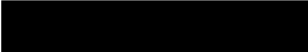





HISTORIC  SCOTLAND


Keeper of the Privy Purse
The Royal Household
Buckingham Palace
LONDON
SW1A 1AA


Chief Executive
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH


Switchboard: 0131 668 8600


3 September 2009


PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE - ABBEY STRAND

Thank you for your letter of 21 July regarding ownership of Abbey Strand. Your stated position concurs with recent expert advice we have received and we accept that although title lies with Scottish Ministers, ownership lies with the Sovereign.

This clarification is helpful and allays my previous concerns that an unresolved position would be difficult to defend publicly.

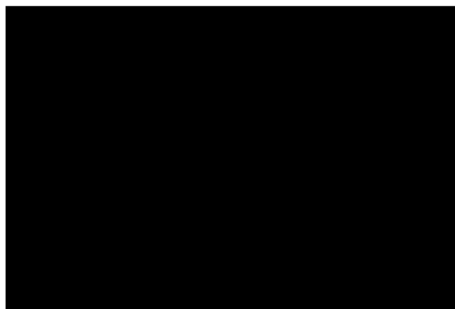
It means that any future change of use for Abbey Strand would ultimately be a matter for the Sovereign. For the moment there is, I think, no such change in prospect. Since use of the building is currently split between HS and Royal Collection Trust /Royal Collection Enterprises Ltd (RCT) our view remains that each body should meet its own energy bills and that maintenance costs should be split 50/50. We would be happy for the proposed Service Level Agreement to be further amended to include the Abbey Strand buildings and associated grounds.

Similar title and ownership arrangements apply to the Queen's Gallery, shop etc. The recent advice we have received supports our position as stated in paragraph 8 of my letter of 16 February, namely that as these areas and premises have become entirely commercial with no remaining official role responsibility for servicing, internal and external maintenance should fall to RCT. To put it another way, there seems to us to be no justification in law for the Scottish Ministers through Historic Scotland to fund or subsidise any aspect of the maintenance or operation of these buildings.

In the longer term and to formalise matters, we would prefer to transfer title back to the Sovereign for all those properties which no longer support the official function, but we do not see that as a matter of urgency.



I look forward to seeing you on 24 September.



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