

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Benson Buildings

ENVIRONMENTAL  
AFFAIRS

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3003

July 1989

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
18.7.89.							
PREM 19/2659							

File

PRIME MINISTER (2)

**WESLEY'S CHAPEL AND THE BENSON BUILDING**

Earlier this month, Dominic mentioned the latest position on the Benson building. At that stage, the compromise proposal (English Heritage had suggested that Wesley's Chapel could use the Benson Building by creating extra space through the installation of a mansard roof) had come to nought. The Chapel concluded the cost/space ratio would not work for them.

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I have now heard that English Heritage will be instructing the London Borough of Islington to turn down the Chapel's application for listed building consent for the Benson Building (ie to knock it down). Once Islington have responded, it will be open to the Chapel to appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment against the decision.

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Dominic has spoken to Reverend Hume who has said that he appreciates that you have done all you can and that there is nothing further that you can do. He intends to contact DOE to find out about the possibility of appealing against the decision.

CBS

Caroline Slocock  
18 July 1989

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Dominic Morris Esq  
Private Secretary to  
The Prime Minister  
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My ref:

Your ref:

14 July 1989

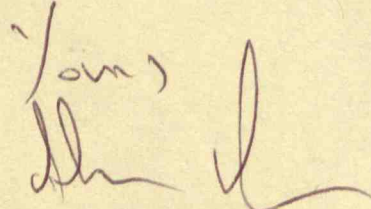
Dear Dominic,

**BENSON BUILDING**

At their meeting on 7 July the London Advisory Committee recommended that the LB of Islington be directed to refuse listed building consent for the Benson Building, although the Council would be given the opportunity to discuss the matter if they so wished. HBMC will consider their LAC's recommendation on 19 July and I will let you know what they decide. (We do not expect them to disagree with the LAC's recommendation).

The applicant's legal position is as follows:-

- (i) An applicant may appeal against non-determination of an application after eight weeks (or such longer time as may be agreed with the local planning authority) of the lodging of the application. The appeal should be lodged within 6 months of the end of the 8 week (extended) period.
- (ii) If HBMC direct Islington Council to refuse the application and they are unwilling to accept the direction, Islington can formally notify the Secretary of State of the application. It would then be open to the Secretary of State to require the application to be referred to him for decision. If reference to the Secretary of State was not required, HBMC's direction would stand and Islington would be obliged to notify the applicant accordingly.
- (iii) If Islington accept a direction from HBMC to refuse the application and formally do so, it is again open to the applicant to appeal to the Secretary of State.
- (iv) In addition to the procedure outlined in (iii) above it is also open to the Secretary of State at any time to direct that any application be referred to him instead of being dealt with by a local planning authority. He would need to have clearly justifiable grounds for doing so.

  
A D RING  
Private Secretary



NBPM

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My ref:

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3 July 1989

Dear Dominic,

**BENSON BUILDING**

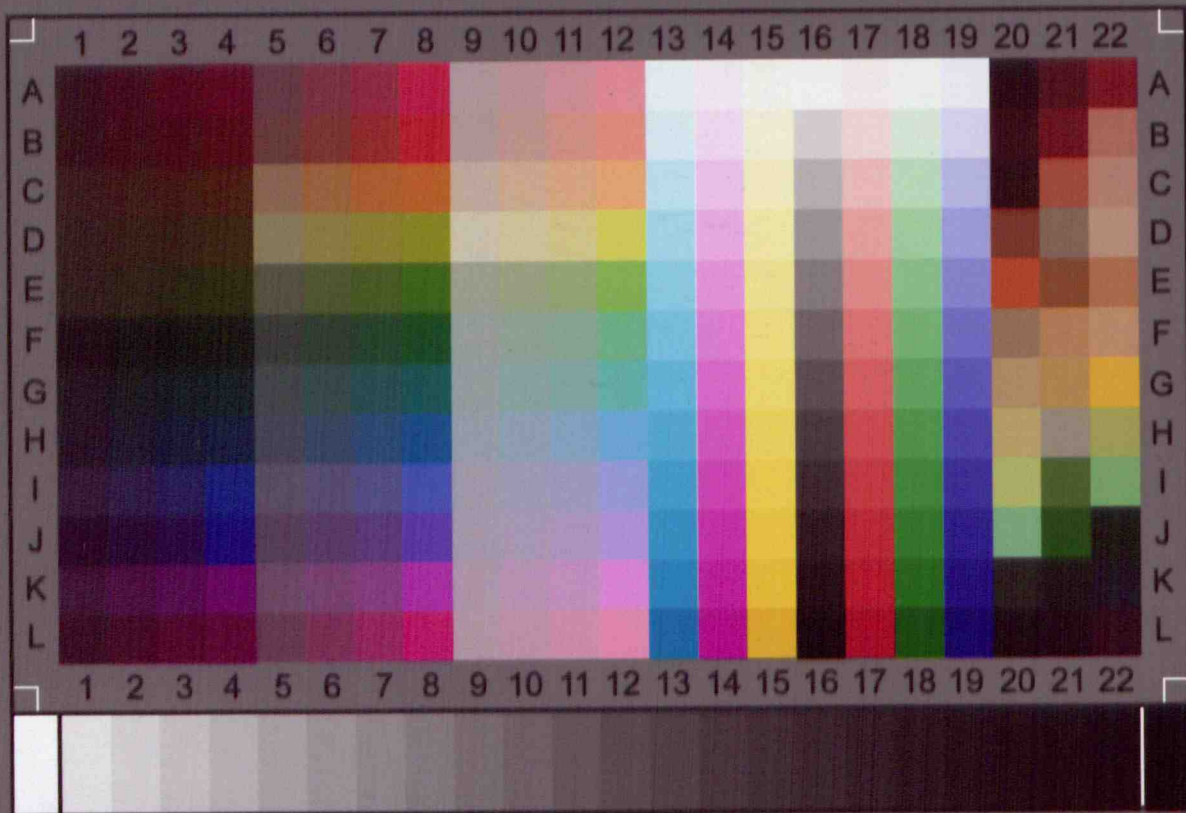
You asked me for a note on the current state of play here.

I understand that the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission take the view that the building is so important, particularly with regard to its group value, that every effort should be made to preserve it. They consider that the applicant's plan to get more space from the site could easily be achieved without demolishing the building. HBMC have been negotiating with the applicants on this basis but I gather that the applicants remain of the opinion that the building should come down.

HBMC next expect to consider the matter at their London Advisory Committee meeting on 7 July. I will let you know what they decide to do.

Yours

A D RING  
Private Secretary



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