

PET(4)-13-12 : Tuesday 2 October 2012

Note of Petitions Committee meeting with petitioner, 1 July 2012

Related petition: P-04-381 Restoration for North Wales Hospital:

'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to assess the architectural heritage of the North Wales Hospital and to ensure that the bat roosts located there are protected. We would like this truly unique building to be preserved and restored for the nation.'

Present:

William Powell AM (Chair)

Bethan Jenkins AM

Joyce Watson AM

Paul Sharrock, petitioner

Abigail Phillips, Clerk

Sarita Marshall, Deputy Clerk

Annette Millett, Committee Support

1. The Chair thanked the petitioners for meeting the Committee and invited them to tell the Committee about the petition.
2. The petitioners told the Committee:
 - a. The hospital was built in 1842 and was funded by public donation.
 - b. They are concerned that a demolition company is undertaking work at the site and felt that demolition should be avoided if at all possible.
 - c. They were confused as to why the U shaped area at the front of the building was being targeted in the current work programme. They wanted to know what would happen to the other buildings, in particular the nurses' home and chapel.
 - d. There was general confusion regarding any future plans for the site.
 - e. They were aware that asset stripping had been carried out by previous owners and that the timber framed building could now be unsafe as it had been unprotected from the elements for a period of time. A building survey had been carried out prior to a steel roof being put in place to replace roofs that had been stripped of lead. The group were supportive of the steel roof being put in place.
 - f. A bat survey had been carried out, but no follow up survey had taken place.
 - g. The building is crucial in a national context and should be protected.
 - h. There is a lack of transparency from the council and petitioners felt that communication had broken down. The petitioners would like to know what will be retained of the building and details of its future management.
 - i. A community use for the building would be welcomed, and the petitioners stated that they would not like to see the building used for housing, as there is not a need for more housing in the area.

- j. The group dis-associated itself with individuals who had been breaking in to the hospital to take photographs.
 - k. They recognised that the council are taking a 'brave' approach to the issues affecting the building and emphasised that they do not want to work against the council. They feel that Cadw could helpfully be brought in to assist.
 - l. A preservation group has shown an interest in taking on the grounds of the building, but the idea has not progressed.
3. The petitioners asked the Committee to seek transparency from the council on the issue and to try to ensure that as many of the buildings as possible were saved, even if it was just the façade.
 4. Paul Sharrock loaned a book on the hospital to the Committee. The Committee thanked him for it and promised to return it soon.
 5. The Committee thanked the petitioners for their time and agreed to pass on contact details for Save Britain's Heritage.

Committee Service

July 2012