



## Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

29 March 2023

To all Councillors of the Scottish Borders Council

Dear Councillor,

### **Lowood House, Melrose, Scottish Borders, TD6 9BJ and Tweedbank Expansion – A Community for the Future**

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) is responding to a news item on the BBC website 'Lowood House nr Melrose set for demolition'. This was brought to our attention by a member who lives in Melrose. We are writing in relation to 'Tweedbank Expansion – A Community for the Future'.

The entry for Lowood House on page 508 of 'The Buildings of Scotland : Borders', by Kitty Cruft, John Dunbar and Richard Fawcett, 2006, is as follows:

'A beautifully situated house on the S bank of the River Tweed, developed from a small early C19 villa purchased c. 1829 for his country seat by Robert Reid, Master of Works and Architect to the King. The original villa, two storeys, three bays, with a slightly advanced centre bay, faced S. Reid seems to have added a simple two-storey kitchen office range to the W, and a Regency-style veranda across the ground floor which incorporated a projecting porch. The villa mostly disappeared when the house was extended by Henry Kidd in the late C19, when the W end was remodelled and added to. An L-shaped addition was built across the S front, and a billiard room with a bedroom above, at the E end. Mutule blocks were added to the roof line. The interior was completely recast in the late C19 mostly in a classical style.'

The AHSS urges Scottish Borders Councillors to continue the item regarding the proposal to demolish Lowood House, a non-designated historic environment asset and postpone making any decision on the future of the Lowood House, pending the preparation of a conservation plan and exploration of other options, for example, retaining the house for letting to groups. Lowood House is presently a local asset, presumably worth at least £1m even without its wider estate, and to spend £450,000 destroying a £1m asset seems a significant waste of taxpayer's resources. This is exactly the kind of place large groups of tourists seek to rent by the week, so if the report does not mention using it as single occupancy accommodation, it is a serious omission from the research.

Lowood House contains embodied carbon and Policy 7 of NPF4 has the 'Policy Intent: To protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places.' The second policy outcome is 'Redundant or neglected historic buildings are brought back into sustainable and productive uses.'



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We ask you to recognise that Lowood House contains embodied carbon, and your carbon calculations should include those expended in demolition, which are not recognised in the item at 15.5 of the 'Tweedbank Expansion – A Community for the Future' report.

We urge you to support the principles of sustainability and to make every effort to retain, repair and adapt Lowood House, modifying as necessary the layout of Tweedbank expansion to permit its re-use.

We would be happy to discuss this further.

Yours faithfully,

**James Seabridge-Cooper**

Convener of the Forth & Borders Cases Panel