



## Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

30 January 2026

Strategic Place Planning  
Aberdeen City Council  
Business Hub 4  
Ground floor North  
Marischal College  
Broad Street

Dear Madam or Sir,

Planning Application Ref.: 260075/CAC  
Former Police Scotland HQ Queen Street City Centre AB101ZA

The demolition statement for this planning application makes a number of assumptions which are not backed up by any factual evidence:

- It is stated throughout that the 'brutalist architecture' of the building is of no merit and out of keeping with the rest of the city architecture. **Comment:** While one may not contend that this building is of the Corbusier standard, it does not mean that it is without merit in its historical architectural context. What authoritative academic or professional body has been invited to make an assessment of the building's architectural value? None is cited, so what has been stated is merely opinion.
- It has not been possible to market the existing site with the building in situ. **Comment:** By the Council's own admission only 'soft marketing' has been done. This is highly opaque and not suitable for supporting the idea that the building cannot be sold or developed. What was the nature and extent of this 'soft marketing' that is being used as evidence against redevelopment?
- Because of its internal configuration it is not suitable for other uses. **Comment:** Again, there is no supporting evidence given for this contention. There are any number of examples of buildings in Aberdeen that have undergone changes of use more complicated than that presented by this building.
- It's concrete and glass construction is out of keeping with the granite nature of the other buildings in the site. **Comment:** Once again, opinion is stated as fact. Any number of buildings have been given planning permission in Aberdeen despite their use of these materials. Even if this were to be accepted as a criterion for demolition, it is not beyond the capabilities of architects to change the general appearance of the building while maintaining the structure.
- Current planning restrictions on demolition of this type of building do not apply as no immediate plan for redevelopment has been established. **Comment:** In relation to demolition in Conservation Areas, Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places) states that demolition of buildings in a conservation area which make a positive contribution to its character will only be supported when all reasonable efforts have been made to repurpose it, the building is of little townscape value, the structural condition prevents its retention, or the form or location of the building makes its reuse extremely difficult. The demolition statement has provided no firm evidence for any of these. The guidance further states that 'Where demolition within a conservation area is to be followed by redevelopment, consent to demolish will only be supported when an acceptable design, layout and materials are being used for the replacement development.' In reply to this, the statement makes the rather disingenuous claim that no immediate development plan exists. This is making use of semantics in an appalling manner since the stated intention of the demolition is to prepare



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- the site for redevelopment, one that may result in a building of less architectural merit than the one being demolished. That is why it is necessary to see detailed plans for the replacement building before demolition.
- Regarding embodied energy, it is stated that 99.9% of the building can be recycled. **Comment:** This statement shows a complete ignorance of the concept of embodied energy, which takes in consideration all the energy required for the production, delivery and application of all the materials used in a building along with all the energy required in the actual construction. Concrete and steel are two of the most energy consuming industries on the planet and also some of the most widely used. In fact, concrete is only second to water in use. Also, embodied energy is generally calculated as a means of evaluating the embodied carbon dioxide in a building, which means that an existing concrete and/or steel building is a massive store of embodied energy and embodied carbon dioxide. Demolition destroys the usefulness of the original expenditure of energy, but it also requires large additional inputs of energy and accompanying releases of carbon dioxide. The claim that 99.9% of the building can be recycled implies that it will *be* recycled which is certainly not the actuality in demolition projects. It is more 'smoke and mirrors' in implying that the building's structural materials will be recycled. The implication that the structural concrete will be recycled, at best means that it will be broken up into small enough pieces to be used as hardcore or aggregate. It is a complete fallacy that it will be reused on site. The quantities involved and impurities argue against this.

In view of the above, we strongly recommend that demolition of the building be reconsidered and that re-purposing be investigated in a more thorough and intelligent manner.

Yours faithfully

Dr John P Coyne  
Chairman  
AHSS North-East Group