

Royal High to be leased to music school

As anticipated in the papers published for the council's Finance & Resources committee last week, the council has agreed on Thursday to lease the former Royal High building to the Royal High School Preservation Trust.

The building has been empty for more than half a century and has recently been the subject of planning appeal. A previous developer wanted to turn the building into a luxury hotel, but did not get the required planning permission to allow that to proceed.

RHSPT already hold planning permission for the building, but until now had no legal right to occupy it. The property was placed on the open market in the summer and will now be offered to RHSPT on a long lease in return for an initial premium of £1.5 million.

The music school bid is funded by £45 million from the Dunard Fund and a further endowment of £10 million.

Councillor Rob Munn, Finance and Resources Convener, said: "It's great news that this iconic building, set in the heart of our World Heritage Site, will now be restored and put to good use again, making it accessible for many generations to come.

"I'm delighted committee approved this proposal today as I'm confident it meets our criteria as the RHSPT will ensure a sustainable long term future for the former school while at the same time committing to the high architecture standards required for future restoration of the building to make sure it is in-keeping with our World Heritage Site."

Councillor Joan Griffiths, Finance and Resources Vice-Convener, said: "This is great news for people in Edinburgh as when we finalise the lease, we'll explore partnership opportunities with the RHSPT so we can share knowledge and open up opportunities for our pupils as well as other musicians, choirs and orchestras from throughout the city to make good use of this much loved building and the world class facilities the trust is planning to provide."