as £15,000/year to maintain. The downside of taking more time for a proper market assessment is limited while the "rush to judgment" being promoted by Perth and Kinross Council would see the irretrievable loss of the City Hall. Such an outcome would be unacceptable.

Cultural use was considered as an option and the related figures showed this as potentially viable. Despite this, an option that would further support the attraction of the City Centre has been set aside by Perth and Kinross Council in favour of the demolition/city square proposal. In terms of the latter, the claimed economic benefits appear difficult to substantiate. Based on there being a larger public space, it has been estimated that an additional 60,000 people annually would attend events etc within the proposed square and that the mere formation of this space would also encourage approximately 150,000 people to extend their stay in the centre thereby spending more as a result. In total this would generate an additional £6.8 million albeit it is not clear over what period this estimated spend would occur. While this shows a net benefit of £2.4 million (over the £4.4 million cost figures), even if this was accurate (which is a brave assumption particularly in the troubled economic times which appear to rule out the commercial use of the building in Perth and Kinross Council's view) would this really deliver "*significant*

benefits to economic growth or the wider community" as required by the stated test? As is more likely, a lower spend level would completely change the arithmetic underpinning the assessment. In short, the estimated economic benefits are far too uncertain to base any robust assessment of the merits of the current proposals.

How Perth and Kinross Council can conclude in its 16th November, 2011 committee report that *"provision of commercial/retail or cultural uses through the re-use of the City Hall will deliver less net benefit to the economy and community given higher development and optional costs"* as compared to the demolition and of the building and the formation of an open area, is open to question.

What if there are other uses for the building that would sufficiently secure its retention and contribution to the City Centre, including the additional patronage and spending, that has not as yet been explored (or evaluated). An historic marketing campaign (2004) is not sufficient to address issue related to this historic structure. At the very least, before any decision was taken supporting the removal of the listed building, in accordance with Scottish Government policy, every effort should be made to retain it. This has not occurred. There is also a case to support the retention of the building on a care and maintenance basis until such time as the commercial market recovers. An annual cost of £15,000 is incidental to the longer term benefits and value to the City that would emerge from the productive re-use of the building.

While the various development plan policies related to Perth City Centre, the retention of listed buildings, the conservation and enhancement of the designated Conservation Area are all assessed by Perth and Kinross Council, this has been done from a position of already promoting the loss of the listed building. The potential for a new square in central Perth in the local plan and other documents is noted but there is nothing to say that the City Hall site is the only option to deliver this. It is also clear that the local plan being relied upon by Perth and Kinross Council to promote their favoured outcome was adopted in 1997, some 14 year ago and therefore its continued relevance and currency is, in real terms, limited. It may still form part of the development plan but it was designed to cover a 5-10 year period (maximum).

d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

No underlying problems with the building are known and therefore no repair issues affect its viable re-use. As outlined above, the building has not been sufficiently marketed since 2004 and therefore, this test has not been satisfactorily addressed.

Other matters

In addition to an assessment related to the listed building, there is an obligation placed on the decision maker through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to ensure that development would conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated Conservation Area. It is noted that Perth City Hall is a key building within the Conservation Area Appraisal, representing a significant part of the City's built heritage and an important focal point within the City centre. The loss of this structure will significantly impact on the existing character of this designated area to its immediate and long term detriment. Additionally, the removal of the City Hall will expose a range of other buildings to prominent view, significantly increasing their contribution to the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area. Many of these buildings are of significantly inferior quality to the City Hall, some are simply not of a standard/design/appearance to enhance the city core. In short, the removal of the City Hall will fundamentally and irrevocably alter the established street pattern, result in the loss of a building which makes a significant and positive contribution to the Conservation Area, and increase the prominence of other inferior (some very poor) buildings within the City Centre, all to the material detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The underlying Conservation Area requirements would therefore not be met by the demolition and re-use of the site as presently proposed by Perth and Kinross Council.

Conclusions

As intimated above, based on the information presently before Historic Scotland it is not possible to conclude that any of the required SHEP tests are satisfied to the extent to justify the demolition of the iconic listed Perth City Hall. There may remain options that have not been properly explored, hardly surprising in light of the extended period since the site was marketed (2004). It is understood that there are interests in retaining the building in productive use that simply cannot be progressed in light of Perth and Kinross Council's stance as the owner (custodian) of this building. By failing to actively and positively market the building Perth and Kinross Council appear to be promoting a self fulfilling prophecy of no alternative viable options. This is unlikely to be the case and it is certainly not been "*clearly demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain it*" the requirement underpinning the SHEP assessment.

I have also seen no assessment of the waste caused by the demolition of the City Hall and its replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials. As intimated, such waste should be avoided wherever possible otherwise there is a failure to accord with national sustainability policy.

Therefore, the loss of the building has not be justified as the alternatives for re-use have not been properly explored (marketing failure), the economic case for development has not been substantiated, and the negative impacts on the built environment (including the impact on the designated Conservation Area) has not been robustly assessed. Accordingly, there is a presumption against demolition this listed building.

The process adopted by Perth and Kinross Council appears to be one of undue haste and untested assumptions. This is clearly a matter that requires full and careful consideration as do the assumptions that underlie any assessment. The assumptions which are relied upon to justify the demolition have not been tested nor have the potential alternatives to retain the building been fully explored as is the fundamental requirement of SHEP.

As a result of the above, how can Historic Scotland have confidence that Perth and Kinross Council's assessment is sufficiently robust to justify their proposed outcome, the removal of an iconic structure at the heart of the City of Perth. In short, it is considered that there is insufficient justification at this stage in accordance with prevailing policy requirements and therefore permission to demolish the listed Perth City Hall should be refused.

TMS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LTD



From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 05/12/2011 10:24:46
Subject: FW: Demolition of Perth City Hall
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 05/12/2011 10:24:46

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Bill Radcliffe [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 December 2011 19:08
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Demolition of Perth City Hall

In response to your requests for comments I would cite the following reasons for not thwarting the elected Perth and Kinross Council's decision:-

1. The building is redundant. It was never a satisfactory entertainment venue and is very unlikely to be suitable as a retail outlet given the number of empty shops in Perth.
2. It has little architectural merit. I appreciate that this is a matter of opinion, but given the proximity of the historic St John's Kirk, if planning permission was currently sought for a similar building in this location, it would undoubtedly be refused.
3. Perth lacks a central meeting/gathering area and an open space in front of St John's will meet that need.
4. Opposition to the demolition has been from a small group of vociferous opponents who have not come forward with a commercially viable alternative use. The worst outcome would be to leave the empty building in situ, without any useful purpose, with ongoing maintenance costs.

I hope that you will endorse Perth and Kinross Council's decision to demolish the existing City Hall.

Regards
Bill Radcliffe
[REDACTED]

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 15/12/2011 10:16:49
Subject: PayneR_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 15/12/2011 10:16:49

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Dymond N (Nicole)
Sent: 14 December 2011 14:49
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: FW: Perth City Hall Consultation

From:
Spence P (Paul) (Hist-Scot)
Sent: 14 December 2011 14:30
To: hs.inspectorate (external)
Subject: Perth City Hall Consultation

From:
Ron Payne [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 December 2011 14:06
To: Web Site Mail
Subject: Perth City Hall Consultation

FAO Heritage management Directorate

Planning case 11/01083/LBC

Perth City Hall

Perth and Kinross Council have applied to demolish the City Hall in the City Centre.

Since this building was closed down several years ago it has failed to find any alternative use. It is an unattractive, brute of a building with no architectural merit whatsoever. I am strongly in favour of demolition.

yours faithfully

Ron Payne

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 07/12/2011 09:37:03
Subject: MairsR_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 07/12/2011 09:37:03

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 December 2011 19:52
To: HS.Consultations Perth & Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall proposed demolition

Dear Sir/Madam

I have lived in the Perth area since the 1980s having moved up from England so I don't have the emotional attachment that many of a certain age who were born and bred here do.

I have always considered the City Hall to be ugly in the extreme. Its dark sandstone seems to absorb light and it detracts from the pretty St John's Kirk which is surely Perth's most significant building historically. I also cannot believe that it has any real architectural merit and the much vaunted and massive cherubs which recline on it are truly horrible to behold. It has been closed now for fully 5 years and I shudder at the thought of what it will cost the taxpayer to revitalise it, especially in these financially straightened times.

I urge Historic Scotland to have some sense and allow the building to go so that the area can be opened up. This will present the perfect vista for the Kirk and give us an area where people can enjoy a proper public space in the heart of the city which will have a multitude of uses.

Robert M. Mairs

[REDACTED]

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 23/12/2011 10:11:14
Subject: MacQueenN_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 23/12/2011 10:11:14

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
norrie macqueen [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 December 2011 20:46
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall Consultation

Fundamentally,
Perth City Hall has no obvious architectural merit. It's an overbearing (in all senses) early twentieth century irruption into the town's open medieval heart. In other words, it is quite disproportionate to its situation (and, of course, would never have received planning approval any time after the middle of the 20th century). The building hems in and glowers over the wonderful fourteenth century St John's Kirk, utterly polluting the lay-out of the town's historic centre. As a building it is intrinsically disproportionate as well. The faux column walls are brutal and the misproportioned Mueck-like cherubs are just bizarre.

While
not strictly relevant to arguments about the building's own worth, the potential for its future utilisation and maintenance must also be considered in the debate about demolition. At the other end of Perth High Street the once imposing St Paul's church has found no sustainable alternative use since its deconsecration many years ago. Consequently it is now disintegrating into a monumental eyesore which is beginning to raise serious safety concerns. Perth City Hall, since the opening of the Concert Hall in nearby Horsecross, has been a literally 'useless' building and no viable plan has been put forward for its future utility nor seems likely to be even putting aside current economic conditions.

The
plan for an open civic square in place of the City Hall is a bold one. So far, the arguments against this have been based, rather disingenuously, on comparisons with southern European Italianate piazzas and with the Scottish climate called in evidence of the folly of the scheme. The true association, of course, should not be with Rome, Seville or Dubrovnik but with Krakow, Tallinn or Riga. In these latter cities

large civic spaces with perimeters of traditional local architecture (which would be the case in Perth) define the centres as a whole.

Unfortunately, however, the terms of the debate over the future of the City Hall have been set by a small but vocal and well-organized group of objectors (some evidently intent on pursuing extraneous hostilities which appear to have little to do with either good architecture or sound planning). Properly conducted consultation exercised such as that conducted by the Council (and even more rough and ready media vox pops) have produced much more clear sighted results in favour of demolition.

Several Scottish cityscapes are rich in high quality Edwardian architecture. This is most obviously the case in Glasgow and other west central urban areas such as Paisley and the towns of the Clyde Coast (though it is also evident in the central parts of nearby Dundee). In these places that style of architecture is historically and therefore aesthetically significant. This is not the case in the centre of Perth where the 'proper' tone is of a much earlier period – and where this particular Edwardian construction is in any case a very poor example of its type.

Norrie
MacQueen

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 15/12/2011 10:16:23
Subject: GriffithsD_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 15/12/2011 10:16:23

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
David Griffiths [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 December 2011 12:20
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Reference 11/01083/LBC - Perth City Hall - Support for Perth and Kinross Council

Dear Sirs

I write to express my strong support for Perth and Kinross Council's long overdue decision to demolish the redundant Perth City Hall. There has, of course, been a sustained and vociferous campaign against demolition but I would not wish Historic Scotland to think that the objectors speak for all, or even a majority, of Perth residents. Shouting the loudest doesn't mean that the objectors are right.

While I respect their right to their opinions, many seem to belong to the "there's no such thing as a change for the better" school of thought.

Perth City Hall is redundant. It has outlived its usefulness. Nobody has come up with a viable alternative use for it. Given the number of empty shop units in central Perth, the town clearly does not require further retail space. The building itself is unattractive and, I respectfully suggest, of limited architectural merit. (The oversized cherubs on the front elevation are particularly hideous). It has a heavy, brooding presence and anyone who exits the St John's Centre opposite does so into a dark, claustrophobic space instead of an attractive open square with a clear view of St John's Kirk, a building of infinitely greater historical and architectural merit than the City Hall. If the City Hall didn't exist, nobody in their right mind would plan to build it on that site and I imagine Historic Scotland would have strong views about the detrimental effect on St John's Kirk.

Perth has a once in a lifetime opportunity to get rid of a building eyesore, to create a much-needed civic open space and to open up the view of St John's Kirk. I strongly urge Historic Scotland to support the Council.

Yours faithfully

Dr David B. Griffiths



(Friends of Historic Scotland Member No. [REDACTED])

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Perth City Hall was opened as an auditorium around 100 years ago. It became obsolete in 2005 when the Perth Concert Hall opened. That is 6 years ago. It must have been (should have been) obvious then to the Council administration that the City Hall would have to go. We have had six weary years of consultation and obfuscation in order to pass the ultimate decision, like the unwanted parcel at a kid's party, to someone else. Outside consultants are brought in so that it isn't the fault of the administration. Public opinion is sought so that the finger isn't pointed at any one, lest it costs votes.

When the decision was made to build the Perth Concert Hall it was because the Perth City Hall was no longer fit for purpose. After a hundred years, with changes in society and tastes in entertainment and the movement of technology, this is hardly surprising. I have danced there on a Saturday night. My wife has won singing prizes there. These days have gone though.

When the controversy over the Wharfside regeneration of the City Hall was at it's height I took the trouble to go to Leeds to look at the Leeds Corn Exchange. Wharfside was involved in the regeneration of this building. I wanted to see if perhaps my strong opinions about the hall being unsuitable as a shopping mall were wrong. (did anyone from the council take the trouble to do this I wonder?) What I found in Leeds Corn Exchange was a marvellous oval building with a domed glass roof with a deserved grade one listing. It is worth going to see purely as an architectural experience. In comparison, Perth City Hall has all of the architectural attributes of a decorated brick. A search on the internet will prove my point. Remember that pictures of the City Hall are taken with a wide angle lens. It doesn't look like this from twenty yards away!

Wharfside appear to have made a successful job of the regeneration of the building. It's a lovely place. A huge airy naturally lit open space where traders would congregate in the past, with now a large number of shops or units on the ground floor and in a first floor atrium. It was and is, however, a commercial disaster. At that time it had, at maximum, six tenants. It is still to my knowledge, and two or three years later, not nearly half full. And this in a building that was designed as a commercial building at the outset. And one that pulls people in just to see it. Think what a disaster we could have had in the City hall by this time had it gone ahead as a shopping mall or something similar. It would have been converting (not regenerating) a not fit for purpose building into another not fit for purpose building. And inevitably not half full.

In respect of the other whimsies still being floated as potential uses, in the course of business in the past I've been in buildings built for other purposes and converted into units for antique sales etc and I can say that they are usually unsuccessful depressing places. Also, as regards having markets in the hall, in England where markets are common, whether farmers markets or otherwise, indoor markets do not have anything like the vibrancy and success of the outdoor ones. People don't wander into an indoor market the same way as an outdoor one. Also, it degrades the building into a second hand, and second class one. Smelling usually of stale food.

Perth doesn't need this building. As a building it's dead. Someone has said that the open square left after the demolition will be a useless open space. Well that's exactly what the interior of the hall is at the moment. All the talk about finding this or that reason to retain it is like the reluctance to dispose of a deceased relative's clothes, in other words the reasons are emotional rather than pragmatic. The recent other idea, to retain the entrance and little else, like leaving a decapitated head lying in the

square, would simply have a lumbering portico looking over King Edward Street and leading to..... nothing.

If we'd had a decisive council at the outset the whole business would have been done and dusted, this lumpen object would have been removed and Perth would have by this time been a fairer city because of it. It's unbelievable that this has taken six years, or probably nearer ten if you go back to when the Concert hall was conceived, with heavens knows what expense, to bring this to anywhere near a conclusion.

And another thing! X million pounds and two years to demolish it? Surely not. Sounds like figures plucked from the air (by some consultancy company?). Another attempt to hitch onto the public money gravy train? That gravy train gets shorter by the minute. Time to get out the blue pencil and look again at these figures.

From: Yvette.Brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 22/12/2011 08:05:53
Subject: BrownP_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 22/12/2011 08:05:53

Yvette Brough | Heritage Management Support Assistant

Historic
Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore
House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t|
0131 668 8707
e|
yvette.brough@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Pat Brown [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 December 2011 19:38
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: City hall

I would like to suggest with the strongest possible feelings that the City Hall should be demolished- or just the front of the building left (the latter would offer a measure of compromise to those who favour retaining the entire building!)

St John`s Kirk is the jewel in the crown for Perth. At present, one cannot appreciate this lovely old church; if you go to stand well back to admire this fine old historic building, you are almost immediately backed up against the front of one of the surrounding buildings which crowd in on it from all sides. To see it at its best, with a traditional square laid out in front of it, would be to set it off to its best advantage. It would attract the eye as soon as one turned the corner from King Edward St, rightly dominating its surroundings, as it deserves to do.

To leave it cramped & overshadowed by the bulk of the City Hall, with its large unattractive walls on three sides, is to deny the predominance deserved by the aesthetic beauty of our lovely old historic kirk , which should be seen in all its glory. I have the feeling that those who designed the City hall felt they had to compete with the Kirk, and in consequence had no respect for its architecture &

history in relegating it to a secondary position There must be many from those times who would be turning in their graves to applaud the demolition of the city hall!

I have no time for those who scorn open spaces in a town or city - it is `breathing space`! In Scotland one either accepts the vagaries of the weather- or retreats to a shopping mall!

Yours sincerely Pat Brown (Mrs)

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 08/12/2011 10:22:27
Subject: [REDACTED] Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 08/12/2011 10:22:27

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 December 2011 16:35
To: HS.Consultations Perth & Kinross
Subject: Perth City Hall

Dear Sirs

We write as Perth residents for the last 30 years, and support wholeheartedly the Council's plans for demolition and replacement with a city square.

Taste is personal and ephemeral, our view is that the Hall is an ugly building with no aesthetic merit. We do appreciate however that conservation of unattractive buildings can be appropriate for conservation rather than attractiveness.

More to the point is how ill it suits St John's Square, it is grossly disproportionate, out of keeping with the Kirk and the vernacular buildings around it. The analogy would be siting a massive three piece suite in the living space of a studio flat.

Those who wish to preserve it fall into two groups. The first is sentimental - "I used to sing in the Music Festival 40 years ago". The second is unrealistic - "Surely some use could be made of it". No-one has come up with any viable suggestions, no developer (and there are many who scour the country on the look-out for properties to restore) has made any kind of offer.

By contrast those who support demolition live in the real world, successful local businesses appear to be unanimous in their views.

The above is negative - why the Hall should go. The positive side to this is that the formation of a civic space would greatly enhance the square and the city and would be in keeping with Historic Scotland's mission in terms of restoring the city's history (the many centuries before The Hall was built) rather than preserving a Victorian white elephant which adds nothing aesthetically or functionally to Perth.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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From: Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Received: 16/12/2011 15:01:48
Subject: GillespieR_Representation
To: "" (incoming@lh23hisa.scotland.gov.uk)
Date Sent: 16/12/2011 03:01:48

Lynn Allen | Business Support Assistant

Historic Scotland | Alba
Aosmhor
Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
t| Number 0131-668 0315
e| Lynn.Allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

From:
Bob Gillespie [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 December 2011 09:24
To: HS.Consultations Perth &
Kinross
Subject: Plan To Demolish Perth City Hall
Importance: High

Dear Sir/Madam,

I think that I should say at the start of this statement that, if there are any who feel that agreement on the issue of whether the City Hall should be preserved and used for a different purpose or demolished in favour of a civic square can be reached, they are, unfortunately, deluded: views are strong on both sides. There are also several views of how the existing preserved building should be used and of the ways in which a civic square should be utilised. I can appreciate the strengths and weaknesses on both sides of the retention-versus-demolition argument and also that many of those with clear views on the future use of either a preserved City Hall or a created civic square are following an agenda dear to their hearts, without necessarily having or gaining the support of the wider resident population. I have to admit that I remain at present undecided.

The concept of a public area of reasonable size in the centre of cities or larger towns has obvious attractions: one thinks of Trafalgar Square in London and George Square in Glasgow as examples of places where people gather for events, meetings, exhibitions and even just to meet friends, sit down and have a chat. The concept is also a welcoming one to visitors or tourists. It is also attractive to us democrats to have a civic meeting place where issues of common concern can be raised, peaceful demonstrations held, etc. There could be open air pop and folk concerts, street theatre, perhaps even street football tournaments, each of them attracting visitors to Perth from other areas. The benefits of large numbers gathering together in the centre would be very attractive to shops (mainly large ones) located in the city centre streets nearby, and those actively seeking city status for Perth will see the development of a central meeting place as an important feature in their argument.

The mental picture created,

however, is not always a wholly positive one: such focal centres may be where the less attractive or desirable elements in society may gather, disturbing others who are quietly doing their own thing, where demonstrations might be held which become aggressive gatherings rather than peaceful ones. The potential prevalence of drugs, both soft and hard, and alcohol at concerts of modern music (common at T In The Park and other festivals) might not be an appealing prospect for local residents, especially older ones. There is the potential both for peaceful gathering for a common purpose and for the disturbance of both those living nearby and others seeking quietly to carry out their normal duties (shopping, for example).

There are positive and potentially negative aspects to the setting up of statues and sculptures, fountains, art works such as mosaics and the planting of trees in a civic square: they are, or can be, very attractive features, welcomed and admired by those visiting them and appealing to strangers visiting for the first time; but such features (just think of the vandalism of the Donald Dewar statue in front of Glasgow Concert Hall) can also attract people intent on damaging symbols of civic pride in activities which give them a strange form of amusement.

There is also a clear diversity of opinion about whether the City Hall building should be retained and used for a new civic purpose or knocked down and its location become the centre of a new civic square. In addition, there is the question – also one which divides opinion – of whether historic buildings should be preserved as part of local history or should be demolished in favour of a different, more modern view of a city centre – apart from the rights or otherwise to knock down, or even to significantly change, a listed building. I am well aware that we cannot retain all old buildings which might have some historical significance, but there must be a stronger than usual case for the retention of a building which has been for so long at the heart of the city.

Ideas have been put forward that it be retained and become a museum and/or art gallery, removing the need for the present combined building to serve two purposes; other ideas such as the one to house the Demarco collection in Perth could be served by such a new role for the City Hall, as more space would be provided for displays in two buildings than in the current combined building; perhaps the Fergusson Gallery and the Friends of William Soutar would be interested in a building housing a combined collection of artworks with Perth connections, and the tourist advantages of such a development might be considerable. There are many possible alternatives which should all be 'on the table'.

It can also be asked, with no small amount of justification, why events likely to attract large numbers need to take place in a new central civic square when there are already two very large areas, North Inch and South Inch, where they can be held. Admittedly, large gatherings at one of the Inches will not necessarily produce healthier sales for city centre shops, but they will deny the problem of disturbance to the residents in the centre of Perth.

Moreover, there is the question of the maintenance of the civic square, including its (regular, perhaps) cleaning. After concerts or gatherings of any sort, there will be a large amount of litter (perhaps including cigarettes, empty cigarette packets, drinks containers – empty beer cans or wine bottles, as well as general "waste"). Would the local authority have responsibility for the cleaning, or would the local shopkeepers have to clear up the mess in their own areas? I remember being in St Mark's Square in Venice on the day following a night-time Pink Floyd concert and the square was full of litter and other refuse (aggravated by the heavy rain which had fallen overnight), and there seemed to be nobody other than tourists interested in tidying up. Would the same be true in Perth and, if so, how would such a sight aid its attraction as a place to visit? In general terms, would the creation of a civic square bring about the need for far more maintenance work and more

regular cleaning than at present?

In a democracy, the Council should listen to the views of the people whom they represent and, if the majority favour a realistic and affordable option, then there will be good reason to support that choice. However, the idea of a civic square should not sit alone as the issue to be discussed: other options should also be aired, whether at one or more public meetings, in the local press, in the A K Library or elsewhere. I have yet to come down firmly on one side or another on this issue, but I think that it would be a great mistake either to set narrow limits to the discussion or to make a rash decision which we may live to regret for a long time to come.

Bob Gillespie,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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