

# Music school the preferred option for the old Royal High

Over 81% of those asked favour the scheme to turn the old Royal High School into a music school over a hotel development.

The Royal High School Preservation Trust (RHSPT), who are behind the music school proposals for the empty building on Calton Hill, have reported the findings from an Ipsos MORI poll today.



William Gray Muir of RHSPT and Dr Ken Taylor Headteacher of St Mary's Music School

The independent survey asked over 500 residents to compare the two rival schemes, one for a music school and one for a luxury hotel. Only 10% said they preferred the international hotel.

The RHSPT have proposed that the school is redeveloped in a multi-million pound overhaul which would then allow St Mary's Music School to move in. St Mary's has outgrown its current premises and are anxious to find a new home on the hill. The conversion is fully funded, the planning consent granted but there is an alternative proposal which is causing a delay.

The Ipsos MORI investigation provides the clearest feedback of what the public really think about the benefits and drawbacks of both schemes. Two thirds of those asked said that they liked the idea that the music school would nurture Scottish talent and over a third thought it would improve Edinburgh's reputation.

They also commented on the unattractive design of the proposed plans to convert the Thomas Hamilton building into a hotel, and queried whether the capital actually needs another hotel.

Two thirds of those asked did not favour the hotel proposal.

[RHS Preservation Trust and the Perfect Harmony Campaign](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

William Gray Muir is the Chairman of RHSPT, which commissioned the survey. Set up in 2015 to conserve and protect the former Royal High School building by finding an appropriate and sustainable public use, the Trust launched the Perfect Harmony campaign last month to highlight the benefits of moving St Mary's Music School to the Old Royal High.

***[tweet\_box design="default"]The RHSPT Perfect Harmony campaign holds its first musical rally at the Canongate Kirk on 22 June 2017 at an event open to the public.[/tweet\_box]***

He said: "The survey shows overwhelming support for our plans for a national music school at the Old Royal High School.

"We thought it important to take an objective reading of public opinion using the strict social research methodologies favoured by government. For that reason we asked Ipsos MORI to present both our proposals and those for the hotel along with both sets of designs as part of face-to-face home-based interviews. So this is a survey people can trust.

"The vast majority of the people of Edinburgh do not want another hotel at this site and there is little enthusiasm for the perceived benefits. Instead they see the exciting opportunities that a national music school within the prestigious and historic surroundings of one of our most important buildings would bring in terms of nurturing young talent and cultural heritage.



“The Old Royal High is our finest example of democratic architecture. It was built for public use and our proposals would ensure that it stays that way.”

The Perfect Harmony campaign will run until a final decision is made on the future of the rival hotel development, which has already been refused planning permission by the City of Edinburgh Council. The developers now have two sets of plans on the table, the most recent of which received over 3,100 objections when made public earlier this year.



The plans to establish Scotland’s national music school at the site, including 280-seat concert hall and public garden, have received both planning and listed building consent but the legal position is that the hotel developers have a lease with the City of Edinburgh Council. At the present time until that lease falls RHSPT cannot yet bring their plans into reality.

***Perfect Harmony Music Rally: Canongate Kirk, Thursday June 22, 2017. Time: 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Close 8.30pm. Free to attend [www.rhspt.org](http://www.rhspt.org)***

***Perfect Harmony***

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