

RUPERRA CASTLE

QUANTITY SURVEYOR'S PROOF OF EVIDENCE On BEHALF OF RUPERRA CASTLE PRESERVATION TRUST

Planning Inspectorate reference APP/K6920/A/08/2078434/WF

20 March 2009

Introduction and experience

1. I am Trevor William Groom a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Chartered Quantity Surveyor and I have been requested by the Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust to submit evidence to the Public Inquiry
2. I am a Senior Partner with Press & Starkey, Chartered Quantity Surveyors, 9-12 Stonehills House, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6NH
3. I qualified in 1980 and became a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 1987
4. On leaving the Royal Navy in 1973 I trained as a quantity surveyor firstly with the Stevenage Development Corporation and then with Mid Bedfordshire District Council joining Press & Starkey as a senior Quantity Surveyor in 1978 and becoming an equity partner in 1986.
5. I have since joining Press & Starkey worked almost exclusively on projects involving historic buildings and new buildings in an historic setting.
6. My clients include English Heritage, Cadw, Historic Royal Palaces, The National Trust, churches in the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions and private clients
7. Commissions involve six World Heritage Sites including HM Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Stonehenge & Silbury Hill, The North Wales Castles and Town Walls of Caernarfon, Conwy, Beaumaris & Harlech and the Blaenafon Industrial Landscape.
8. A particularly relevant commission working over 10 years for English Heritage in the consolidation of Lulworth Castle in Dorset in 9 contracts from 1986 to 1997 involving over £3.5 million to repair the building gutted by fire in the 1920's and left as a roofless ruin. The project included major structural masonry repairs, reconstructing the roof and windows so that the Castle looks complete externally but remains a consolidated ruin internally



Lulworth Castle, Castle

Issues covered by my evidence

1. In providing my evidence I confirm that I have followed the principals laid down in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Practice Statement and that my report is:
 - Independent, unbiased and falls within my expertise, experience and knowledge;
 - Includes the facts and assumptions used;
 - Impartial and unbiased.

2. I have been requested by the Ruperra Castle Conservation Trust to given an opinion on the following issues
 - The estimated cost of consolidating Ruperra Castle as a roofed ruin similar to the work completed for English Heritage at Lulworth Castle in Dorset and holding the other buildings to reduce further deterioration
 - Commenting on the Barakat Ruperra financial appraisal

Documents seen

1. I have been provided with copies of the following documents

- PIA drawings 640/PL02 to 31 inclusive
- Ruperra Castle Development drawings 1011/A, B, C,
- Bradley Associates report June 2005 drawings 8647/01 to 04 inclusive, 10 to 14 inclusive, 100 to 109 inclusive
- Appellant Hearing Statement 11 August 2008
- Proposed development of Ruperra Castle Representation from Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust and others 13 August 2008
- Preliminary Archaeological Survey by Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis for Barakat Ruperra Ltd December 2001
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for Barakat Ruperra Ltd September 2007
- Planning Report P/02/0773
- Donald Insall Associates report January 2007
- Franklin & Andrews Financial Appraisal



Ruperra Castle

1. I was contact by the Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust on 11 June 2007 and asked if I could prepare an order of cost for the consolidation of the ruin of Ruperra Castle
2. I visited the Castle on 20 June 2007 but as the Castle is in private ownership I was unable to do more than view the building from the southern and western boundaries. I was not able to go inside the building and have not carried out a detailed survey of the building. The photograph above was one of those I took on my visit which clearly demonstrates the condition at that time.
3. Based on my experience I prepared a cost plan assuming the following outline scope of work to arrive at an estimate cost which would be sufficiently accurate to establish the scale of the money that would be needed to arrest the building's decline
 - Rebuild the collapsed section of the southeast tower
 - Consolidate the wall tops
 - Consolidate and rebuild the central core
 - Provide and construct a timber and lead clad roof over the building and its four towers
 - Provide and install windows to all of the current window openings and external doors

4. The specification assumed is that appropriate for the repair of an important historic building
5. Following the above works the Castle will have been consolidated so that from the outside it would look as Lulworth Castle does and the building will give the impression of being complete. However internally it will remain a ruin without intermediate floors, staircases, internal walls, doors and finishes and be completely un-serviced without power, lighting, heating and the like
6. I made allowance for clearance of the immediate vicinity of the Castle of undergrowth to facilitate scaffolding but not the wholesale restoration of the garden
7. I made no allowance for works to the other buildings, stables and glasshouses or works to the access roads and boundary walls which would involve considerable further expenditure.
8. I assumed the Castle would be consolidated by a conservation contractor selected in competition based on a full survey, specification and schedule of work and standard form of building contract
9. I assumed the work would be completed in a single continuous project lasting 2 years starting in 2008
10. On this basis I estimated the cost at £3,590,000 excluding fess and VAT (as my Appendix A). Given the current market conditions this figure is likely to be still current as inflation has peaked and tenders may begin to reduce.

Financial Appraisal

1. I refer to Franklin & Andrews Financial appraisal indicating a total development cost of £14,832,014
2. I have no specialist knowledge of the sale value of the completed property which falls within the province of a Chartered Estate Surveyor so I have made a working assumption that their Income figure of £16,790,000 is reliable
3. The appraisal indicates a margin of £1,957,986 or 11.66% which is low for residential scheme where a developer would normally seek a return of 20%
4. Taking the elements of expenditure in their financial appraisal in turn
 - Land Cost and Stamp Duty fall outside my expertise
 - The allowance for infrastructure and drainage are not unreasonable in my view
 - The allowance for the renovation of the greenhouse of £195,000 is in my view unrealistic. I have completed the reconstruction of the historic listed timber glasshouses at Tatton Park in Cheshire for the Cheshire County Council, Chiswick House for English Heritage and Hidcote Manor for the National Trust and would expect the cost to repair, re-glaze and redecorate this glass house which occupies a floor plan of over 2,000 square feet to cost at least £500,000 excluding fees and VAT
 - It is difficult to comment on the allowance for landscaping of £65,000 but given the size of the site and its historical context this allowance is extraordinarily optimistic
 - I am unclear what the other sums listed under General Items are intended to provide for
 - As set out above in my view it will cost £3,590,000 to consolidate the external envelope of Castle. The cost of installing intermediate floors, staircases, internal walls, internal doors, finishes, kitchen, bathrooms and mechanical and electrical services into a building with a gross floor area of 2089 m² (22,492 ft²) would in my view add approximately a further £2,000,000 plus fees and VAT.
 - The stable block has a gross floor area of 1,181 m² (12,712 ft²). The buildings are roofed but in a poor state of repair and the appraisal includes £1,276,210 for repair and conversion i.e. £1,080 per m². In my view this is unrealistic. Based on data my firm holds for similar works and that produced by the Building Cost Information Service of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors I would expect these works to cost at least £1,500 per m² given they are part of an important historic site

- The appraisal includes an allowance of approximately £972 per m2 for the new houses this is achievable but suggests a level of specification below average
5. In my view a more realistic assessment of the works to the Castle and Stable Block based on my comments above would add over £2,500,000 to the project cost and make it unviable
 6. Residential development of any kind other than social housing in the current climate is problematic and it unlikely that any developer would proceed with this scheme in the short to medium term and unless the valuation of the development rose dramatically the current level of enabling development would not sustain the repair of the historic buildings.

Trevor W Groom FRICS
20 March 2009