



## Speaking for Scotland's Buildings



**AHSS**  
THE ARCHITECTURAL  
HERITAGE SOCIETY  
OF SCOTLAND

Cllr Martin Dowey  
South Ayrshire Council  
Country Buildings  
Wellington Square  
Ayr KA7 1DR

30 May 2023

Dear Councillor Dowey,

### **Ayr Station Hotel**

It was with considerable concern that the AHSS noted the fire in Ayr Station Hotel on Sunday 28 May. My colleague, Martin Robertson, wrote to Eileen Howat about the parlous state of this iconic building on 5 April 2021 and reflected the views of many of our members. A copy is enclosed.

We recognised the difficulties the Council has found itself in and the need for a long-term, financially sustainable solution. We suggested that making the building safe, wind and waterproof, as has been applied in similar circumstances elsewhere, will remove the need for the scaffolding and shrouding, as well as the substantial financial burden. Considerable internal work may be needed, as timber will have deteriorated over the period of its shrouding.

However, accessibility to the building would allow the opportunity for investors to assess potential uses and to make the necessary contributions to further renovation costs. This approach was also set out in the SAVE report given to you last year and widely circulated to interested bodies in Scotland.

With good will and co-operation between all relevant parties, a solution encompassing a new compliant railway station and permitting the retention of the former hotel building to be renovated and reused is feasible. This would retain the important backdrop to Burns Statue Square. Demolition of the building would leave a gaping hole in a key urban setting, resulting in a poor long-lasting legacy. The embodied carbon in this building, well-constructed using Ballochmyle red sandstone, is considerable. Consequently, any demolition and the carbon load of a new construction is contrary to current thinking and Policy 7(b) of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

A full independent/

**AHSS National Office** | 15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh EH1 2BE  
0131 557 0019 | [nationaloffice@ahss.org.uk](mailto:nationaloffice@ahss.org.uk) | [www.ahss.org.uk](http://www.ahss.org.uk)

The Architectural Heritage Society (AHSS) is a registered charity: SC007554REG. The Society is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee: SC356726  
President: Mary Miers MA Hon FRIAS. Vice Chair: Jocelyn Cunliffe MA DipArch FRIAS RIBA

A full independent survey to ascertain the condition of the building is an essential first step and we understand that this is due to be carried out very soon. Hopefully, the damage caused by the recent fire is minimal but, nevertheless, it is a wakeup call to the dangers that exist with an abandoned building.

While we appreciate that the current Council administration has inherited the present difficulties, it is inevitable that decisions made now will define the legacy. We and others, with the requisite background and knowledge, remain prepared to assist.

Yours sincerely,



Jocelyn Cunliffe RIBA FRIAS FRSA  
Chair of AHSS National Conservation Committee

Cc: Eileen Howat, Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council  
Henrietta Billings, Director, Save Britain's Heritage  
Mary Miers, President of the AHSS