

Edinburgh architecture lecturer supports saving Meadowbank grandstand

Meadowbank grandstand is worth saving for its architecture

It is the considered view of Dr. Dimitris Theodossopoulos, a lecturer in Architectural Technology at the Edinburgh College of Art that the grandstand at Meadowbank should be saved on architectural grounds.



Edinburgh Council plans to demolish and rebuild the stadium alongside some housing which will help pay for the new sports facility. But Dr Theodossopoulos says the 7,500-capacity grandstand is a hugely significant building and should be retained.

He said : “The architectural beauty of Meadowbank is mainly due to its grandstand. Get rid of that and the site it loses its character.

“A similar cantilever grandstand in Galashiels has been granted Grade A listed building status. So too should the Meadowbank grandstand.

"Meadowbank is one of the last major examples of design carried out by the City Council architects. It can be included in the contemporary examples of creative attitude by local authorities all over Britain, like London's Royal Festival Hall.

"The Stadium uses an interesting dynamic system of concrete beams and columns to form the main skeleton, which is clearly and elegantly expressed. I find the way the steel members tie the grandstand along the London Road elevation an interesting feature, reminiscent of early hi-tech sports architecture like P. L. Nervi's Palazzetto dello Sport in Rome for the 1960 Olympics. The result is a rhythmical composition which with an improved landscape and lighting scheme can become more prominent.

"I am aware of the problems the council has faced in maintaining the Stadium but I believe the architectural and cultural prominence of the site can be matched to its significance as a vital sports facility for the community and therefore a carefully drafted development masterplan can provide the required value for all of East Edinburgh.

"I have always been in favour of the architectural prominence of the current front of the stadium along London Road. Even though it was not one for the most advanced designs of its period, its later cultural significance and presence meant there is a welcome modernist break in the area. This can be viewed as reminiscent of a wider range of architectural periods that enhances the fact that Edinburgh has been an active city across all of its recent history, not just the established late Georgian/ Victorian aspect. Something of similar prominence needs to be re-established with the architecture of the centre and its clear frontage along London Road.

"I therefore register my strong objection to the scheme and the demolition of the Stadium."

Campaigners have of course welcomed his views. Save Meadowbank spokesperson Linda Furley commented: "With support for the Council's plans at less than 14%, why can't the Council simply admit it made a mistake and propose a reversal of the decision to demolish Meadowbank?"

"Councillors must now look again at this controversial development and reflect on the sheer strength of opposition there is to it."

Edinburgh Council's planning committee will decide on the two planning applications for the Meadowbank site when it meets on 29 June. One relates to the stadium and the other to the wider site.