

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The national charity campaigning for the Victorian and Edwardian historic environment

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Cllr W Aron
17 High Street
Horncastle
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LN9 5HP

Your reference:
Our reference: 2009/04/005

9 April 2009

Dear Cllr Aron

Horncastle Town Hall, Horncastle

We understand that Horncastle Town Hall has closed and that the future of the building is uncertain.

The Town Hall was originally built as a drill hall in 1901, during and after the First World War it was used to treat the wounded and more recently it has been used as the Town Hall. The historic building forms an important part of Horncastle's built heritage and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst not of exceptional architectural quality, the Town Hall is undoubtedly a building of local architectural and historic interest. Furthermore, there is a strong local attachment to this building which has played an important role in the community for many years; the social value of the building is irreplaceable. Local and national planning policies set out a strong presumption in favour of retaining such buildings.

The demolition of the former drill hall would be an appalling waste of a structurally sound historic building. At a time when sustainability is on the agenda for all new development it should be a priority to utilise the resources already existing. Replacing an attractive, well-loved and well-built building with a modern structure that has a relatively short design life would be unimaginative, insensitive and unsustainable.

We would urge East Lindsey District Council to support proposals that allow for the retention of this building. The business plan put forward by the Town Hall Working Group shows that there is a demand for community facilities such as these, that the hall has been well used in the past and that it can continue to make a valuable visual and social contribution to the community in the future. With the Working Group offering to take on the financial burden of renovating, running and maintaining the building, we see no overwhelming justification for its closure and demolition.

We hope that the potential rehabilitation of the building is not jeopardised by a lack of basic maintenance in the intervening time. The building should be kept secure, well ventilated and weather tight with gutters and downpipes periodically cleared of leaves.

In summary, we hope that the Council will continue to work with the Town Hall Working Group in order to secure the future of this locally important historic building and show its commitment to protecting East Lindsey's historic environment.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baldwin
Conservation Adviser

Cc. R Walker, East Lindsey District Council