



Yes (go to 2b below)

No, not at all  We will treat your response as confidential

**2b.** Where *confidentiality is not requested*, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

### ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3 The name and address of your organisation *will be* made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes

No  We will treat your response as confidential

### SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4 We will share your response internally with other Scottish Executive policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

No

### Background

1. *In what capacity are you involved, or have you previously been involved, with seeking advice on the Historic Built Environment (e.g. applicant, agent, amenity body, planner, etc)?*

I am a clock maker and restorer of antique clocks (listed in the HS Conservation Directory of the early 1990's) and have been invited to examine and report on various public clocks, in churches and other buildings, and in general have been appalled by the poor quality and inappropriate methods which have been employed recently in the name of progress of preserving Scotland's horological heritage. Reference to both church authorities (for many clocks are in church buildings), local authorities (who often are custodians on behalf of the nation of public clocks) and Historic Scotland (where clocks often form part of a listed building) reveal a lack of well defined guidelines and authoritative advice. For instance there is no statutory system for protection of clocks in listed ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland, and invariably local authorities who should be custodians of listed buildings, and other bodies have little

knowledge or interest in pursuing the best practice but all too often rather opt for the cheapest option. Historic Scotland does not have a direct policy aimed at the preservation of our horological heritage. This submission to the consultation aims to change that situation.

#### Content of Guidance Notes

*Do you think the guidance notes present Scottish Minister's advice on the Historic Environment in a clear and consistent manner?*

The categories listed in the current consultation document are by their very nature generalisations designed to cover all manner of buildings and their fabric. However, one aspect of many public (and some private) buildings in Scotland is the existence of a turret (or tower) clock providing time by means of dials and perhaps bells. This aspect of buildings covers both internal (the clock mechanism) and external (the dials) features to a historic building.

“A turret clock is more than a clock movement, it is the whole entity, movement, weights, clock case, leading off work, dials, bells, hammers, building itself and indeed the locality, culture and history that surrounds it all.” (Chris McKay, Guidelines for the repair, restoration, conservation, preservation and maintenance of turret clocks, 2007). ([www.homepages.tesco.net/chris.mckay](http://www.homepages.tesco.net/chris.mckay))

#### Future Guidance Notes

1. The 14 Guidance Notes replace guidance from the withdrawn Memorandum. What aspects of the Historic Environment should be considered for inclusion in an expanded series in the future?

Public clocks in Scotland. Their use, their preservation, insistence that any public clock is maintained to keep good time, and, particularly, are correctly i.e. sympathetically maintained and preserved. Many of these Victorian and older clocks are unique to Scotland but have been abused, particularly in the last 20-30 years. Often the clocks are in the care of Local Authorities, which make them the judge and jury in determining the outcome of any listed building consent, often coming down to lowest price as the deciding factor in options. This is inappropriate where destruction or significant alteration of antique artifacts is concerned.

## **Response to Consultation Document**

I am a clock restorer dealing mainly with longcase and other domestic clock restoration and, unusually perhaps, am also interested in the historical public clocks which exist in many buildings. I have noticed that in the last number of years there is a vogue for “electrifying” the antique mechanical movements. This is understandable perhaps when there is difficulty in recruiting a team of clock winders to provide a rota to ensure that the clock is looked after on a (usually) weekly basis. However, the manner in which many of the clocks have been “electrified” is contrary to the preservation of the historic fabric of the building and its artefacts.

As in many facets of industrial and domestic work there is more than one way to achieve a degree of automation. Unfortunately, Scotland does not have an organisation similar to the Council for the Care of Churches under the auspices of the Church of England who rigorously assess any changes proposed to the fabric of church buildings and that also includes any clock and its ancillary equipment. In Scotland the Church of Scotland and other ecclesiastical organisations do not seem to have such a proactive view of maintenance of church property. It must also be said that some church clocks, although located in churches, are in fact maintained by the local authority. This perhaps is where some of the problems may lie. Other public clocks are often in local authority buildings (town halls and similar), and most local authorities, especially at the present time, are bound by financial constraints often give little or no consideration to the heritage value of an object which, for the most part, is never seen or perhaps appreciated by the general public. These public servants are likely therefore to assume that the cheapest option or that offered by a salesman as “the best” is in fact the only method without consideration for the least/non invasive option for the antique clock.

My experience of antique turret clocks that have been modified include examples of:

a) **complete removal and disposal** of the antique clock movement and its substitution by a synchronous electric motor, with the striking controlled by an electric striking unit released by a micro-switch triggered by the electric motor or

b) **removal of parts or all of the escapement** of the original clock movement and substitution of the weights which otherwise drive the clock by a synchronous electric motor, usually bolted or screwed to the original cast or wrought iron framing of the clock, which effectively drives parts of the clock gearing backwards. The striking is sometimes triggered either by the method outlines in a) or by a wholly independent micro-processor control box (basically a quartz clock) thereby making redundant the whole strike side of the clock or

c) Retaining the clock as a purely mechanical device and fitting **automatic winding** to the mechanical clock movement.

Options a) and b) are possibly likened to putting a modern automobile engine into a vintage car – externally it serves the same purpose but it has lost all of its value historically. Additionally it verges on vandalism where holes are drilled into iron frames and parts are removed from the clock (and often completely from the site) making the possibilities of restoring the clock to an original piece at any time in the future impossible.

In purely conservation/preservation terms the third c) option is the only method that should be applied to these clocks. Options a) and b) involve removal or partial removal, destruction or irreversible alteration to what is an antique and possibly unique artefact whereas fitting of automatic winding can be done without alteration to the movement and can, if necessary, be removed without any trace or damage to the original clock. This option should therefore be specified for all public mechanical clocks in Scotland unless compelling reasons can be demonstrated where it is not feasible. The costs of making and fitting automatic winding to many clocks is not

significantly different to that where synchronous electric motors and ancillary micro-processor “black boxes” are employed as substitute motive power and time markers.

As public clocks form such a dominant part of the exterior of many historic buildings and include the mechanism to drive the hands, they should be accorded more protection than they currently have in Scotland.

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