

TORBAY CIVIC SOCIETY

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

Chairman - Councillor John THOMAS.

(verbal 3 minutes)

Good morning everyone.

As Chairman of a local Civic Society it is unusual for me to write in support of a developer. However, the Torquay Harbourside project which includes restoration of the Pavilion, is seen as so important to Torquay and to Torbay Civic Society that we have on no less than three occasions gone public to state that without any plan "B" in place, we believe the Pavilion could well be lost. The Pavilion is already facing its third season of closure, and restoration is now wholly dependent upon the current project going ahead.

When the Council closed the Pavilion during the 1970's, a small group of residents "The Friends of the Pavilion" were formed, which later became Torbay Civic Society. I was a founder member of both groups. Having helped save the Pavilion once - a Listed Building, its closure again merely proves Torbay Council's difficulty in establishing a permanent and sustainable use for this building, even though over the years, it has been granted permission for a number of uses.

My Society members have in the last two years been polled twice, in the stark realisation that Cary Green might have to be sacrificed, in order that the Pavilion can be saved. A restored Pavilion with a permanent use - public concourse to the hotel, cafes, a restaurant, spas and other public areas, as well being the only access to hotel guests, means EVERYONE gains.

By supporting the Mayor in his refusal to grant a covenant on Cary Green, we hope that the Hotel and apartment development and the £2-3 million spend in order to restore the Pavilion would go forward quite quickly.

To those who suggest that Cary Green is a much loved and much used public space and as someone that regularly visits the nearby bookshop on the site, I would refute that. Cary Green was used for parking a long time ago and with the development of a modern day concrete water feature and then a zigzag, the so called park now has little historic features of significance. The Nicholas James Group have already given your planners an undertaking that "special events" would be allowed on Cary Green at certain times of the year, and there is also agreement that the new landscaping will bring new seating, trees and walkways and that there will be no white marking across the vehicle areas. In all, the area could become an added feature or additional asset to residents and visitors alike.

Ladies and gentlemen - please do not be swayed by the emotion of the petitioners, they do NOT represent any sort of majority of local residents, yet should this project stall again, the likelihood is that you will leave your town with another decaying eyesore for many years to come.

Thank you. Ian L Handford