

## **PE1749/B**

Royal Town Planning Institute submission of 28 October 2019

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2,100 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 25,000. We:

- support policy development to improve approaches to planning for the benefit of the public;
- maintain the professional standards of our members;
- support our members, and therefore the majority of the planning workforce, to have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver planning effectively;
- maintain high standards of planning education;
- develop and promote new thinking, ideas and approaches which can improve planning;
- support our membership to work with others who have a role in developing places in Scotland; and
- improve the understanding of planning and the planning system to policy makers, politicians, practitioners and the general public.

The Institute is grateful to the Committee for the invitation to comment on Petition 1749, concerning the upkeep of listed buildings.

RTPI Scotland acknowledges the very important contribution that built heritage makes to the quality of places across the country, and listed buildings are clearly an important component of this heritage. In the context of limited public resources – both professional time and capital funding – to invest in the built environment, RTPI Scotland believes that while listing status should be one consideration in determining priorities, other issues such as community impact should also be taken account of. The Institute is therefore concerned that the proposals included in the petition could create costly new requirements that could divert resources away from other built heritage, for which there might be a stronger case for investment.

There are several recent examples from around Scotland where the restoration and reuse of listed buildings has been undertaken as part of a wider regeneration initiative – for example the Dalkeith Corn Exchange and the Olympia Building in Bridgeton Cross. These projects demonstrate that securing a use for a currently redundant building, and then securing the funding for restoration, takes a great deal of cross-sector collaboration, particularly when the buildings are located in a weak property market area. RTPI Scotland believes that this positive and partnership-based approach to protecting the future of built heritage is more likely to achieve a long term use for buildings – and therefore necessary maintenance – than creating a status quo where public funds are always made available when buildings enter a state of disrepair. As the Committee's discussion infers, the latter approach runs the risk of disincentivising private owners from carrying out routine maintenance.

With regard to detailed answers to each of the points made in the petition, RTPI Scotland endorses the submission made by Historic Environment Scotland.