

Former Royal High School is on the open market

The former Royal High School has lain empty for over half a century, been the subject of a thwarted bid to create a six star hotel amid a planning wrangle which lasted for almost five of those years.

A decision by the council's Finance and Resources Committee in January to put the building on the open market is now being implemented and enquiries are invited.

Any proposals must take into account conclusions drawn by Scottish Ministers following the public inquiry.

The main planning applications proposed a hotel use which would ensure "repair, reinstatement and protection for the principal listed building, Hamilton's masterpiece of Greek revival architecture for the Athens of the North", and so contribute to the economy..

But the Scottish Ministers considered that the work to revamp the building inside and out would not preserve the listed building or its setting. They also considered that the character and appearance of the Edinburgh New Town Conservation Area would be "neither preserved nor enhanced".

The hotel developer had proposed building two wings on the main building which were a major obstacle in granting permission for the hotel. The opposing permission for the Royal High School Preservation Trust to turn the building into

a music school was not based on a legal right to occupy the building, and the council decided to return to the open market for new proposals.

Councillor Rob Munn, Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, said: “This an important step forward for the future of this iconic site and means we can identify the best value option for the city and our residents in the future. We know there are a number of interested parties and having it back on the market allows them to submit any development proposals.”

Councillor Joan Griffiths, Vice Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, added: “There was unanimous agreement earlier in the year to remarket the old Royal High School and I look forward to seeing the options presented to us at a future committee which could occupy this very important building, so prominent in our World Heritage site.”



The Royal High School. Edinburgh. Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com