

Speaking for Scotland's Buildings



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Dear Ms Howat

Ayr Station Hotel

A representative of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) attended the meeting held on 29 August 2018 in Ayr Town Hall, to discuss the future of Ayr Station Hotel. Following that meeting I wrote to Councillor Brian McGinley to offer the Society's assistance in saving this important building, a landmark building in the town centre, one of the fine group of hotels built by the Glasgow and South Western Railway.

We recognise that the identification of a long-term, financially sustainable solution whilst balancing the special architectural interest is a challenge. We would like to suggest that rather than concentrating on assessing options which show a financial shortfall which might meet the statutory test for demolition you consider an alternative approach, similar to one adopted a number of years ago in the Scottish Borders. There Scottish Enterprise Borders (and their predecessor bodies) made Ettrick Mill, Selkirk, wind and watertight and structurally secure and, after a time interval, and when economic circumstances changed, carried out phased work to bring the building back into use. Scottish Borders Council took a similar approach at Tower Mill in Hawick, securing the shell ahead of agreeing the brief and appointing a design team for the internal work. A similar approach should be considered at Ayr Station Hotel. Once the shell is secure work should be carried out to bring the railway station back into use and then the phases of re-occupation can be considered.

As part of the Climate Emergency existing buildings should be retained and re-purposed and we are confident that a mixed use solution, including the railway station with small retail units, business incubation/office use, possibly a reduced hotel with café and function suite, perhaps some apartments, could be the way forward. The first step is a professional appraisal with costings to make the shell wind and watertight and structurally secure. Ayr has lost too many distinctive building and has become a place

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of 'holes'. We urge the Council to view the situation holistically and recognise that Ayr Station Hotel could and should be an asset to the town.

This building is one of the largest and most stylish listed buildings in the key town of Ayr and the AHSS is anxious to help it achieve a worthwhile future. If we can help at all in this process then please do let us know.

Yours sincerely

Martin Robertson
Chairman