

Speaking for Scotland's Buildings



22nd May 2023

Planning Service,
8 North Ness Business Park
Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LZ

RE: 2023/079/LBC | Linkshouse, Mid Yell, Yell, Shetland

The National Conservation Committee of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland has examined this application to demolish Linkshouse and **objects** to the loss of this piece of Shetland heritage.

When the RIAS guide 'Shetland – an illustrated architectural guide' was published in 1990 the building was described as 'Linkshouse, 1770, a plain merchant's house of two floors'. The building was listed in January 1992. The Historic Environment Scotland (HES) list description, updated in March 1998, says 'Linkshouse is currently (1997) roofless with windows and doors boarded up due to a fire in the early 1990s. It is likely that the S elevation was the front of the house, and that (like the Bod of Gremista and Gardiesting) the ground floor was used for storage and trading, accounting for the lack of windows on the N elevation. Its unusual fenestration and pier-head position make it an interesting and historic focus to Mid Yell.'

Shetland Islands Council clearly thought it important since they grant aided the consolidation of the building in 1997. While the building has deteriorated it is the nature of our society that all owners of historic buildings have responsibilities towards their charges, whether they have a use for them or not. While a structural survey has been carried out there is no analysis or assessment of the historic/cultural value of the building, nor its potential social uses in respect of the island community. This was a prime building and while we cannot find photographs online there must be some in Shetland.

It is not clear that anything has even been done to find a new use for Linkshouse. Has the building been marketed? Have feasibility studies or options appraisals been carried out? For example, could the building be turned into a hostel? Demolition and razing all evidence of the building into the ground is, effectively, a reward for neglect. This application for demolition does not conform to policy HE2 of the Local Development Plan.

We object to the loss of this 'interesting and historic focus of Mid Yell' and urge the Council to refuse demolition consent and require the applicant to implement a repair programme to stabilize the building and explore options for bringing the Linkshouse back into use.

Yours faithfully

Jocelyn Cunliffe RIBA FRIAS FRSA, Chair, National Conservation Committee of the AHSS