

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, EUROPE AND
TOURISM COMMITTEE
22nd January 2007

Agenda Item	2.4
Report No	C/P/4/07

**06/00431/LBCCA DEMOLITION OF FORMER BREWERY AT OLD BREWERY, 22
MANSONS LANE, THURSO, CAITHNESS.**

Report by the Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

Application is made for Listed Building Consent to demolish the brewery building at the corner of Mansons Lane and Riverside Place in Thurso. The building is in a perilous state of repair and evidence has been submitted by the applicant to demonstrate that it is beyond repair. Evidence has also been submitted detailing efforts which have been made over the years to try to find a use for the property but all of these efforts have proved fruitless.

Recommendation: Grant Listed Building Consent.

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 Proposal: Application is made for Listed Building Consent to demolish the Category B Listed Building which is the former brewery building in Thurso. The applicant has submitted significant evidence that the building is beyond repair and has also submitted evidence of the efforts made to find a use for the building over the last 20 or so years. This evidence is discussed further below.

1.2 Application Site:- The application site is the former brewery building at 22 Mansons Lane, Thurso which is a category B Listed Building.

1.3 Applicant: O'Brien Construction Limited, Park Lane, Thurso, KW14 8JZ.
Agent: Pentarq, 41 Traill Street, Thurso, KW14 8EG.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 The site is subject to Policy 2 of the Thurso Chapter of the Caithness Local Plan which states that it is proposed to convert the former brewery at Mansons Lane into a significant visitor attraction/Orientation Centre, including an archive with genealogy and research facilities.

2.2 As this is a Listed Building and this is a proposal for its demolition the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas 1988 of Historic Scotland becomes particularly pertinent. In that document paragraph 2.10 particularly applies and states that "Government Policy with regards to the demolition of Listed Buildings is that no worthwhile buildings should be lost to our environment unless it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted by all concerned to find practical ways of keeping it".

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Thurso Community Council: No objections

3.2 Highland Council Conservation Architect: Whilst initially opposed to the proposal he now accepts that given the evidence submitted that the building can not now be saved.

3.3 Historic Scotland: Consultation with Historic Scotland prior to determination is informal but again after initial opposition to the proposal Historic Scotland are now reserving their position.

3.4 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency : No objections.

3.5 Area Roads and Community Works Manager: No objections.

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 I have received one letter of objection from Mrs. Aline L. Gunn, Vice Chairman of the Highland Building Preservation Trust. She is concerned about the loss of this historically important building in the middle of Thurso which contributes to Thurso's once elegant, well planned and distinctive character.

5.0 APPLICANTS SUBMISSION

5.1 In trying to decide whether consent should be given for the demolition of a Listed Building 2 main areas require to be examined. One is the efforts made to reuse the building and the other is the actual condition of the building.

5.2 In relation to efforts to find uses for the building, the applicants agent, Pentarq Architects has submitted a chronological summary of efforts made over the recent past and they are listed as follows:

- March, 1982 – Public Local Enquiry re. application for Listed Building Consent for demolition of building – Refused per report June, 1982.
- August, 1983 – Negotiations re. sale to Highland Regional Council end.
- November, 1984 - Interest noted by The Boots Company PLC.
- March, 1985 – Offer received from Argyle Stores (Properties) Ltd.
- August, 1987 – Highland Regional Council advised of agreement for the building to be included in the Register of Listed Buildings surplus to the requirements of the owners.
- November, 1987 – An application for grant assistance for buildings with Special Architectural of Historical Interest to Highland Regional Council was declined.
- June, 1988 – Highland Regional Council advised of two interests parties, Albyn Housing Society Ltd and a local consortium re. a potential museum for glass products.
- June, 1990 – Amended design scheme put forward by Scot Sutherland School of Architecture for Creative Glass Company, per L. Leet. Architect.
- July – 1990 - Listed Buildings Consent granted by Highland Regional Council re. repairs/ partial demolition subject to conditions.
- January, 1991 - Conditional missives sale negotiated with Creative Glass Company Ltd.

- September, 1995 – Change of use application lodged by Creative Glass Company Ltd.
- October, 1996 – interest of Creative Glass Company Ltd ends due to lack of funding for development.
- November, 1997 – Initial officer received from the Buildings Renaissance Trust.
- June, 2000 – Interest from Highland Regional Council re. Archive Centre. A feasibility Study was undertaken however decisions were taken by the Highland Council not to support the restoration and interest again ceased.
- 2003 – Interest expressed by Bellhaven Breweries re. pub conversion, but abandoned after various meetings.
- June, 2005 – Ownership transferred to O’Brien Construction Ltd., the current applicants as a condition of the sale to them of the adjacent site now being developed for housing.

In all cases the potential purchasers for a variety of reasons were unable to pursue development of the building.

5.3 With regard to the physical condition of the building the applicant has submitted two reports from A. F. Cruden, Consulting Engineers, one report from Arch Henderson, Consulting Engineers and one letter from D. F. MacKenzie, Stone Masons. These reports are included as appendices to this report. Basically the reports indicate that the building is unstable and indeed part of it has collapsed and is being held up shoring at present. Initially the structural reports indicated that it would be basically impractical to underpin and to try to save the building as it stands. Consideration was then given to dismantling the building and reusing the stone to rebuild the building however it has now become evident that the stone has become so delaminated and friable that according to Arch Henderson its reuse should be restricted to volume infill material and it would not be particularly suitable as a finished building material, indeed it is now generally accepted that so little would be left of the stone that there would be practically nothing left to build with.

6.0 APPRAISAL

6.1 As outlined above it is evident that many efforts have been made to try to find practical ways of keeping the building dating back to 1982 but none of these have come to fruition. In the meantime the building as been deteriorating quickly and as has now been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt the building is such a perilous state and the stone of such poor quality that its retention is impossible. Given this circumstance I see no alternative than to reluctantly recommend that Listed Building Consent be granted to demolish this Listed Building.

6.2 It should be noted that if the Committee agree to this recommendation that the application will require to be referred to Historic Scotland. Thereafter if Historic Scotland agree to grant this Listed Building Consent the applicant must serve a Notice on the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland giving them 3 months in which to record the building.

Recommendation: Grant Listed Building Consent subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to commencement of development a Traffic Management Plan to be put into operation during the demolition phase shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.

Signature:

Designation: Caithness Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

Date: 15th January, 2007

Author: Iain Ewart

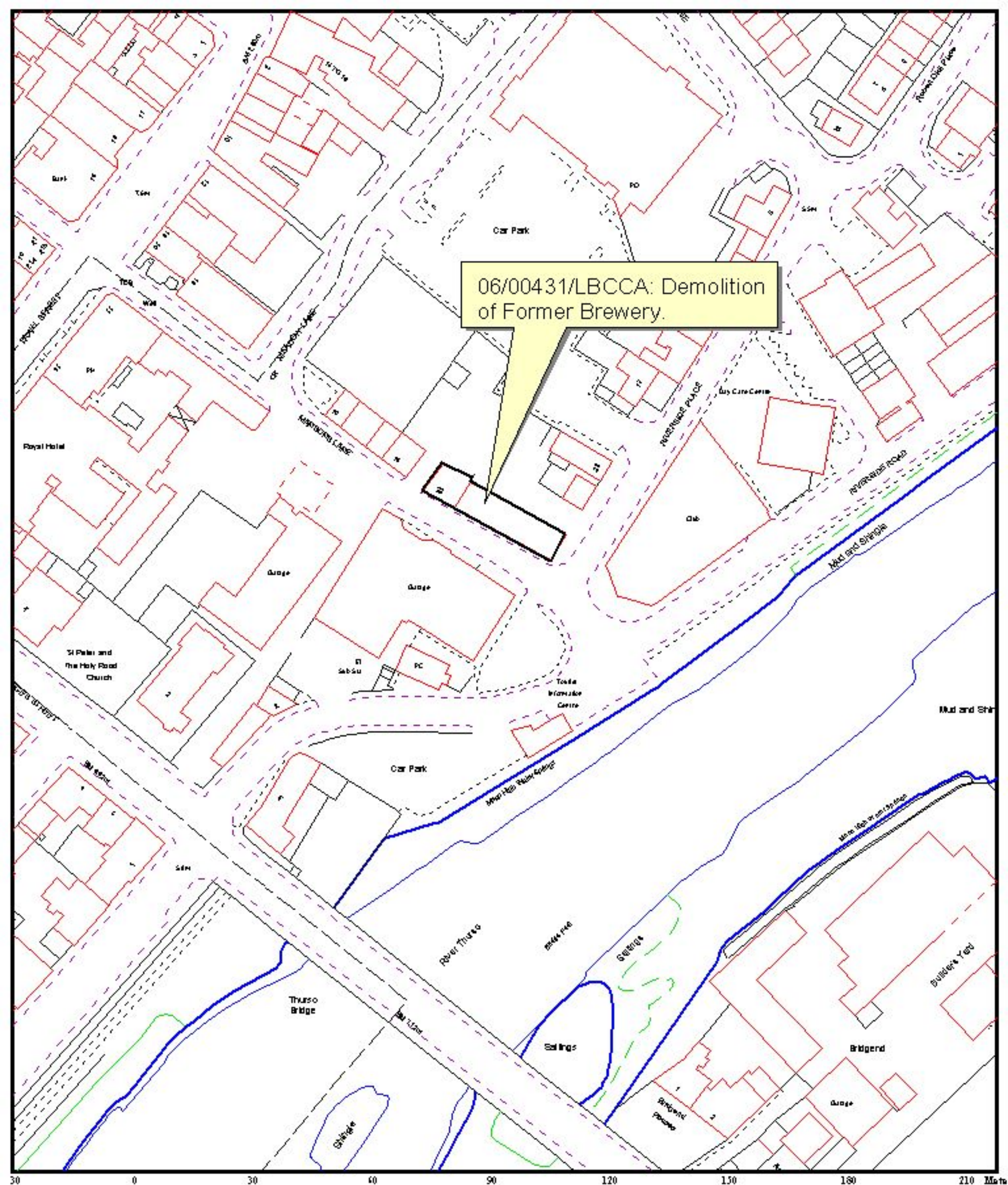
Tel: 01955 607754

Ref: 06/00431/LBCCA

Background Papers

1. Application form and plans.
2. Caithness Local Plan
3. One letter of support from David Swanson, Swyncot, Harbour Road, Castletown.
4. Consultation response from Conservation Architect dated 15th August, 2006.
5. Letter of objection from Mrs. Aline L. Gunn, Swiney House, Lybster, KW3 6BT dated 14th August, 2006.
6. Letter from architectural Heritage Society of Scotland dated 22nd August, 2006.
7. Letter from Historic Scotland dated 30th August, 2006.
8. Letter from Pentarq dated 3rd October, 2006.
9. Letter from Pentarq dated 10th November, 2006.
10. Letter to O'Brien Construction Ltd from A. F. Cruden Associates, Consulting Engineers dated 28th July, 2006.
11. Letter to O'Brien Construction Ltd, from A. F. Cruden Associates dated 29th November, 2006.
12. E-mail message to O'Brien Construction from D. MacKenzie, Stone Masons dated 30th November, 2006.
13. Letter from Pentarq dated 1st December, 2006.
14. Letter to O'Brien Construction from Arch Henderson dated 1st December, 2006.
15. Memo from Highland Council Archaeologist dated 23rd August, 2006.
16. Memo from Area Roads and Community Works Manager dated 5th September, 2006.
17. E-mail from Bob Earnshaw, Thurso Community Council dated 29th August, 2006.
18. Letter from Pentarq dated 3rd October, 2006.
19. Letter from Historic Scotland dated 7th November, 2006.

Any person wishing to inspect any of the above background papers should contact Iain Ewart on 01955 607751.



06/00431/LBCCA: Demolition of Former Brewery.

Old Brewery, 22 Mansons Lane, THURSO.



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