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29th June 2020

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

RE: Petition P-05-949. Save Cowbridge Old Girls' School from Demolition

Thank you for your correspondence of the 22nd of June regarding the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism's response to the Petition Committee's request for an independent peer review into the decision not to list the Old Girls' School in Cowbridge. The response is similar to those received by Jane Hutt AM and Dr Tudur Davies following similar requests for an independent review.

The Deputy Minister states in his response to the Petitions Committee that he is 'satisfied that the assessments that I have received from my officials and Dr Hayman are unbiased and have been carried out to a highly professional standard'. In correspondence with Dr Tudur Davies he stated specifically that he believes the assessment undertaken by Dr Hayman was undertaken with 'utmost professionalism, having recently been appointed to undertake impartial listing assessments for Cadw'. Whilst we do not contest Dr Hayman's qualifications and capability in assessing the suitability of buildings for listing, we question whether he can indeed be considered objective, free of bias (whether conscious or subconscious) or 'independent' when reviewing decisions made by his own colleagues at Cadw. Dr Hayman's publicly available CV is evidence of a longstanding history of employment by Cadw (since 1996). Given this long standing and close working relationship with Cadw employees [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] we have concerns relating to potential bias within Dr Hayman's assessment. Instead of being a balanced critique of the evidence put forward by Mr Scourfield and Ms Alfrey, as would be the normal format of an independent assessment, Dr Hayman's report instead is put forward in such a way that its presents itself as justification for Ms Alfrey's assessment of the school.

Additionally, with specific relevance to this case, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We have sought clarification from the Deputy Minister about the procurement procedure that was undertaken in this case, however, we have yet to receive confirmation of this and whether conflicts were declared by Dr Hayman. Regardless of the procurement route, it is clear in both the Welsh Government conditions for the supply of services and the terms for public appointment that conflicts must be declared.

It is also disappointing that the Deputy Minister has disregarded the views of 20 senior academics and specialists in the fields of history, architecture and buildings archaeology. This group of highly regarded individual had written to the Deputy Minister in support of listing the Old Girls' School in Cowbridge. With every due respect to Ms Alfrey and Dr Hayman, their experience is lacking in

comparison with the aforementioned specialists whom have specific expertise in the history of education and architecture of school buildings in Britain.

Furthermore, the latest correspondence provided by the Deputy Minister pays no regard to the recent report written by Davies and Scourfield (2020), which addressed specific concerns raised by Ms Alfrey and Dr Hayman's more recent assessments of the school. This report provides new research that establishes that the original school buildings survives to a higher degree than previously appreciated and demonstrates that the school meets the criteria for listing based on Cadw's four forms of heritage value outlined in Cadw's Conservation Principles (2011). This research deserves recognition and consideration by a suitable heritage professional to assess its contribution to the case for listing the Old Girls' School in Cowbridge.

Despite the Deputy Minister's response, we maintain that a peer review by either Historic England or Historic Scotland would facilitate transparency and alleviate public concern relating to the independent nature of the listing decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Pedersen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

Sara Pedersen
SAVE Cowbridge Girls' School Campaign Group