

Support shown for Royal High development



According to the architects leading the redevelopment plans for the Royal High School, members of the public have expressed clear support for proposals to turn Edinburgh's old Royal High School into a world-class hotel following a two day public consultation earlier this month which attracted more than 580 people.

Over half of these visitors completed a feedback questionnaire which revealed that 79% of them were generally in favour of the redevelopment proposals, with over 75% agreeing that a world-class hotel would be an appropriate use for the well-known Edinburgh landmark. For many people, this was the first access they have had to the former boys' school, with a large number of respondents expressing concern about the deterioration of the main building.

If you have not yet had your say then you still have time as there is an online survey which you can access [here](#) by 28 February when final figures will be compiled.

There will then be an exhibition of the further developed proposals on 5 and 6 March 2015 from 10am – 7pm at the old Royal High School prior to an application being submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council for planning consent.

Speaking on behalf of the project team, David Orr of the Urbanist Group, says they were pleased with the public turn out and the feedback through the questionnaires. "It was good to see so many people taking the time to look at our initial proposals and then discuss these with members of the project team. We are delighted that an overwhelming majority of people support the proposals and we are taking on board all

comments as we go through the design process. We look forward to presenting our developed proposals during a second exhibition at the old Royal High School on the 5 and 6 March.”

The old Royal High School on Regent Road was designed by architect Thomas Hamilton, as a new school to the east of Calton Jail, and was completed in 1829. Hamilton’s building is one of the best examples of Greek Revival architecture.

One of the supporters of the hotel proposals is former Royal High School pupil, David Ingram, who is keen that the building is fully restored and opened to the public for the first time. “Something has to happen to this building. I personally love the proposals for the gallery reception in the old assembly hall where we had prayers every morning and I am pleased that the original rooms will be restored as public spaces such as library lounges and bars.”

An even greater majority of respondents, 83%, supported the removal of later ancillary buildings on the site. In particular over 80% of people liked the idea of improvements to the Regent Road area and the prospect of a new management plan for improving the Calton Hill amenities.

Designed by Gareth Hoskins Architects, the new buildings will restore a more generous view from Waterloo Place of the only accessible route to Calton Hill as well as the views to the north façade of the centrepiece building, which has been hidden or partially obscured by later buildings. A new public space is planned at the western end, revealing Hamilton’s original retaining wall, and to the east a tower which has been hidden since 1884.