

**P-05-949 SAVE COWBRIDGE OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION,  
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 02.11.21**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

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

Thank you for forwarding the response from the new Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport. It is disappointing that, once again, there is a refusal to seek an independent peer review of the listing decision. The decision not to list the school is not just contested by our campaign group but the most senior and well-respected heritage professionals in this field alongside many national heritage groups. Signatories of the petition were from every part of Wales – this is a national concern, not a local one.

We have previously shared information that raises questions regarding the appointment of the internal 'independent' reviewer and the failure to disclose potential conflicts of interest that is standard practice when taking on a public role within Welsh Government. Again, we wish to highlight that an immediate family member of the independent assessor appointed by (and employed by) Cadw works in partnership with the developer seeking demolition and whilst we do not question the assessor's integrity, we question why this was not raised on the '*Political Activity and Conflict of Interest Form*'. The wording of this form and the scenarios detailed directly apply in this situation and at no point has any valid reasoning been provided as to why this conflict was overlooked, or more importantly not declared. This alone requires further scrutiny.

Given the above, failure to seek a truly independent peer review (as would be normal procedure in other nations of the UK) goes against the Seven Principles of Public Life. As laid out in detail in previous comments, there has been a lack of accountability and a failure of openness and objectivity in the decision-making process and more specifically, providing reasoning as to why an independent peer review will not be granted. It is not clear what is to be lost by allowing a review of the decision or why the opinions of those with greater expertise in this field are not given any regard.

Under the previous Petitions Committee an agreed action was that the petition be put forward for debate in the autumn term (minutes of May and July 2020), however, due to Covid this did not occur. We ask that you put the petition forward for debate (at the time of submission it reached the required 5,000 signatures) so that the Members of the Senedd who have supported our campaign can question and scrutinise the Deputy Minister in the Chamber. The petition was signed from constituents in every part of Wales. Failure to hold the Welsh Government to account in this situation undermines the confidence of those across Wales in the Government's ability to act as custodians of our heritage.

Yours sincerely,

*Sara Pedersen*

Sara Pedersen

SAVE Cowbridge Girls' School Campaign Group