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14 January, 2016

Dear Mr Gray,

**15/00920/CON | Complete Demolition in a Conservation Area | Anton House 5
Forthill Road Broughty Ferry Dundee DD5 2JT**

The development site is in Forthill Conservation area and in one of the most desirable locations in Broughty Ferry. It is bounded by stone walls and attractive protected mature trees. To the north, in an elevated position, the Victorian mansion, dominates the site. The main facade is by fronted by an expansive heart-shaped open green space. While further to the south there is the lodge house. This, and the associated original gate piers, were designed to match the manor house.

The mansion was originally known as Forthill House and was occupied by Mr and Mrs Charles Anton. Subsequently it was gifted by the Anton family to the Scottish Orthopaedic Council as a residential training centre for disabled girls (1).

The subsequent 'institutional' modifications have not been sympathetic to the external appearance of the house. They include the utilitarian North and West Extensions , a few inappropriate window replacements to the main facade, and bodged cement repair to some of the stone quoins. However, even the applicants grudgingly admit " Although the existing building does have some character,..." (Financial Assessment Document, Paragraph 4. Visual Impact-Sales Values).

This opinion can be reinforced. The main facade (and much of the rest of the house) is constructed of coursed ashlar sandstone that is in good condition for its age, and includes two bays and an impressive stone entrance porch. Many of the windows, particularly in the bays, seem original. The "Chimneys are in a reasonable condition for their age," (Financial Assessment Document, Paragraph 1. Visual Impact-Sales Values). No major problems are visibly apparent with the slate roof in spite of unsupported speculation by the applicant. There is no indication that a detailed survey was carried out on the roof.

The applicants employed Scott Barratt Associates (Consulting and Civil and Structural Engineers) to carry out a visual non-invasive, non-destructive structural survey. A key part of their Structural Survey Report (which is contained within the Building Condition Report and listed in the planning application 15/00919/FULL) is quoted as follows.

" 7. DISSCUSSIONS (*sic*) OF FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS

The main house is in a fair condition considering the age of the property. Externally, the building requires moderate repairs to rainwater goods and roofing. Internally, the building requires minor repairs to floors, ceilings and some walls."

The comments on the modern buildings are far more negative. These should be removed to improve the setting of the original house.

The conclusions of the financial assessment are noted. However, this is incomplete without factoring in the purchase price of the development site. The presence of a statutorily protected structure will reduce this price when compared with a site where demolition has occurred.

Residential conversions of historic buildings have proved popular and successful development opportunities in Dundee, as evidenced by the Parkview and Eastern Primary School projects. The listed buildings concerned required sensitive upgrading to modern building standards and the retention of internal original features. As Anton House is not listed, the latter requirement is not essential. This may be considered as a money-saving 'advantage' to the developer. However, it would be desirable to at least save the main staircase, the nearby stained glass window, remaining cornices, and the internal wooden panelling/shutters associated with the original bay windows.

Last year Forthill Conservation Area underwent a reappraisal by Dundee City Council. As a result of this it was implicit that Forthill/Anton House was still worthy of statutory protection. It is therefore considered appropriate for the developer to consider revising the proposal to incorporate, as a minimum, the facade of the existing building which is a familiar and conspicuous landmark in Broughty Ferry that is complemented by its associated lodge house and gate piers. The easy option of complete demolition and replacement by a modern block of flats would not preserve the character of the conservation area.

This is an objection to the proposed demolition of the historic sandstone building.

Reference

1. What's in a name? A street history of Broughty Ferry. C Webster & C Muir, Dundee Civic Trust, 2014.

Yours sincerely,

D.S. Hewick [Planning Secretary, Broughty Ferry Community Council]