



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Paul Meara
Convener
Historic Buildings Scrutiny Working Group

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:
Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

Councillor June Burtonshaw/
Councillor Nick Bradley
(01792) 636366

E-Mail / E-Bost:
Our Ref / Ein Cyf:
Your Ref / Eich Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad:

JEB / NB

9 June 2014

Dear Councillor Meara

HISTORIC BUILDINGS SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

We thank you for the interest of the Historic Buildings Scrutiny Working Group in the issue of Listed Buildings at Risk. This is an area where considerable progress has been made recently in co-ordinating and focussing action. This has culminated in the Listed Building at Risk Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in January 2014.

In response to the meeting held on the 3rd February 2014 and the letter sent by the Historic Buildings Working Group on 25th March 2014, your recommendations are noted below in italics and the responses to the recommendations are as follows.

- 1. Town Councils, Community Councils and other community groups might be more involved with decision making where historic buildings are concerned. Community involvement should be encouraged. Many community groups seem keen, but have little direction. The Council could provide links and advice, and help community groups access funding which the Council itself cannot apply for.*

The Design and Conservation Team will update the Council's web site to provide more information on the historic environment and where to consider applying for funding. There is an existing 'Swansea Built Heritage Forum' that is co-ordinated by the Swansea Environmental Forum. This brings all those interested in the historic environment together, however it would benefit from greater promotion and a more regular programme of meetings. The Council will work with the Swansea Environmental forum as indicated in paragraph 5.1.7 of the Listed Building at Risk Strategy.

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☎ (01792) 636196
✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 2

2. Town Councils and Community Councils should be asked to ensure that they know which buildings in their area are listed;

Emails will be sent to Ward Councillors, Town Councils and Community Councils with a Ward map and associated information that shows all designated heritage assets in their area. This will include Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments. There may well be heritage assets that do not have a formal status, this doesn't mean that they are not important but they are not nationally recognised by Cadw. In these instances the Design and Conservation Team can advise interested organisations or individuals on how to approach Cadw, but many features may remain as 'locally important'.

3. There should be a pooling of knowledge between County Councils, Town Councils and Community Councils. Collective resources, pressure groups and organisations such as Swansea Civic Society could assist in taking projects forward;

As indicated above there is scope to improve awareness of the Swansea Built Heritage Forum and the Design and Conservation Team can liaise with relevant organisations with a view to identifying potential partnership projects, however this will depend on current resources. The starting point for this will be the email about known heritage assets in the areas, but it should be noted that whilst the Council can raise awareness and perhaps bring the various interests together, it may not be possible to get every group to collaborate.

4. The Council should look for 'quick wins' with a push on private projects;

The Design and Conservation Team is currently liaising with other Council departments on a variety of measures to tackle the 48 listed buildings at risk. The current and potential range of actions are outlined in the Listed Building at Risk Strategy. Some of these projects could be classed as quick wins, but this term isn't really relevant in many cases as the problems are complex and the likely costs significant, so in some cases the work is focussed on essential urgent interventions to keep buildings standing whilst the longer term project is devised and funding secured. For example at present the following work is underway with regard to listed buildings at risk:

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 📠 (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 3

- At the Hafod/ Morfa Copper works there are multiple listed buildings at risk and the following work is underway:
 - Laboratory building – was on the verge of collapse, but consolidation work has now been completed
 - Northern canal walls and tramway pillars – consolidation completed
 - Southern canal walls – consolidation underway (summer 2014)
 - Vivian Engine Shed – completely propped with scaffolding
 - Vivian chimney – inspected by steeple jacks
 - Swiss Cottage – restoration repair work will be completed during summer 2014
 - Roman Bridge – Landfill Tax funding secured in partnership with the Clyne Valley Community Project to repair and reopen this structure to foot traffic
 - Scotts Pit – Landfill Tax funding secured to allow repairs to engine house and surrounding remains
 - Danbert House – urgent safety work being considered by Building Control
 - Observatory Penllergaer – restoration works underway by the Penllergaer Trust
 - Palace Theatre – positive discussions with owners and a grant of £75,000 towards the significant urgent works has been offered.
5. *A training day for local councillors should be arranged, to make councillors aware of the ways of obtaining funding, who to contact, what to do, etc. They can then share this information in their wards;*

An awareness day was recently held by the Heritage Lottery Fund in Swansea about heritage, funding and regeneration, but a more Swansea specific briefing about heritage for Councillors could be organised following the email regarding heritage assets in their Wards if there is sufficient interest.

6. *The Council needs to make more of historic buildings when it is promoting the cultural heritage of Swansea.*

The Albert Hall which is a grade II listed building was a key element of the City of Culture bid. Although the bid was unsuccessful it is still hoped that the Albert Hall will be a cultural project and key element of the City Centre regeneration.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 4

The Glyn Vivian project seeks to promote Swansea's culture within a grade II* listed building. The Guildhall which is a grade I listed building is coming to the final stage of a major refurbishment which has restored much of the civic splendour and the Brangwyn Hall will be the focus for many cultural events. The Copperworks project focuses beyond the actual site to the wider community and culture. Many heritage assets are also parks or landscapes, so the cultural life and recreation of Swansea often takes place against a backdrop of heritage. The heritage amongst the everyday is being addressed through the Blue Plaque scheme which marks locations associated with important historical individuals.

There is the wide issue of diminishing chapel congregations and the future of these buildings in the communities and townscapes. This indicates that the issues of culture and heritage are much broader than one department of the Council or the Council itself and this is a wider issue for the communities of Swansea.

The linked concepts of culture and heritage extend beyond the Council and this potentially could be taken on board through the wider networks that have been highlighted through the City of Culture bid.

7. There should be a focus on awareness raising; Local people, including This schools, should become more involved;

The schools in the Hafod are involved with Copperworks site, but this is not consistent in all areas and often depends on the Head Teacher. Additional information on the web site will aid teachers with regard to heritage resources, but there is a limit on what can be done in terms of 'outreach' with current resources within the Design and Conservation Team.

Swansea University is supporting community led projects to research and interpret heritage through the Heritage Lottery Funded 'Connected Communities' project which focuses on the industrial and post-industrial communities of the Swansea Valley. This project has provided funding and support to local history groups, to schools and to communities. Therefore it is suggested that the wider awareness raising could be led by a wider network not just the Council.

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☎ (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 5

8. *Committee felt that there was considerable scope for Historic Buildings to be supported by voluntary groups. Schools and children might get involved in this, as could the various Historical Societies. Such groups have access to funds that Swansea Council does not have access to. However, there is scope for the Council to facilitate bids for funding. Council should also help owners to apply for grants to maintain historic buildings that are in private hands.*

As indicated earlier, there is a limit to what the Council can do with current budgets and priorities, however the wider Swansea Community is already engaging with this issue, such as Swansea Universities 'Connected Communities' project.

The Council has worked with the Clyne Valley Community Partnership to secure £40,000 to fund the restoration of the Roman Bridge at Blackpill. This is a direct example of how working with communities has secured external funding, but it should be noted that the community groups have to have a legal status and constitution.

The Council does suggest sources of grant funding to private owners (such as Cadw historic building funding), but it should be noted that the grants available to private owners is more limited in comparison to the grants available to public or charitable organisations.

Swansea currently lacks an overarching pro-active group that is willing to tackle historic buildings. Other parts of the UK have what is known as a Building Preservation Trust that can take ownership of problem buildings, raise funding and undertake works. The challenge of establishing a Building Preservation Trust in Swansea is highlighted in paragraphs 5.3.11 and 5.3.12 of the Listed Building at Risk Strategy.

9. *Committee felt that Historic Buildings held considerable scope for generating employment opportunities. Council should encourage people to develop these opportunities. Council should also consider developing a small specialist work-force with skills in building restoration as part of its apprenticeship programme.*

Swansea Metropolitan University (now Trinity St David's University) did have a historic conservation course, but this closed a number of years ago. The Council's Building and property services department has engaged apprentices working and learning on the restoration/ repairs at Swiss Cottage and following the success of this is looking to roll this out across further projects and develop links with the CITB and regional shared apprentice programme. The intention at the Scotts Pit site is to include a 'community

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☎ (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 6

working day' if possible and to encourage a local Friends Group to help sustain the site in future. The area of historic skills training is an area that needs further development working in conjunction with other Council departments and wider partner organisations.

10. Committee felt that the sums available for the preservation of historic buildings in the Council's care were too small to be realistic. Council should give consideration to increasing this budget as and when the economic climate improves. Council should also look at making more effective use of the Section 2.1.5 legislation;

There is no specific budget within the Design and Conservation Team for the care and preservation of historic buildings. The significant progress that has been made to date in tackling listed buildings at risk has been funded from specific projects that are being led by others with the Design and Conservation Team working on an advisory basis.

The Section 215 legislation is part of a wider suite of powers that can be used to tackle problem privately owned listed buildings. The Head of Economic Development and Regeneration has delegated authority to use these powers such as the Section 54 Urgent Works Notice but there is no budget identified for the undertaking of works in default by the Council. This means that it is not possible to use the full range of these powers at present and this issue is highlighted in the Listed Building at Risk Strategy. However the intention is to re-evaluate the potential of the Section 215 planning legislation with the support of the Councils Planning Enforcement Officers. It should be noted that this is a visual amenity and 'tidy up' power that is applied to public elements of buildings and that the undertaking of works in default are 'optional'. The Section 215 powers have been used effectively without resorting to works in default by other Councils and there is scope to undertake a 'test case' in Swansea.

With regard to Council owned listed buildings, a small budget of £50,000 per annum has been allocated as part of the councils building capital maintenance programme for the last two years but the ability to maintain this is dependant on the many challenges and financial challenges it faces

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☎ (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 7

11. There should be better promotion of listed buildings, with Swansea heritage events;

A number of listed buildings are regularly featured in the Open House event that takes place in September every year. In 2013, of the 20 venues open to the public, 14 were listed buildings. The completion of the phase 1 Hafod/ Morfa Copper works project will be celebrated by a launch event in June 2014. However there is scope for a wider Heritage event in Swansea as indicated in paragraph 5.1.8 of the Listed Building at Risk Strategy; this will celebrate all the positive work that has been carried out in recent years as this is often overlooked as well as opening up the issue of heritage at risk to discussion.

12. It was quite clear to us that there is a problem in respect of the maintenance budget and a lack of available funds for listed buildings.

The Council has recently sold a number of redundant listed buildings in its ownership including The Pilot House by the River Tawe and numbers 2 & 3 Prospect Place. This passes the cost and responsibility of maintenance onto new owners who will bring the buildings back into use. There is however still the wider issue of revenue funding to sustain the significant capital grant funding investment at the Hafod/ Morfa Copperworks.

The Design and Conservation Team has been successful in securing Landfill Tax funding (Roman Bridge, £42k and Scotts Pit £31k), plus the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme for Swansea City Centre identifies the Palace Theatre and Albert Hall as key buildings within the City Centre regeneration area, whilst in Gower the Historic Landscape funding from the HLF could provide capital for some structures.

In addition a small budget of £50,000 per annum has been allocated to the maintenance of Council owned listed buildings as part of the councils building capital maintenance programme for the last two years but the ability to maintain this is dependant on the many challenges and financial challenges it faces

Clearly more funding would be beneficial, but this then raises the capacity to undertake the works and the willingness of private owners to co-operate.

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☎ (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

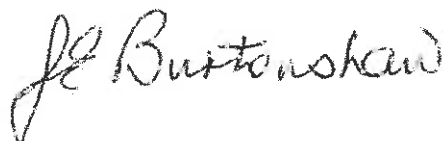
CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 8


With regard to bringing neglected listed buildings back into use, the issue is not just the initial capital funding for repairs and restoration, the key issue is the end use and business plan to generate income to sustain the historic building into the future. It is clear that heritage projects must seek to pay their way and should not rely on subsidies. In this regard feasibility studies have been undertaken for some of the priority listed buildings at risk such as the Palace Theatre to estimate the costs of works and to identify potential viable end uses.

We hope that this is a clear and fair response to your recommendations. If you have any queries, please can you speak to Steve Smith, Design and Conservation Team Leader in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR JUNE BURTONSHAW
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE



COUNCILLOR NICK BRADLEY
CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 636141/636366/637426/637427 ☒ (01792) 636196

✉ cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk