

Economic Policy Unit  
E5.22  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BT4 3SR

December 29, 2007

Dear Sir,

**Draft Programme for Government: Protection of the Built Heritage**

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society was pleased to note the reference to the protection of our historic environment within the draft programme's strategic priorities where it states that "at a local level...action is needed to protect our built heritage, our landscape and marine environment and to reduce our impact on climate change."

However we were disappointed to note the absence of any associated key goals which would actively encourage the re-use of the built heritage given the vital role it plays in providing inherently sustainable development and its significant regenerative potential.

We would therefore suggest the introduction of the below goals in order to encourage the conservation of our irreplaceable built heritage. These would provide a positive incentive for owners to care for their statutorily protected buildings and help steer more appropriate development in sensitive historic contexts.

Suggested goals

- Introduce grant aid to B2 listed buildings, which constitute over 50% of the listed building stock.
- Re-introduce grant aid to conservation areas.
- Increase the number of qualified, dedicated conservation officers in all Planning Divisions.

We trust that these recommendations can be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Rita Harkin  
Research Officer