

INSPECTORS REPORT INTO THE
LISTED PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR THE DEMOLITION OF KINMEL HALL
30TH MAY 1978

I am directed by the Secretary Of State to say that he has considered the report of his inspector Mr H M Cross, ARIBA who held a public local inquiry at the Council Offices, Colwyn Bay, into your clients application for listed planning consent to demolish Kinmel Hall, Kinmel Bay, Abergele (except for the stable block). The application was referred to the secretary of state in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4 of schedule 11 of the town and country Planning Act 1971

'I am of the opinion that Kinmel Hall is a building of Architectural merit which was, prior to the fire, capable of a very substantial life. Given renovation and possibly conversion the Hall would still have a lengthy useful life, the most likely uses being educational, institutional or conversion into good quality multiple living units. The Chapel and adjacent service wings however are heavily damaged and I consider that consent for demolition of this part of the building, if sought, could not reasonably be refused: such partial demolition would not unduly detract from the major architectural features of the hall.

I accept the view advanced at the inquiry that full restoration of the original materials and details is probably impracticable. To repair and seal the building without use would appear to defer the decision to refurbish or demolish. I am not of the opinion that the substantial cost of such a proposal can reasonably be expected to be forthcoming whether from public or private funds. A further possibility is that of creating a romantic ruin bearing in mind the location in the middle of a private estate, also the initial cost and continued upkeep appears to me to have little merit.

The renovation and future use of the Hall, assuming the demolition of the Chapel and adjacent service wing, would appear to have the best chance of success along the lines of the planning authority's scheme 4, estimated to cost £577,000. This involves the most detailed survey and estimate available, and I consider that it is reasonable to accept the cost of such works to be between £500,000 and £600,000, for a use similar to that of the former school. An improved financial balance between costs and benefits could possibly be achieved over a comprehensive scheme, including the undamaged stable block and service wing, and I consider it reasonable to assess possibilities on that basis.

A hotel/conference centre use would not involve extensive alterations in my opinion.

For a prospective purchaser to acquire the property for such a use a considerable additional capital cost would be involved, including purchase costs, financing, professional fees etc.

However I am not convinced that such a purchaser cannot be found, given that there is wide advertisement over a period of time, with reasonable encouragement in the shape of a feasibility study.

Alternatively there is the possibility of renovation and conversion into living units, possibly as holiday homes. The possible conversion of the hall into dwelling units to sell for £25,000 to £35,000 each as discussed for an estimated return of some £500,000 to £700,000. The cost of such a conversion scheme is however not known.