

Uncertain times for Tron funding

Today at the Finance and Resources Committee, The City of Edinburgh Council will be asked for over £500,000 to be set aside from its Capital budget to fund the restoration of The Tron. But it looks as though Covid-19 will be used as the main excuse not to offer the funding.

The council is unwilling to commit the sum, despite the fact that this would unlock other funding to restore the building. The coalition says it prefers not to commit any capital funds to the building for now 'due to significant unbudgeted capital pressures'.

Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH) has occupied the Tron on the Royal Mile on a short term lease since June 2018. In a bid to save the building, they have staged an exhibition there to try and generate some income, but also importantly to keep it occupied. The Director of EWH, Christina Sinclair, has submitted an explanation of their proposals for a 'creative and viable solution for the building'. She says that their plan 'is the most cost effective and efficient way of solving a major conservation challenge for the city'. But the fact that it comes with a heavy price tag at a point where the council will be setting its budget in February 2021 in very

difficult financial circumstances, may make this impossible. EWH have asked for any future lease to set the rent at £1,000 a year, to allow them to spend the money on restoring the building. The last passing commercial rent for the Tron was £45,000.

In March 2020 EWH ended the lease with an annual rent of £20,000 – just ahead of the lockdown.

They have used the building to house a heritage exhibition over the past two years, but are now asking that the council lets the building to them for £1,000 a year along with substantial capital funding. The council is asked to spend £560,000 which is 10% of the capital costs required. This would unlock funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

During the past two years the council spent £180,000 on repairing the roof which was damaged in a storm. Presumably at least an element of this was an insurance claim.

In 2018 when the council [decided to award the new lease to EWH](#), the then Director of EWH, Adam Wilkinson, said: 'This is an important moment for conservation in Edinburgh and I would like to thank the city's leadership for the trust they have placed in us. The Tron is a marvellous example of Scottish 17th century architecture, but its future has been uncertain for many years. This is an opportunity to tell the story of Edinburgh's World Heritage Site to residents and visitors alike, and is a first step towards creating a sustainable future for a building which is currently at risk.'

It appears that for the time being the future of the Tron may remain at risk.

This is the deputation from EWH:




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The Finance and Resources Committee will take place on Thursday morning from 10.00am. You can watch the live or recorded webcast of the meeting [here](#).