REPORT NO 826/04

ANGUS COUNCIL

SPECIAL COMMITTEE – A92 PROJECT

22 JUNE 2004

DISCOVERY OF STONE MASONRY BUILDING AT
UPPER VICTORIA JUNCTION ON THE A92 – SUPPLEMENTAL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROADS

ABSTRACT
This report supplements Report No. 817/04 considered by Committee on Tuesday 15 June 2004 and informs the Committee of certain additional responses which have been gathered in the interim period.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree:-

(i) to note the contents of this report in regard to the supplemental information which has been gathered since the earlier meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 15 June 2004;

(ii) to reconsider the content of Report No 817/04 as further informed by the supplemental information now contained in this Report;

(iii) to reconsider recommendations (i) through (vii) inclusive of Report No 817/04.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Report No 817/04 entitled “Discovery of Stone Masonry Building at Upper Victoria Junction on the A92” was considered by the Special Committee – A92 Project at their meeting on Tuesday 15 June 2004.

2.2 Members are reminded of the decision of that Committee to defer a determination on the structure pending the assembly of further relevant information by the Director of Roads.

2.3 This Report now provides the additional information which has been obtained in the interim period. This information should be read in the light of the full detail contained in the earlier Report 817/04. For the sake of completeness and for ease of reference Report No 817/04 is also provided for the consideration of the Committee at this meeting.
3 DETAILS

3.1 A letter was received from Historic Scotland on the day of the Committee meeting (Tuesday 15 June 2004) and was tabled at the meeting. The text of this letter is reproduced in this Report as Appendix 1.

3.2 The content of the letter appears to conflict with earlier correspondence which had previously been received from Historic Scotland and which was presented to Committee as Appendix 7 in the earlier Report No 817/04.

3.3 In view of this the Director of Roads has written further to Historic Scotland seeking clarification on their current position. The Director of Roads’ letter and Historic Scotland’s response are contained in Appendix 2 to this Report.

3.4 In view of Historic Scotland’s most recent correspondences the Director of Planning and Transport has been asked to comment further. His comments are now as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 of this Report.

3.5 The views of Historic Scotland are acknowledged and in normal circumstances the preservation of the building would be promoted. In this case, consideration should also be given to the circumstances, and in particular that the building will have lost its original, historical context once the A92 is completed. It will then become an isolated reminder of the former quarrying activity. It has been suggested that the building might have to be enclosed if it is to be retained. A structure of substantial dimensions would be required and that would overpower the building. Enclosing the building would diminish the setting even further.

3.6 Whilst there is some industrial archaeological interest in the building it would be a rather isolated remnant of the former Pitskelly quarry. The form of construction is typical of the period, the main features being the circular wall surmounted by a vaulted stone roof. Given that the setting will be completely lost it is difficult to justify its retention on the basis of historic merit. Having regard to these circumstances, unless a scheme can be devised to retain the building in a manner which makes it attractive to view and/or visit safely and that the future maintenance costs are reasonable and can be met, then the best option is detailed recording, archaeological excavation and publication of the results in a publicly accessible location.

3.7 The Director of Roads had also been advised by the new works contractor (Morgan Est Civil Engineering) that they would be in a position to realign the Upper Victoria Link Road to enable retention of the structure in its current location, at no cost to the Council. This advice had only been given verbally.

3.8 Accordingly the Director of Roads has also written to the Company under the contract, Claymore Roads Ltd, seeking written confirmation that this is indeed the case. At the same time the director has sought Claymore’s confirmation that the necessary additional land will be conveyed to the Council’s account at no cost to the Council.
3.9 At the same time the director has enquired as to the Company’s willingness to make a financial contribution to the other costs which would arise in respect of the prospective retention of the structure (as were addressed in the financial implications section of Report No 817/04). The Director of Roads’ letter is attached to this Report along with Claymore Roads Ltd response (if available or to be tabled) at Appendix 3.

3.10 Within Committee Report 817/04 a number of options were set out at paragraph 3.7 for future treatment of the building. These are reproduced below for convenience of reference:

(i) retain the structure in its current location – which would require the realignment of the new side road (the Upper Victoria Road) linking the A92 to Carnoustie;

(ii) relocate the structure elsewhere either by moving it as a single body, or by disassembling and reassembling it elsewhere;

(iii) re-bury the structure in its current location for possible scrutiny/use by future generations;

(iv) investigate and record the detail of the structure and then allow its demolition while facilitating archaeological investigation of the associated sub-structure.

Of these options it is considered that options (ii) and (iii) are not favoured for the following reasons in summary. In the case of option (ii) it is considered that moving the structure would be likely to be traumatic to the integrity of the structure and would significantly diminish its contextual setting. In the case of option (iii) this would either require a further translation in the realignment proposed for the Upper Victoria link road or would be difficult and awkward to achieve geometrically and is likely to be an unsatisfactory compromise. For these reasons it is the Director of Road’s view that these options may now be set aside.

3.11 Should the structure be retained it will be necessary to give careful consideration to the extent and complexity of access arrangements which may be required in association. The financial implications which have been set out in Report 817/04 are based on the expectation of relatively modest provision only. However consideration would require to be given to such issues as pedestrian and cycling access, the provision of car and/or coach parking, the needs of disabled prospective visitors, all set against the geometric and topographic constraints imposed by the junction layout and the current location of the structure, together with the extent of the Council’s land ownership. At present this has not been considered in any depth by the Director of Roads as it would, to some extent, flow from the Council’s wishes as to how the structure should be treated, in the event that a decision is taken to retain it, in terms of its future accessibility and “visibility”
4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Paragraph 3.10 of this report has commented that two of the four options identified in Report 817/04 should now be set aside. This leaves only two options to be examined in a financial context (see Options A and B below).

4.2 Option A – Retain Current Location

4.2.1 Morgan Est have advised the Director of Roads on a verbal basis that there would be no costs arising to the Council from the realignment of the Upper Victoria link road and associated necessary land acquisition. However, attempts to have this position formally confirmed by either Morgan Est or Claymore Roads Ltd have at the time of writing this report been unsuccessful.

4.2.2 In the event that these costs were sought to be passed to the Council via a formal change request raised by the Council as outlined in the A92 Project Agreement it is highlighted that this could represent a substantial contractual cost to the Council.

4.2.3 The financial implications of progressing this option to retain the building at the current site as set out in Report 817/04 were based on a relatively modest provision only regarding access arrangements to be provided. However, if the access provision was to allow for car and/or coach parking with additional land requirements, a high specification for disabled access etc, then the costs would be subject to an upward projection.

4.2.4 In light of the unknown factors surrounding the level of potential development likely to be progressed at this site should the option to “Retain in Current Location” be recommended, it is considered useful to show the potential costs based on a Pessimistic, Optimistic, Best (POB) analysis basis.

4.2.5 The projected costs under each scenario are shown below:

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<tr>
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<th>£000’s</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pessimistic</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>100</td>
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Depending on the level of development required it is considered that the capital cost may be up to some £150,000.

4.2.6 It may be possible to negotiate a contribution from the contractor for these works or pursue a cost only/restricted profit level contract.

4.2.7 This potential high front end capital cost together with any potential cost associated with a change request from the Council as outlined at 4.2.2 above would need to be viewed against the current nil funding provision allowed for such expenditure within the Council’s overall budget.
4.2.8 On-going maintenance costs are likely to range from circa £3,000 to approximately £8,000 depending on the level of capital development progressed at the site.

4.3 Option B – Record and Demolish

4.3.1 The costs associated with this option would be relatively nominal and could be subsumed within the A92 Project Capital Budget provision for 2004/05.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Planning and Transport have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Pursuant to consideration of Report No 817/04 by the A92 Special Committee at its meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2004, the Director of Roads has assembled certain supplemental information. This information is now contained within this Report and should assist in concluding a decision on the structure unearthed at Upper Victoria. The bulk of the detailed supporting data is contained in Report No 817/04 which this Report now supplements.

Ronnie McNeil
DIRECTOR OF ROADS

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 the above Report.

JG/JSG
17 June 2004
REPORTS/a92.upper.vic.supp
Dear Mr Green

PITSKELLY QUARRY STRUCTURE, BARRY PARISH, ANGUS

Further to our telephone conversation this week I enclose a statement outlining Historic Scotland's view of the significance of the Pitskelly Quarry structure. I have sent a copy of this to John Cathro of Morgan Est also.

I am on annual leave next week but my colleague Robin Evetts should be available 0131 668 8743, or Dr Deborah Mays on 0131 668 8709, should you wish to discuss the issues further.

Thank you for your patience in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Ms Pauline Megson
Inspector of Historic Buildings
FORMER PITSKELLY QUARRY STRUCTURE, BARRY PARISH, ANGUS

The following statement relates to the early 19th century circular stone structure with vaulted stone roof unearthed during the current upgrade of the A92 Dundee to Arbroath route by contractors Morgan Est. The site of the structure is at Upper Victoria, just south of the existing route of the A92.

The location of the structure at the former Pitskelly Quarry would logically tie its function to the quarry and, at present, the consensus from respected archaeologists and engineers in the field is that it was built as a powder house to contain and prepare explosives for quarrying the freestone or, as local knowledge suggests, a smiddy for making, sharpening and storing quarrying tools. The structure contains a raised central stone hearth (which may or may not be contemporary) with chimney and it is thought that an external chimney component was knocked off the top of the domed roof during excavation. Local sources also suggest the ‘smiddy’ was built around 1820 when the quarry opened and a small railway from the quarry connected it to the main Dundee – Arbroath railway to transport the stone.

This is an unusual building of quite deliberate design and it is considered by the Historic Buildings Inspectorate to be of sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant statutory protection. It clearly has worth in terms of its industrial history and its architectural merit can be seen in its method of construction and paired down classical design. So far, in the limited time available to investigate the structure and its history, no other similar buildings have been identified or are known, making it a rare find and certainly of regional significance. A structure of comparable design, though not function, is the earlier 19th century Bone House at Laws Hill, listed at Category B.

In terms of documentary evidence, the structure is marked on a Pitskelly Estate map of 1842 (University of Dundee, Ref MS 57P/40) and on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 as a doocot, though there is insufficient evidence, such as nesting boxes or flight holes, to support the doocot theory. David Hunter of Blackness and Pitskelly built the railway to his quarry which was exhausted not long afterwards and became disused. In the early 1950s the nearby naval air station was demolished and the quarry backfilled with much of this material. The structure has remained buried and virtually intact until now. Archaeological and engineering reports state that the structure has survived well and that it is generally in good condition, though they acknowledge there may be issues regarding contamination. Nonetheless, further research is needed in order to fully understand the structure’s origins.

Given the realistic and welcome prospect that the A92 can be diverted to avoid the structure, Historic Scotland advocates the best option for the structure and for its future understanding is that it be retained in situ and consolidated. A conservation plan could detail the way forward but in the meantime a cordon or other protective measures could be considered. Relocating the structure would separate it from its context which, although not ideal, is better than total loss, should that be proposed. Reburying the structure could also be considered, leaving it intact for future debate though unappreciable in the immediate future.

Although Historic Scotland has no formal locus when dealing with an unlisted structure such as this, we have a duty to respond to any request to consider the merit of such a building for listing or scheduling. We do appreciate the delicate situation that has arisen due to the extent of the road works involved but can only say that as more comes continues to come to light about the building, the greater the case would seem for its retention.
There is a great deal of local support for the preservation of the structure (the Carnoustie and District Heritage Society have indicated they intend to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding) and there is also considerable will on the part of those more closely involved to enable the structure to remain as a roadside feature and symbol of local history. It would be entirely regrettable if, since coming to light after more than fifty years, the structure was now to be demolished.

Pauline Megson
Historic Buildings Inspector
Historic Scotland

11/6/04
 APPENDIX 2

RWM/JG/JSG    CR5.1/40

16 June 2004

Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Fao Mr Robin Evetts

Dear Sirs

STONE MASONRY BUILDING AT UPPER VICTORIA, CARNOUSTIE
ON THE SITE OF THE A92 UPGRADE PROJECT WORKS

I am in receipt of a letter of 11 June 2004 from Mrs Pauline Megson in connection with the above subject together with an accompanying paper on the subject.

As you may be aware the Council committee considered a report which had been prepared by the Director of Roads on the subject yesterday afternoon. However the committee elected to defer a final decision on the matter pending clarification on a number of matters.

In particular I have been instructed to seek clarification of your position on this matter given your most recent letter as set against a response which I had previously received from Mr Mark Watson by e-mail dated 29 April 2004 to an earlier letter which I had written to you on 28 April 2004 (I am enclosing both my letter and Mr Watson’s response for your convenience of reference). The committee is currently unclear exactly what Historic Scotland’s position is on this given earlier correspondence and the nature of correspondences which you have had via Mr Watson and the Council’s Conservation Officer, Mr Paul Mitchell, during April.

The Convener, Councillor Selfridge, intends to reconvene the committee next Tuesday 22 June 2004 and has therefore asked that I respectfully request clarification of your position prior to that date. I am sure you will readily appreciate that we are eager to progress matters in this regard as expeditiously as is now practicable.

If you have any further queries please contact Jeff Green, Depute Director, on 01307 473289.

Yours faithfully

R W McNeil
Director of Roads

Encs

c.c. Cllr D Selfridge
     P Mitchell, Conservation Officer
Dear Mr Green

Stone Structure at Upper Victoria, Carnoustie, on A92

I refer to your letter dated 16 June and our telephone conversation today. As you know, I have been asked to deal with the matter in the absence of Mark Watson on study leave, and Pauline Megson on annual leave. Thank you for briefing me on the background to the case.

I'm sorry that misunderstanding has arisen in relation to Historic Scotland's response to the discovery of the small domed building, buried in the former Pitskelly quarry. I summarize the sequence of events and views expressed by my colleagues as follows:

1. Mark Watson e-mailed you on 30 April 2004 stating that HS has no locus in the matter because the A92 roadworks are a local authority responsibility [as opposed to a Scottish Executive scheme], and the structure is not a Scheduled Monument. He indicated that Aberdeenshire Archaeological Service acting on behalf of Angus Council should be consulted.

A further reason why HS has no locus is because the structure is not a Listed Building. Mr Watson did not say this, but I assume you were already aware of its non-listed status.

2. I understand my Scheduled Monument colleagues were consulted by Morgan=est in May to determine whether the structure was suitable for Scheduling. It was concluded that it was not eligible for such a designation.

3. Pauline Megson wrote to you on 11 June following your telephone conversation with her. She stated that the structure appeared to have been used in connection with the quarry, perhaps as a powder store or smiddy, although maps suggested a dovecote. She also stated that the Historic Buildings Inspectorate considered the building to be of sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant listing should it be retained, and that it would favour its retention in situ. Failing that, relocation would be regarded as better than total loss, as would re-burying the structure. She concluded by stating that HS has no formal locus, and that there was interest expressed in retaining the structure by the Carnoustie District Heritage Society and 'those more closely involved' [presumably from Angus Council or the contractors side].
Conclusion

As I read it, there is no ambiguity in HS's responses. 1 and 2 clearly state that HS has no locus, and that the structure is not regarded as suitable for Scheduling. 3 examines some of the structure's history, underlines its importance and indicates that it is regarded as of listable quality. It also states again that HS has no formal locus. I would add that the views expressed in 3 are of an informal nature and have no statutory significance.

The decision on the future of the structure is entirely a matter for Angus Council. HS has no locus, and is aware that the undoubted architectural and historic importance has to be weighed against health and safety, delay, practical, and cost implications. Finally, I can state that HS has no intention of listing the structure at this stage, given the current situation.

I hope this makes HS's position clear, and will enable the Council to make a firm decision at its meeting on Tuesday 22 June.

Please do not hesitate to contact me further should you deem it necessary.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robin D A Evetts

Historic Buildings Inspectorate
Dear Sirs

**A92 PROJECT – UPPER VICTORIA JUNCTION**

**RECENTLY UNEARTHED STONE MASONRY BUILDING**

Thank you for your letter of 14 June 2004 in connection with the above together with an enclosure from Historic Scotland. I have also received the enclosure direct from Historic Scotland under cover of a letter from Ms Pauline Megson.

As you may be aware the subject of the unearthed building was considered by Council committee yesterday afternoon. The committee deferred a final decision on the structure at that time pending the assembly of further information to provide a more comprehensive picture. Among the information which I have been asked to gather are the following in respect of yourselves:-

(i) Can you confirm that the Upper Victoria link road (side road) can be realigned to enable retention of the structure in its current location at no additional cost to Angus Council?

(ii) I understand from your letter of 14 June 2004 that you have now completed the purchase of the additional land that is required to facilitate the above. Can you also confirm that this land will be conveyed to Angus Council at nil cost? (Clearly the land would require in due course to vest with the Council as Roads Authority). Can you also clarify what, if any, ramifications there are for any other land which has already been acquired by the Council for the purposes of the road in this vicinity?

(iii) In considering options for dealing with the structure the Council also requires to consider, should it be decided to retain the building in its current location, the means and associated costs of both consolidating/protecting the structure and providing appropriate access to it. Initial evaluation would indicate minimum budget costs of such work being of the order of £80K or thereby. Would you be prepared to make a financial contribution to such costs? If so would you please give an indication of the level of such contribution?
You will appreciate that the Council is eager to progress this matter as expeditiously as is practicable, therefore I would appreciate your prompt response to this enquiry. The Convener, Councillor Selfridge, is intending to reconvene a further meeting of the committee next Tuesday 22 June 2004 so I would be appreciative of your response prior to that.

If you have any further queries please contact Mr Jeff Green on 01307 473289.

Yours faithfully

R W McNeil
Director of Roads

c.c. Cllr D Selfridge
     J Reid
CLAYMORE ROADS LTD LETTER OF RESPONSE
(IF AVAILABLE OR TO BE TABLED)