

## Speaking for Scotland's Buildings



AHSS Strathclyde Group Office Tobacco Merchants House  
42 Miller Street Glasgow  
G1 1DT

8th April 2021

Planning Services,  
North Ayrshire Council,  
Cunninghame House,  
Irvine,  
KA12 8EE

Dear Sir / Madam,

**APPLICATION : 21/00205/LBC | Demolition of Listed Building. Africa House, Lundholm Road, Stevenston, Ayrshire, KA20 3LR**

It has come to our attention that it is proposed to demolish a B-listed building within the North Ayrshire Council area. This building, unique within Scotland, is properly called the South African Pavilion because of its original role as part of the Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938, held at Bellahouston Park. It is one of very few still surviving from that event. These factors alone indicate the importance of preserving it for posterity. The very fact that it is a replica within this context gives it significance.

As a building form, it is exactly what is needed to set an environmental and architectural standard within a predominantly light industry zone. It has been a staff canteen on this site in the past. This, as well as the setting amongst trees, suggests strongly that it could serve something like this role again in the future. All industrial areas need a place of contrasting atmosphere within to relax. This could be adapted as a canteen for the whole area with other supporting facilities such as basic conference / meeting spaces. We agree with the suggestion that it could be used as a "museum" which could include general displays. Or it could be used as an industrial area management office and a central promotional resource of the products and services of those businesses active in the area.

It should be noted that places such as this are eclectic by nature, yet are generally mundane. This is an instance, where we are suggesting that Africa House would provide a unique and contrasting nucleus.

ICI's extensive Ardeer plant itself has a significant history with links to Alfred Nobel. It was a dominant global supplier of explosives to the mining and quarrying industries. Little of that can be expressed spatially in this location anymore, but this particular building can be utilised to record and display that heritage - as an industry and in the global context of the time.

As the Design Statement notes : *HES state that "no viable alternative" is the only ground for demolition of a listed building.* This is quickly followed by a denial to the viability of restoration because of the current condition.

The AHSS is only concerned with Africa House itself and not the later extension. It is a valuable building that can be stabilised and used for new sustainable purposes. If no immediate solution is found, this building



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needs to be left in a state that can taken up at a later date. The engineers report notes the need to prop the gables. Instead of trying to justify its demolition, further ways of stabilising it are required. As the area becomes more developed, new options will become viable.

We object to the demolition of Africa House (excluding the later extension).

Yours faithfully,

Iain Wotherspoon.  
Chairman. Cases Panel. Strathclyde Group.