

Speaking for Scotland's Buildings



24 November 2021

Strategic Place Planning
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4
Ground Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen AB10 1AB

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning Application Ref: 211176 and 211517

Site Address: New Market, Aberdeen

Description: Substantial Demolition, and Re-Construction of Aberdeen Market Buildings

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland has been following the deliberations about this site and its contexts for some time, and we are much encouraged by the Council's decision to show leadership in the enhancement of a very significant part of our post oil and gas environment. We agree with your desire to demonstrate how a policy of *futures based in re-newables* can be secured. Your Consultants have provided most thorough Reports on how the Market can contribute to this. But the recent COP 26 Conference has sharpened our awareness of methods which we must use to achieve these aims, even through building projects. And as these are often surprising, and perhaps seeming counter-intuitive, leadership now is not only apt, but critical. We **object** to both applications.

Halliday Fraser Munro's suggestion to encourage passage through a revamped Market building between Union Street to the Green and beyond seems to us to be inspired, particularly if a semi-open and square-like occasional market site is located just inside the northern frontage. Equally good is the potential to open up the facades to Hadden Street and the Green. That could provide much more light into the body of the market building and perhaps even some welcome greening with vertical planting mixed with the glazed facades. In our view a quite different kind of tactic should guide the Council in the manner of the facades to Market and Union Streets where we can see no merit whatever in an aggressive "canopy" or in extensive glazing. To Market Street a faithful replica of the foolishly demolished Pylon-like east front should be rebuilt, from both retrieved materials and new solid granite work. The Union Street front also should be restored to Simpson's design, as a Screen built in solid granite; thus Aberdeen's faith and pleasure in its own heritage would be clearly celebrated.

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Even with the very thorough report from DSSR on environmental aspects in the Application 211517 savings deriving from the recognition and nurturing of embodied energies is absent. These are very significant indeed, in money terms as much as in scientific ones. These lessons from COP 26 need to guide the Council now. Therefore rather than to squander the sound, very robust, and very large if ugly, carcass which the existing Market buildings present to us, we should use them as starting point. They cost us nothing, the expensive and ghastly business of demolition can be avoided, not to mention the effective doubling of environmental damage which destruction followed by new re-building would entail.

The promising planning improvements proposed can be easily realized based on the construction of the existing Market, and the inherent savings could go towards re-creating the Simpson fronts...which will also encourage the revival of local masons' and other craft skills, while demonstrating the City's regard for its unique culture.

We would be grateful if the above points could be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Dr W. A. Brogden

Cases Panel Convenor

AHSS North East Group