



BUCKINGHAM PALACE



21st July 2009



**PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE – ABBEY STRAND**

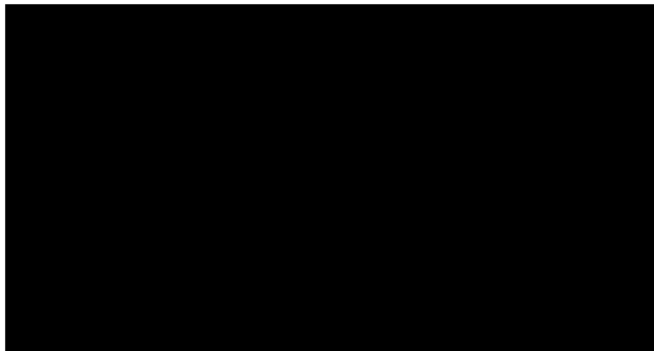
Your letter of the 22nd April on the topic of Abbey Strand, with enclosed copy of comments from your solicitors on the analysis by Morton Fraser has been very helpful, and the purpose of this letter is to make sure that we both understand the point of dispute between us.

We have never queried the issue that the title to Abbey Strand is held by a Minister of the Crown or the Scottish Ministers. The key issue to us is in what capacity is such title held. The Abbey Strand property was gifted to King George V personally. The intended gift, however, only took effect at the point when the Government agreed that it could maintain the property, once gifted, from monies found from the Royal Palaces' vote. The gift then proceeded with title being taken in name of the Minister of Works. At the time this, apparently, was a favoured way of taking title on behalf of the Monarch, because of the potential problems raised if the Monarch were to hold a feudal title in feu of himself. (Other solutions to this problem have been established both before and since.) We contend that there is no doubt, because of the way in which the gift was made and title is held, that it is an adjunct of the Palace and not available for use elsewhere without the Palace's say-so.

It remains our firm view that Abbey Strand is therefore an adjunct of the Palace and that it is in that capacity that title is held by Ministers of the Crown or the Scottish Ministers on behalf of The Sovereign.

As we have said throughout, the legal implications of this are not of the greatest significance and the pragmatic way forward is simply for Ministers and The Sovereign to agree on what use Abbey Strand is to serve. I still can not see any necessity for arbitration on this point as that just seems to be a legal nicety that does not really influence the determination of the future use to which Abbey Strand should be put.

I note that Morton Fraser's letter of the 25th May 2007 remains unanswered and as this, no doubt, will keep legal fees down I have no concern with, but suggest that we move forward on the pragmatic basis.



Keeper of the Privy Purse

  
Chief Executive  
Historic Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH