

ANGUS COUNCIL

ITEM No. 1 3

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 12 MAY 1998

MORTUARY CHAPEL, WESTERN CEMETERY, ARBROATH

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF LAW AND ADMINISTRATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF
PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**ABSTRACT**

This purpose of this Report is to advise members of the request from the Patrick Allan-Fraser of Hospitalfield Trust for the support of Angus Council in their application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) note the terms of the letter dated 26 November 1997 from the Patrick Allan-Fraser of Hospitalfield Trust;
- (ii) agree to support the Trust in their application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund; and
- (iii) approve the provision of assistance to the Trust from the Council's Conservation Officer in preparing a Conservation Plan for the Mortuary Chapel.

2. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to the letter to the Chief Executive dated 26 November 1997 from the Patrick Allan-Fraser of Hospitalfield Trust a copy of which is attached to this Report.

The present day Hospitalfield House was extensively remodelled by Patrick Allan-Fraser between 1850 and 1856. During that period he added most of the present day detailing and extensions to existing seventeenth and eighteenth century fabric. In 1886 he completed, and subsequently gifted to the Royal Burgh of Arbroath, the Mortuary Chapel in the Western Cemetery. Architecturally, Hospitalfield House and its sibling, the Mortuary Chapel are important in the context of the Arts and Crafts movement in architecture and design; historically, both buildings embody local craftsmanship of immense quality, including nationally important stone and timber carvings. Both are Category A listed.

Since 1890, Hospitalfield House has operated as an arts based trust. The Mortuary Chapel was last used for burial purposes approximately 25 years ago. Today, the financial position of the Trust is precarious. The fact that the Trust is responsible for the maintenance of the Mortuary Chapel places an added burden on the Trust's already strained finances. It is the Trust's financial position that is central to the issues raised in this Report.

The Mortuary Chapel was gifted by Patrick Allan-Fraser by Conveyance and Deed of Gift dated 19 April 1886 to the Magistrates and Town Council of Arbroath as the Arbroath Burial Board. The deed contains the following provision:-

“In respect that I Patrick Allan-Fraser have otherwise made provision and may yet make further provision for the due and proper maintenance and repair of the fabric of the said Mortuary Chapel in all time coming it is hereby provided that I and my said Trustees (the Patrick Allan-Fraser of Hospitalfield Trust) or those authorised by me or them shall be entitled to have access to the said Chapel and ground within the parapet walls enclosing the same and to repair and maintain the Fabric of the said Chapel and enclosures thereof as the same shall be completed and left by me or by my said Trustees any additions to or alteration of said Fabric in all its details except so far as I may give or leave written direction on the subject being hereby specially prohibited in all time coming: Declaring that the question as to the necessity of such repairs shall be entirely vested in me and after my death in my said Trustees without the same being subject to challenge in any respect, **the expense of all such repairs and maintenance being to be defrayed by me and after my death by my said Trustees”**

The responsibility for repair and maintenance of the Chapel therefore now rests with the Patrick Allan-Fraser of Hospitalfield Trust.

At the time of writing the Trust is making a bid for Endowment Funding to the Heritage Lottery fund (HLF). This application is to allow fabric repairs and to develop and expand the Trusts activities. In economic and cultural development contexts the expansion is highly desirable.

The initial application was rejected by the HLF who stated “.....**you must include the Chapel within the scope of the study**”. Given the undoubted importance of the Chapel and its inextricable relationship with Hospitalfield House, the HLF’s position is understandable. In addition, the HLF has stated in writing that: **“Angus Council’s involvement is clearly important in gaining a consensus as to what the appropriate course of action is.....;”**

The HLF’s comments gave rise to a letter from the Trust, to Angus Council, requesting agreement on three specific points:

- The need to prepare a Conservation Plan
- The need to develop a funding package (necessarily rotating around Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund).
- The need to develop a community use for the Chapel.

A Conservation Plan is a document that outlines the architectural/cultural/historical significance of a building, highlights any repairs that are required and provides for its future use/management, including maintenance. This document is an integral part of the HLF application so its format and context are important. Accordingly, the HLF recommend input from the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

In addition to the funding that may be available from the HLF, the Trust will also be applying to Historic Scotland for a grant to repair the Mortuary Chapel. It is these two sources that comprise the “funding package” referred to in the Trust’s letter; Angus Council will not be expected to become a funding partner.

The development of a “community” role for the Chapel is perhaps an overstatement. Discussions with the Trust indicate that this is unlikely to involve more than one or two occasional arts events in any one year. Given that the Conservation Plan and the funding package are not dependent upon developing a use (or uses) for the Mortuary Chapel, it is recommended that this is treated as a separate, albeit inter-related, issue.

As has already been stated, the development and expansion of the Hospitalfield House is highly desirable for a number of reasons:

- Economically, the Trust's activities have considerable potential for bringing visitors into Angus and promoting the area both within the UK and abroad.
- Hospitalfield House and the Mortuary Chapel are of major architectural, cultural and historical significance, so it is essential that the future of both buildings, and the art collection in the House, are safeguarded.
- Development of the Trust's activities could be undertaken in partnership with the Director of Cultural Services, thus widening the community role of Hospitalfield House.

Although it is difficult to be certain, it is probable that the Trust's bid for HLF and Historic Scotland funding will be successful. However, the HLF will only award funding on the understanding that the future of the associated Mortuary Chapel is secured. That will only happen if Angus Council is seen to be supportive of the Trust's aims and willing to input into the process.

3. PROPOSALS

On the basis of the Trust's letter to Angus Council, all that is required is:-

- An endorsement of the Trust's proposals in the context of their HLF application.
- Assistance from the Department of Planning and Transport's Conservation Officer in preparing a Conservation Plan for the Mortuary Chapel.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Agreement on the first point will not commit the Council to any financial outgoings. Input into the Conservation Plan by the Conservation Officer will take the form of architectural and historical analyses, advice on masonry repairs and ensuring that the proposals are consistent with accepted conservation practice. Much of the architectural and historical analyses have already been undertaken by the Conservation Officer as part of a post-graduate course in Building Conservation. Consequently, the time commitment is unlikely to be substantial.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance, Property Services, Recreation Services and Cultural Services have been consulted on the terms of this Report.

6. CONCLUSION

It must be stressed that a positive commitment to a partnership with the Hospitalfield Trust is essential, if the current blocking of the HLF application is to be removed. The HLF have pointed out that the Chapel is an integral part of the Hospitalfield estate, hence their insistence on its inclusion in the application. Positive support from the Council will help facilitate the development of Hospitalfield House with resulting economic, cultural and promotional benefits for Angus.

ALEX ANDERSON
Director of Planning and Transport

CATHERINE A COULL
Director of Law and Administration

NOTE: No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this Report



THE PATRICK ALLAN-FRASER
of HOSPITALFIELD
TRUST

Sandy Watson
Chief Executive Angus Council
The Cross
Forfar

26 November 1997

Dear Sandy.

Towards an Agreement between Angus Council and The Hospitalfield Trust concerning the Conservation and Development of the Fraser of Hospitalfield Memorial Chapel.

For much of this year The Hospitalfield Trust has been working to design a Conservation Policy which addresses the future needs and problems entailing the maintenance and security of Hospitalfield House, the surrounding grounds and policies, and also The Memorial Chapel in The Western Cemetery.

The mechanism which relates The Trust and the local authority to The Chapel has also been satisfactorily researched and forms the basis of future development in terms of conservation funding and management. As a consequence, a working dialogue has been established between various officials and councillors and The Trust in order to produce a viable way forward.

Although much has already been achieved, there is a point at which it will become necessary to have a formal agreement or policy document which draws up the current relationship of Angus Council and The Hospitalfield Trust regarding the future of The Chapel. The arrangements of a hundred years ago no longer seem relevant, and the opportunity exists to remodel this position to better serve the management of The Chapel today.

Essentially, The Agreement document should contain a note outlining cooperation over three points:

- (i) The need to produce a Conservation Plan
- (ii) The need to provide a funding package (necessarily rotating around provision from Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland)
- (iii) The need to work towards a Development Policy (integral to both (i) and (ii) which will allow a community role for the building

Happily, everyone with a declared part to play in this exercise is entirely in support of the importance and significance of the building, both historically and culturally; that it currently needs problems of use, security and maintenance to be addressed; that a joint initiative in association with Historic Scotland will secure the future of the building, and the profile of the community will be enhanced by such development.

Such an Agreement, or Memorandum of intent will valuably strengthen the informal, and productive cooperation already directed towards The Chapel, and will be essential to the perception of stability and resolve required for fund raising.

Precisely what form this should take, however, is open to discussion. Would a text document establishing joint endeavour be sufficient, or would this have to be tabled as a minute from a Council meeting? Perhaps you might be able to suggest what might be the most appropriate course.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Kind regards,

Yours Sincerely



William W Payne
Director