

## **Statement Beckford Tower Trust to B&NES Cabinet, July 11<sup>th</sup> 2012**

**To be made by Adrian Tinniswood, Bath Preservation Trust Trustee (in BPT's capacity as sole trustee of Beckford Tower Trust)**

Good evening, my name is Adrian Tinniswood and I am speaking on behalf of the Beckford Tower Trust, which is responsible for the care, protection, maintenance and public opening of Beckford Tower and the associated museum on Lansdown. Beckford Tower Trust is a subsidiary charity of Bath Preservation Trust of which I am a Trustee.

I wish to speak about the proposed development of the Ensleigh MOD site and its potential impact on Beckford's Tower, an important Grade 1 listed building, that is to say a building afforded the highest level of statutory protection. It is described in its English Heritage listing a 'Prospect Tower or belevedere....an innovative fusion of Picturesque asymmetry and precise neoclassicism...a key monument in the development of British Neo-classicism'.

Our concern relates to the setting of the Tower and views from it, but also crucially to the impact of development on views towards it. Long views to the Tower are enjoyed by nearly all visitors to Bath, whether approaching from Lansdown or the A46, the A4 from Bristol or from Box or the A39 Wells road to the south.

Development of the brownfield MOD site at Ensleigh, as long as it was relatively low-rise, high quality, and respected the treeline, would not really be a major problem. However, any development of the playing fields opposite the Tower, currently owned by Kingswood School, would be a serious issue and would be strongly opposed.

The MOD site goes to the brow of the hill, and the edge of the Bath skyline. Any building beyond that would spill over the 'edge' of the bowl, be highly visible from a number of approaches, and seriously compromise many of the long views of the Tower, as well as seemingly urbanising its eastern aspect, which is currently open countryside.

The importance of the Tower and its visibility from far away are we believe under-represented in the Concept Statement which should be adjusted accordingly.

We therefore ask the Cabinet to:

- Remove reference to the Kingswood playing fields from the Concept Statement; and
- Strengthen the reference in the Concept Statement to the importance and significance of Beckford's Tower and its setting and long views.