

Dr Julian Smart's reaction to local area planning committee meeting decision 2023-03-23

Short form (110 words):

We are disappointed: great harm to Berwick's heritage, a conservation area and enjoyment of the Town Walls has been permitted on the false pretext of saving the old Grammar School. A rare WWI Army hut and an even rarer 1908 Speirs classroom are now likely to be demolished, a move condemned by the Victorian and 20th Century Societies and Historic Buildings and Places.

It should be of great concern that our heritage, vital to tourism, is so vulnerable. The views of local residents and those of respected heritage organisations have been pushed aside. We shall, however, continue to raise awareness of what Berwick and its visitors are about to lose.

Long form (225 words):

We are disappointed: great harm to Berwick's heritage, a conservation area and enjoyment of the Town Walls has been permitted on the pretext of saving the old Grammar School. As we have always maintained, the over-large new builds proposed for the back yard are unrelated to preserving the main building and completely unnecessary when two rare, century-old buildings could be refurbished and reused, preserving the conservation area in the process.

In future, those walking the newly signposted England Coast Path along the Town Walls may be surprised to find that what was a beautiful, unspoilt view of a historic townscape has been marred by a brash new development, motivated principally by the need to store canoes. What they may not know is that to build them, a rare WWI Army hut and an even rarer 1908 Speirs classroom will have been demolished, a move condemned by the Victorian Society, the 20th Century Society, and Historic Buildings and Places.

It should be of great concern to all who live in or visit Berwick that our heritage, so vital to tourism, is highly vulnerable to the whims of developers. The views of concerned local residents and those of respected heritage organisations have been pushed aside, and our alternative proposal ignored. We shall, however, continue to raise awareness of what Berwick and its visitors are about to lose.