

Application to demolish the Botanic Gardens Garage called in for independent scrutiny by Scottish Ministers

Scottish Ministers have come to the view that Arnold Clark Automobiles' case for substantial demolition of the A-listed building the Botanic Gardens Garage has not been adequately made in support of their application to redevelop the site, and have therefore called in the application for their own decision.

A Reporter from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) will now carefully consider the case and provide a recommendation for Ministers. The applicant, Arnold Clark Automobiles, has chosen to have the case dealt with through written submissions, which means that Historic Scotland, Glasgow City Council and the applicant will send written statements to the Reporter. The Reporter will also consider third party objections and letters of support that have already been submitted.

Glasgow City Council's Planning Applications Committee controversially granted permission to Arnold Clark Automobiles to partially demolish the A-listed Garage Glasgow on February 9, 2010, despite the fact that not a single one of the four criteria required to support the demolition of a listed building, as laid down by the Scottish Historic and Environment Policy (SHEP), had been fully met.

In applying for permission to demolish a listed building the owner is required to show that demolition, whether complete or partial, is the only economic viable solution.

Because listed buildings are a rare and unique resource, the presumption will be against granting permission to demolish unless it can be shown that there is no viable alternative.¹

Arnold Clark Automobiles have failed to make any attempt to market the property, and given the other expressions of interest by sympathetic restoring purchasers it therefore cannot be argued that it has been shown that demolition is the only viable economic solution.

The garage is the oldest surviving multi-storey car park in the UK, possibly the world. The proposed redevelopment would destroy and significantly alter several significant key features of this iconic building, including the ramp, the early use of Ferro-concrete of the Hennebique system, and the innovative and unusual design of the steel roof trusses. These important factors are all part of the reason for the Statutory Listing of the Botanic Gardens Garage at the highest possible level of Category A, putting it at a similar importance and level of protection as Glasgow City Chambers or Edinburgh Castle.

Sam Maddra of the Save the Botanic Gardens campaign stated: "This decision has vindicated what we have been arguing all along, that no good case for demolition has been made by the owners. We once again call on Arnold Clark to put the building on the market, at a fair price, to give others a chance to re-use the building in its current form. While the local community have clearly demonstrated their great love of this local landmark, the Botanic Gardens Garage has a broader significance, as one of Scotland's

¹ Historic Scotland Website 'Altering a listed building' (<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/altering-a-listed-building.htm>) accessed 11/02/2010

A-listed buildings it falls within the top 8% of buildings that are of 'special' interest, architecturally or historically. Historic Scotland are right to have called in this application, thereby fulfilling their function of safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment on behalf of Scottish Ministers."

<http://www.botanicgardensgarage.org/index.html>

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