

The reasons outlined below are parallel submissions in respect of both **12/02158/LIB** and **12/02148/PP**, which sought consent to change the tower roofcoverings to lead, and both of which were rejected.

1. The comments raised by Historic Scotland in their consultee response dated 29 October 2012 refer to lead possibly being an acceptable replacement for the Rosemary tiles, 'if there are good reasons for proposing a change'. Although they go on to suggest that copper may be preferred over lead, the principle of using lead is certainly not ruled out or considered unacceptable under any circumstance.

This advice is similar (though not identical) to the Historic Scotland Pre-App advice received via the OLI Planning Officer on 27 January 2012.

CP Architects' letter to A&BC dated 24 September 2012 submitting the applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent did point out that:

'We would confirm our client's advice that the tower roofs are, due to their elevation, exposed to high winds and therefore constantly losing tiles in stormy weather, leading to expense in accessing these areas, and risk of decay to the building fabric.'

Thus, we consider that fair notice was given that there were, indeed, good technical reasons for proposing a change of covering. Under these circumstances, we would expect to have at least been afforded the opportunity to expand our client's submission if the council were minded to reject the applications outright. As it transpired, the opportunity to even discuss copper as a possible alternative was not made available. We therefore consider that the council jumped the gun in issuing rejection notices without any further dialogue.

2. The Historic Scotland Listing Notice ref 38853 (North Pier and Corran Esplanade, Columba Hotel) refers to the distinctive form of the tower roofs but does not highlight their finish as being of special architectural or historic interest. We would suggest that the form of the towers would lend itself to lead coverings with rolls, without detracting from the character of the building as a whole.

- Refer HS Listing Notice Ref 38853 attached.

3. A&BC Structure Plan 2002, policy STRAT DC9 specifically calls for the 'Protection, conservation, enhancement and positive management of the historic environment...'

Our client has made clear that, since adding the Columba Hotel to his portfolio, he has experienced extensive problems with the clay tiles being blown from the tower roofs during high winds, causing expense and damage to the fabric of the building. He is anxious to consolidate the building and secure it's long term future through an appropriate maintenance regime. He is convinced that the elevation of the towers, coupled with their distinctive circular form and high exposure means that the clay tiles will inevitably continue to cause these problems, and that the best means of protecting the building is to introduce an appropriate sheet covering in their place.

It is therefore our belief that the proposals are consistent with the obligations of policy STRAT DC9 in terms of responsible stewardship.

4. The introduction of lead to the tower roofs would be consistent with its use as a roofcovering on other parts of the existing building. Both the older (grey granite) part and the red sandstone part (which includes the towers) feature extensive areas of lead in flat roofs, and it is our opinion that the towers would readily relate to those elements already covered with lead and would not look out of place.

- Refer to photograph 1 attached.

5. The use of lead on the towers at the Columba Hotel would also be typical of the treatment used on numerous similar building types elsewhere in Argyll. Three examples are:

- Royal Hotel, Campbeltown (Category C; HS listing notice ref 43123)
- Argyll St/John St, Dunoon
- Barochan Place, Campbeltown (Category B; HS listing notice ref 43051)

- Refer to photographs 2, 3 and 4 attached.

The Campbeltown examples (there are others) are of similar form and age to the Columba. Although featured here alongside slate roofs, it is clear that the lead coverings sit comfortably against the red sandstone, and are well suited to the bell-cast tower profile. The lead bottles would be designed similar to these examples and, given that the eaves of the towers are almost 17m above footpath level, would have minimal visual impact.

As a material, we consider the use of lead in the manner proposed to be both appropriate and tasteful for a building of this character and age. The same cannot be said for several other interventions which have been imposed on the building in the past.

6. A&BC Structure Plan Policy STRAT DC9, A&BC Local Plan Policy LP ENV 13(a), Scottish Historic Environment Policy 2011 and A&B Sustainable Design Guidance 3 all seek to resist inappropriate development and to ensure the protection and preservation of listed buildings.

We consider that our client has assessed his options in a responsible manner and made the decision to opt for lead based on sound technical reasons, having regard also to the wider implications of managing an asset such as this Category B listed building.

Far from being contrary to the requirements of the policies listed above, we believe that the proposals represent the optimum solution to a demanding situation, in that the need to maintain the asset is balanced with the use of sympathetic and appropriate materials which will better equip this building to resist the effects of a harsh marine environment for many decades to come.