



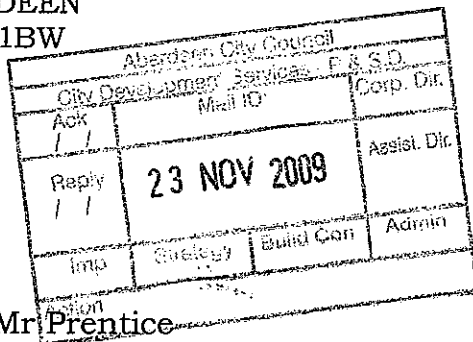
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Our ref: HGG/A/GA/GEN
Our Case ID: 200901172
Your ref: P090565

20 November 2009



Dear Mr Prentice

**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS)
(SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
FORMER OAKBANK SCHOOL, MID STOCKET ROAD, ABERDEEN**

Thank you for your consultation dated 27 October which we received on 28 October.

We have considered your consultation and comment as follows:

Historic Scotland's Inspectorate has carefully considered the report by Keppie which puts forward a case for demolition of the Governor's House. The case is based mainly on whether the building retains sufficient special architectural or historic interest. The report focuses on a comparison between the original design drawings and the building in its current state to demonstrate that there has been a reduction in the special interest of the building.

The lodge house is listed at category C(S) which identifies it as being of local interest. Although buildings were not always built exactly according to archive drawings the alterations referred to in the report would seem to be consistent with what can be observed in a study of the building and its features as it stands. We have only one photograph dating from when the building was listed but this suggests that the building is likely to have had the same appearance as today when it was listed in 1998.



This view is supported by the list description which refers to plate glass glazing rather than the multi-pane glazing shown in the original drawings and seen in other local works by the architects.

Having considered the report, we have concluded that even if the building had undergone these changes since 1998 we would still be satisfied that the building meets the criteria for listing at category C(S). This is on the basis that it is a work by a prominent Aberdeen architects following in the design and craftsmanship traditions of the Arts & Crafts movement. Although it is not specifically referred to in the description, the building is clearly integral to the history of Aberdeen in marking the role of the site in the education and welfare of Aberdeen's people in the 19th century.

Although we think the changes to the building do not have an undue adverse impact on the interest of the building, we feel that it is in fact likely that the building has not changed significantly since it was listed in 1998. For this reason, we feel that it both meets the criteria under which it was listed at the time and stands up to a fresh appraisal under the same criteria today.

For the reasons above, we have concluded that there should be a presumption against the demolition of the building. In cases where the building is identified as still being of special interest a case for demolition would normally go on to focus on its condition, the efforts made to keep the building in use (i.e. find a restoring owner), and any perceived benefits to the community that might arise from its loss.

From what I have seen of the building to date it appears to be in reasonably sound condition. In addition, it seems likely that it would not be difficult to find a restoring owner for it if it was put on the market and appropriately priced. The agents may therefore wish to give consideration to any benefits to the local and wider community that might arise from the loss of the building. However, the fact that the demolition of C(S)-listed buildings has to be notified to Historic Scotland indicates that it is a matter of national interest, and therefore we would normally expect a case based on the public benefit to reflect this.

It should be noted that a building does not have to meet all the criteria to merit listing. In addition, we have not commented on whether the rest of the school buildings on the site are covered by the statutory address (which indicates our intention was to list only the Governor's House) or by curtilage as this is strictly the decision of the Council. Whether or not the rest of the complex is listed, we understand that the Council has a policy which presumes in favour of the retention of granite buildings on the grounds of both character and sustainability.



If you require any further information, please contact Simon Montgomery.

Yours sincerely



 **Simon Montgomery**
Inspector of Historic Buildings