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Your Ref: **11/01590/LBC**  
Subject: **Demolition of listed building**  
**Seafield House**  
**Arrol Park**  
**Ayr**  
**KA7 4DP**  
Date: **23-Jan-12**

Our Ref: **1331**

The Trust has examined this application by NHS Ayrshire & Arran for the above and wishes to comment as follows:

The Trust objects to the demolition of this B-listed building which has been on the Buildings at Risk Register since 2009. The house is of course well known as the former home of the engineer Sir William Arrol, having been built for him in 1888. Arrol had a reputation for being ingenious and energetic, and his company was responsible for building engineering and architectural icons such as the Forth Rail Bridge (1890), the replacement Tay Rail Bridge (1887), the Titan Crane in Clydebank, Tower Bridge in London (1894) and the Bankside Power Station in London, which now forms the Tate Modern Art Gallery.

Scottish Historic Environment Policy states that:

'Where the application proposes the demolition of a listed building, applicants will be expected to provide evidence to show that:

- a. the building is not of special interest; or
- b. the building is incapable of repair; or
- c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community; or
- d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.'

In this case the applicants appear to be using point 'd' to justify demolition. Section 7.0 of the Scott Wilson Fire Damage Report suggests that as the cost of retaining the building exceeds the cost of demolition and rebuild, the site should be cleared. This is hardly surprising in the case of a listed building which has been vacant for several years. It is likely to be the case for almost every historic building in Scotland and totally ignores the intrinsic value of a listed building of architectural and historic interest, and the added value that listed and historic buildings add to a redevelopment project.

The reports submitted appear to consider the restoration of the building only as residential accommodation and do not allow for a more creative reuse of the site. The building sits within extensive grounds which offer a significant opportunity for a creative enabling development which could cross-fund restoration of the listed building.

The Trust would suggest that a more imaginative approach to this site is needed, perhaps involving a building preservation trust or similar organisation, which may be



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able to unlock grant funding to assist the development.

In addition, the Trust notes that no application has been made for the redevelopment of the site. Applications for demolition of listed buildings should not be considered in isolation from proposals for the after use of the site. It is therefore best practise to consider the application for demolition in conjunction with an application for redevelopment, or to use planning conditions to ensure that premature demolition does not leave an empty gap site long before rebuilding or landscaping starts. The building is a local landmark and the Trust would urge the local authority to use its powers, should demolition be approved, to avoid an ugly gap site in this prominent location.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gemma Wild'.

Gemma Wild  
Technical Officer (Conservation and Design)

**To** Austin Cooke, Planner, South Ayrshire Council  
**cc** Historic Scotland, AHSS, Kyle & Carrick Civic Society,  
SAVE Britain's Heritage

