

Fairlawn
McFarlands Down
St. Mary's
Isles of Scilly

8 September 2015

Planning Committee
Council of the Isles of Scilly

Dear Councillors

Re: P/15/059 Demolition of former Sec. School, Carn Thomas

1. As far as we are aware, there has been no public consultation on the future of the former secondary school. We view its demolition as a terrible loss to the whole community and an irresponsible waste of a very valuable, modern building as in our view it isn't the ideal site for building either houses for families or flats for the elderly. This modern school building is of considerable financial value to this community. It has the potential to earn money in so many ways and provide an educational and scientific asset to the future success of this community.
2. We would ask what effort has gone into researching the many kinds of community support services that this building could provide and its future value to existing local business and the advancement of skills for the whole community as well as being a modern centre for tourist entertainment that would improve the visitor experience. The Town Hall and the Woolpack are not ideal facilities. We would ask the Council to research the actual property value of the buildings which we would estimate must be in the millions of pounds. This is an opportunity that must not be missed to do something constructive for this whole community's future.
3. Possible uses: The building could be an asset to tourism and provide a good size Conference/theatre hall open for hire all year round to all types of national organisations and companies as well as visiting musicians, a cinema, many classrooms, a science lab, a cookery/catering training centre to support our school pupils in their careers and much needed courses for our local hospitality industry, a hostel and environmental study centre for all year round Wildlife Trust management courses and accommodation for additional worldwide gig rowers, a science innovation, engineering, woodworking and building skills centre and many more. It should be possible to structurally renovate the buildings employing structural expertise and local builders once the asbestos is removed.
4. Without any breakdown of figures, it is possible the cost of renovation using local builders could be cheaper than the £300,000 earmarked for demolition. The full cost of the loss to this community of this building which could be in the millions has not yet been calculated.
5. 3.1.2 Whilst in theory it might seem to Officers that a hoarding would be more attractive than the present fascia of the building, Councillors must consider the possibility that the hoarding might remain in place for a very long time if no 'developer' comes forward with acceptable plans. This site could end up an eyesore and an unpleasant sight for both residents and visitors for a very long time.

6. Voting to destroy this valuable school building for housing before the redevelopment plans are even known and passed is a leap into the unknown. It could be that the Council will be forced into accepting unsuitable plans simply because no better plan is on offer, resulting in a detrimental visual impact for decades to come on a prominent part of Hugh Town. The need for housing development has not been accompanied by efforts to devise a new housing scheme that would be more appropriate for an island that supports eco-tourism. Building estates of houses destroys the scenic and the green field environment that must be preserved for future generations. A new and creative plan for providing housing other than building estates of houses is required that will do the least damage to the natural environment upon which tourism depends. See our Local Plan submission.
7. 3.2.3 Whilst there is mention of the waste material generated by demolition – “some material, e.g. concrete can be removed to the Moorwell site prior to being crushed for re-use”, we would request that the process of storage and crushing is all done next door at Moorwell and that large amounts of rubble or any other materials etc. are not taken the whole length of the island to Pendrathen Quarry for dumping or processing. Councillors are already aware that in 2012 large quantities of contaminated materials containing asbestos were dumped in the quarry illegally, where despite many requests it still remains. The quarry has not had Planning Permission to become a landfill site and was the subject of a planning application which failed and a 5 year Public Inquiry which decided against the application. In 2012, the EA stated that the material dumped in the quarry would be there short-term, processed and re-used. As we know, this cannot happen for the many hundreds of tonnes of contaminated waste still deposited there which must be returned to Moorwell. An irresponsible Duchy and the Environment Agency has badly failed this authority, island residents and our northern coastline on the issue of Pendrathen Quarry.
8. As in 2012 there would be a considerable increase in traffic the whole length of the island also using our narrow residential road at McFarlands Down without paths, together with excessive noise, vibration and dust which is already unacceptable. This road is frequently used by horse riders, cyclists, walkers, residents and their children and many tourists.
9. The Quarry should have been closed down by the Council decades ago because of the damage it has done to the coastal environment, to the living environment and to the lives of the many people trying to cope with the heavy lorry traffic that is totally incompatible with residential areas, the island tourist trade and the island designations of AONB, Conservation Area, Heritage Coastline and an area Internationally known for its important Ancient Monuments. The considerable damage done in the form of serious coastal erosion to the banks beyond Bar Point from irresponsibly quarrying a large quantity of sand and stone from Bar Point Beach has never been quantified or recorded.

Yours sincerely

Linda and Ray Wornes