

PE2105/E: Safeguard Scottish Listed Buildings at risk of unnecessary demolition

Renfrewshire Council written submission, 28 March 2025

Renfrewshire's Listed Buildings

At the February 2025 meeting of Renfrewshire Council a motion was passed requesting that Council officers submit correspondence to the Scottish Parliament Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee. The content of this correspondence is to reflect the outcomes of discussion at the Full Council on the above subject.

Given the existing context with heritage buildings in Renfrewshire, the Council wish the Committee to consider the following points:

- The requirement for the introduction of additional powers such as Compulsory Sales Orders and clearer guidance for local authorities to adequately safeguard our heritage for future generations;
- The requirement for an urgent review of listed-building regulations and directives.

It is Renfrewshire Council's contention that existing powers available to local authorities are insufficient to avoid property owners from deliberately choosing to neglect heritage buildings, causing their physical condition to deteriorate to the point where the buildings cannot be returned to a viable new use and in some cases become dangerous.

The Council wish to draw particular attention to the need to introduce new regulations such as Compulsory Sales Orders and request that the Scottish Government provide clearer guidance for all stakeholders on how these can and have worked in practice today across Scotland. It is believed that Compulsory Sales Orders will offer greater confidence for other local authorities to utilise this power.

Many of the powers currently available to local authorities include the following:

- a) AMENITY NOTICE [Town & Country Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 s.180]
- b) REPAIRS WORKS NOTICE [Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 S.43]

- c) URGENT WORKS NOTICE [Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 S.49]
- d) DANGEROUS BUILDING NOTICE [Building (Scotland) Act 2003 S.30]

The aforementioned powers work on the presumption that the Council concerned will have the ability and resources to “step in” and carry out the required work directly or take steps towards ownership of the property in question. This is also implicit in the statements to date by Scottish Government for Compulsory Sales Orders.

However, such resources are likely to be unavailable to most Scottish local authorities thus creating significant conflict in efforts to maintain and protect listed buildings and other heritage buildings.

Renfrewshire Council call on the Scottish Government to address the issue of the onus being on the local authority to have to find resources in order to be able to preserve the local area’s heritage buildings of note.

Head of Economy and Development