

M PRESENTATION

Slide 1

I'd like to introduce ourselves:

Save Our Lonsdale has been running now since November 2005. Linda Hargreaves and I began it, shortly joined by Edna. We are the Lonsdale 3. After our first public meeting, we began our mailing list and it has just snowballed since then. We extended our committee and there are about 8 of us, including Paul Hendy of Communities Reunited.

Slide 2

You can read the history of our campaign, and indeed, the history of the building on our website:

www.savethelonsdale.co.uk

But in short, the aims of our campaign are very simple. As it says on the Home Page of our website, we want to move from this to this:

Slide 3

This is what we're moving from. The Lonsdale as it is now. It looks sad, dilapidated and it's any wonder that any of us love it at all, never mind it being worthy of Listing. As possible newcomers to Carlisle, who could blame you for not seeing the potential in this old building? But this is what we want to move to:

Slide 4

The Lonsdale as it was:

In all its Art Deco glory. We could have this back, and we hope to prove that in the course of this presentation.

Slide 5

What we would like to do within this presentation is to go a little way in explaining why we have been fighting for so long for The Lonsdale.

We believe that Carlisle not only deserves an Arts Centre, but we have believed all along that The Lonsdale building is the best site for an Arts Centre. We will present our reasons for this.

We have also commissioned a local architect, Stephen Buttler, to redesign The Lonsdale, based on the original and updated architect's plans incorporating all that is required in the Arts Centre.

We have also commissioned a local artist, Philip Moore, to sketch impressions of how the new Lonsdale would look. Paul Carrick, a computer graphics designer has also added mock ups of how the building would look, were it to be restored as our plans suggest. When we saw these mock ups, we became really excited as to the possibilities of this building. We hope that this excitement we felt will be infectious today.

We hope the above will help you to visualise our wishes for the building and help you to believe that this is all possible as we give you a virtual tour of our designs.

We will also provide ideas for funding and provide examples of other sites which have been restored.

Then we will finish with a Question and Answer session.

On 17th January, we heard from DCA, the consultants who carried out a feasibility study based on a pre-existing model. We hope to show you another way, which is both practical and possible.

Slide 6

First of all, I would like to begin by talking about Carlisle. I don't know where you are all from, or indeed what brought you to Carlisle, but I am from Carlisle. I am 35 and have lived here all my life. Now ... you might think that's rather sad. But it's not. I live here because I choose to live here. I'm not "trapped" here. I could live elsewhere if I choose to, but I honestly believe that this is the best place in the world to live. I love fell walking and Carlisle is within easy travelling distance of the Lake District and North Pennines, I love going to concerts and theatre, and I have my own transport to get to Newcastle, Manchester, Glasgow etc. I love Carlisle's history and the fact that we are surrounded by so many historic buildings.

Now, when I say "historic buildings" – I know what you're all *thinking* – The Cathedral and The Castle.

Slide 7

Slide 8

They are the buildings that are generally shown on tourist brochures for Carlisle and we are so proud of them. They are the buildings which will always be protected in Carlisle ... unless the Scots get rowdy again! And it's right that they are sacrosanct. Once historic buildings are gone, they are gone forever. We need to hold on to them. The two buildings I have shown you are not, however, the only historic buildings in Carlisle.

As you have probably gathered, my favourite period of architecture is Art Deco:

Slide 9

If you want to know and get a feel for Art Deco, then watch a copy of "Top Hat" – the Fred Astair and Ginger Rodgers film. That is pure Art Deco ... and it's a great film. When we think of Art Deco architecture, the buildings that spring to mind immediately are The Savoy Hotel in London and The Chrysler building, New York.

Slide 10

Slide 11

Aren't they beautiful and inspiring? Well ... let's take a look at how we treat our few remaining Art Deco buildings in Carlisle. You probably haven't noticed them ... and if you have, the chances are you see them as they are now and not how they *should* be. It's heart breaking that they've been allowed to get into this state:

Slide 12

Argos

Slide 13

This building is on Victoria Road, Botcherby. Ironically, the sign on the door says ... "Building Preservation". Is that a joke?

Slide 14

Cavaghan & Grey

Slide 15

The Co-op on Cumwhinton Road

Slide 16

The Enterprise Centre – thankfully, someone has had the foresight to renovate this one, but this kind of vision is rare.

Slide 17

The Funeral Parlour, Spencer Street – just look at how dilapidated this one is.

Slide 18

The Jester, London Road. I never did go into this pub, but recognised that it was a beautiful building. Concentrating the night life of Carlisle on Botchergate by setting up homogenous, impersonal pubs and clubs has ensured that historic buildings such as this no longer have a purpose and now it is left to rot.

Slide 19

This is the Former Paton's Garage on the Viaduct. Now ... if you look closely at the photograph, this was built to purposely look like a lorry. That was in the days where architects had vision and didn't just erect soul-less breeze blocks padded out with metal and plastic. I don't know if this building is listed or not and I don't know how many people know that it was built to look like a lorry, but this is the state it has been allowed to get into.

Slide 20

Here's a lovely Art Deco building which I see every day – Trinity School

Slide 21

And of course ... Woolworths

That's just a quick whistle stop tour of Carlisle's Art Deco buildings. Perhaps you know of more, but this is just a quick overview – the point being that whilst we are dreaming up new build, we neglect the beautiful old buildings that we already have ... such as this:

Slide 22

And we're back to The Lonsdale. Back in November 2005, it was announced that this building had been sold, was going to be demolished and yet more soul-less flats built on the site.

Let me show you an example of soul-less flats:

Slide 23

This "abomination" has been built on the site of the former Palace Cinemas. It is ghastly and does not belong in Carlisle and it breaks my heart to walk past it on my way home from work. The idea that something similar to THIS could possibly replace Carlisle's beloved Lonsdale building caused a public outcry.

Slide 24

Slide 25

Slide 26

If you just home in on this one and read one of the banners. Who can tell me what it says? Yes ... that's right, it says: "Long Live the Lonsdale". Here's another which said: "The Lonsdale for the People". Switching into my best primary teacher mode ... can any of you put your hands up and tell me, can you see the banners saying: "New build theatre for Carlisle?" No? Do you know why you can't see them? Because they weren't there! Much as we need greater theatre provision in Carlisle, nobody has *ever* been moved to march for it. Much as we are pathetically grateful for the Sands Centre (because it's all we have), nobody has *ever* been moved to march for it. They never have and they certainly didn't on that cold winter's day when they marched for The Lonsdale. That's what people want. That building. Yet, people sat

up and listened to us and our group and our wishes were included in a feasibility study:

Slide 27

When the first stage of the Feasibility Study was published by Roger Lancaster Associates in October 2006, we were delighted as it was extremely positive about The Lonsdale.

Slide 28

Slide 29

Let's look at some of the Pro's mentioned

- The building offers significant volume and potential for either a theatre or arts centre development – perhaps the largest such site in central Carlisle.
- There is potentially good external access to the site for vehicular access and “get ins”
- It has a good position in the city centre close to rail and bus stations with parking nearby
- Redevelopment of the site for cultural purposes could act as a catalyst for the Warwick Road area – distinct from neighbouring Botchergate.
- Considerable public support already exists in favour of a theatre/arts centre development on this site.

Note the last bullet point there – Considerable Public support. Surely that must count for something.

Just to balance things out – let's look at the Cons Roger Lancaster Associates came up with:

Slide 30

- The site is currently owned by a developer who is not interested in development of an arts facility but wants to knock it down and build apartments.
- Listing status has been applied for and if granted could lead to the developer reconsidering the intended use – but still seeking to maximise commercial gain.
- Initial indications are that listing is unlikely and therefore acquisition of the site could be both difficult and expensive.

Okay – I could go through these one by one and ask which of these Con's still exists, but I'm not going to insult your intelligence, you already know how it is now.

The Lonsdale *has* been listed, which we feel changes things a little. If the Culture Secretary deems the building fit to be preserved, we feel that we as a city should also appreciate this – and what better place for the theatre/arts centre which has been promised to the people of Carlisle?

Let's just look at how Roger Lancaster Associates conclude their study of The Lonsdale:

Slide 31

“The Lonsdale *could* be the largest and easiest to convert site in the city centre. It *could* make an excellent theatre and arts centre with the capacity to incorporate all the suggested “ideal” elements. Issues related to ownership, acquisition and listing however create uncertainties as to the viability of this option although it is recommended that the option is further explored in the next stage.”

And so we all sat back and waited with baited breath for the next stage of the feasibility study to be completed. Most Lonsdale supporters were becoming cynical and claimed that the feasibility study would be “rigged” so that it would come out in favour of a new build site in Rickergate. However, we hung on in their hoping that things would come out in favour of The Lonsdale. The second stage of the feasibility study was published in June 2007:

Slide 32

This was extremely disappointing, to say the least. Unlike the Roger Lancaster phase, which looked at several sites and how they could be converted to be a theatre/arts centre, the DCA study already had in mind a model for the theatre/arts centre and if the building did not fit, then it would be impossible to consider that site. Because of this, I was inclined to suggest that it was not worth the paper it is written on. It is of no surprise that it says of The Lonsdale:

“The former Lonsdale Cinema site is larger, but is dominated by poor quality brick enclosures of the former cinemas. In order to develop the spaces required to fulfil the brief for the Theatre/Arts Centre, these large brick volumes will require demolition as they do not reflect the spaces and the facilities that will be required.”

It goes on to say:

“The cost of acquisition and of demolition and redevelopment would be likely to be substantial and this option therefore scores poorly in terms of the ability of the City to deliver a site in private ownership”.

The first point is contentious, but nobody could argue with the second – the building was owned by Empera Estates who were unwilling to sell, so there was nowhere else to turn, the Lonsdale was lost and was going to become a monstrosity like the flats I showed you earlier.

However, only a week or so later, the news came that the building had been listed!

Slide 33

Just look at this slide! We never really thought we'd ever see this.

Slide 34

Can you just imagine the elation we felt, walking through town and seeing this on the billboards?! This changed everything. In our eyes, we could not see Empera Estates wanting to hold on to a property which could not be demolished to make way for flats. Our Council has kept on reiterating that they are committed to providing a Theatre/Arts Centre and here it was, just standing ready to be converted. On July 24th, Edna, Danny Ibitson and myself met with Maggie Mooney, Katharine Elliot, Mick North and Mark Beveridge. They wanted to know what our vision was for The Lonsdale.

We are only interested in The Lonsdale as the venue for an arts centre in Carlisle and would love to see it restored to its former glory. This could be done quite easily. Prior to The Lonsdale's closure, we escorted local architect Steve Buttler and local builder Bob McKnight around the building. They support the notion that The Lonsdale could be converted to its former glory. With this in mind, they wrote reports backing up the appeal to list the building. Bob McKnight is the builder who worked on the conversion of the Lonsdale in the early '70s so is aware that a lot of the Art Deco treasures remain in situ, beneath facia board.

Slide 35

More recently, Steve Buttler and I have been looking over the original architect's plans for The Lonsdale from 1931 and the updated plans from the '70s and '80s. From these, Steve has redesigned The Lonsdale as a theatre/arts centre for Carlisle. Local artist, Philip Moore has created artist's impressions of what some of Steve's plan would look like. Graphic Designer, Paul Carrick created virtual reality scenes of the restored Lonsdale. It is hoped that this will give you a greater idea of what "Our Vision" is for The Lonsdale and to prove that it is possible to have the theatre/arts centre within this building. I'd like to go through these with you now.

Slide 36

This is how we would like The Lonsdale to look from the outside. It's fairly similar to how The Lonsdale looked when it first opened in 1931. The Blue and Yellow zig zag stained glass window is still intact and is still within the building. This is what people would see from the outside of the building. This is how the building would look when stripped of that ghastly blue plastic Gala Bingo sign. The main entrance to the building would be through the former Gala Bingo entrance, shown on this slide with a red carpet. The two side entrances would lead up to the restaurant, gallery etc. which will be discussed in a moment.

Slide 37

Here's a CGI photo of what you would see walking down the street – isn't it beautiful? Isn't it something Carlisle can be proud of? Let's look at a couple more:

Slide 38

Slide 39

As one can see from the following slides, The Lonsdale building spans 4 floors, so we have a lot of room to play with.

Slide 40

Slide 41

As I said earlier, practically all of the art deco features remain beneath fascia board, so restoration would not be difficult. This is the renovation of the foyer in the 1970s. By breaking through the false roof, one can still see the original light fittings etc.

Slide 42

The original mirrors still line the stair wells.

Slide 43

One can still see these windows on the outside of the building, partially concealed by the Gala Bingo sign.

Slide 44

The mosaic floors are still intact.

Slide 45

Much of the original plaster work still exists or could be easily restored.

Slide 46

And of course, the stained glass window which I'm sure you've all heard so much about.

Slide 47

Moving onto Steve Buttler's plans – this is the Ground Floor. One would enter the box office through the Gala Bingo entrance. This part of the building would be returned to its original state:

Slide 48

The box office would be exactly as it was in the 1930s, in the centre of the entrance walkway.

Slide 49

Slide 50

The foyer, too, would be restored to its Art Deco glory with a beautiful glass sky light. At the far end, you can see the lift, which would make disabled access possible. When English Heritage inspected the building in January 2006, they claimed that the beautiful wrought iron lift was still intact and in working order. We would have this operated by a bell boy complete with pill box hat etc. to keep up the 1930's feel of the building. Let's just have a look at some CGI clips of the restored foyer to give you a better "feel" for it:

Slide 51

Main entrance to the foyer would be from the Warwick Road site. All additional features, such as these doors would be in keeping with the Art Deco age.

Slide 52

This is what you would be walking into

Slide 53

And another angle, showing off the natural sky light.

Slide 54

This would be the view from the balcony looking toward the entrance doors.

Slide 55

And again from the ground floor.

Slide 56

However, bringing the building further into modern usage, we would introduce a kiosk at the far end, selling coffee and snacks. Philip has photoshopped coffee tables and a cyber café. This would help provide extra income for the arts centre and encourage people to meet here, pop in for a quick coffee and browse the net. So, bear in mind ... we have just walked into the foyer from what is now the Gala Bingo entrance, through the box office and into the Cyber Café toward the lift. However, were we to turn and look back toward the entrance, this is what we would see:

Slide 57

The Sun Window. Cleaned and restored to its former glory. By day, it would radiate natural light and in the evenings it could be floodlit.

Slide 58

You may look closer at Steve's plans, but he has also allowed room for the following on the ground floor plan:

- Music Studios
- Dance Workshop
- Cloakroom
- Toilets
- Rental Offices
- Cleaners Room
- Manager's Office

When hired out, the music and dance studios would make a return on investment, as would rental offices.

Toward the back of the foyer, to either side of the lift are entrances into the main theatre:

Slide 59

This is a photograph of the stage during the renovations which took place in 1972 to create a two screened cinema. Prior to The Lonsdale's closure in April 2006, all of these features remained beneath fascia board. The Orchestra Pit etc. were all intact. We would have all of these restored and have the organ and rising platform reinstated

so that we could return the stage to its 1930s grandeur. We also checked the glass dome in the ceiling ... and yes ... it's still there. This is what we could have:

Slide 60

Isn't it beautiful! With the will and the vision, this is what we can have and it's what we feel Carlisle deserves. This is to rival any West End stage, and it's certainly a lot better than anything the Brewery Arts, Keswick or The Sands Centre can offer. It's a real theatre for Cumbria's premier city. Let's just pause and reflect on it, before moving on. Now, I can hear some cynical cogs turning there and my powers of telepathy are hearing you thinking: "How would we possibly fill that?" Well ... we have that covered, too. When The Lonsdale was first built, this theatre held 1,900 seats. What we have done is "shaved" some of these off to allow extra room on the ground floor and first floor. We have also widened the aisles to allow for wheelchair access so that the auditorium would look something like this:

Slide 61

An 800 seat theatre. This artist's impression shows the dome in the ceiling and exits on the ground floor covered by curtains. These exits would lead out to the back of the lift and through into the foyer. The picture also shows the balcony. We will look closer at the balcony on the first floor in a moment, but the overall impression is of a fully functioning theatre which could attract the larger money-making shows to our city. The theatre could also be hired out to local amateur groups, schools etc. Let's move on to look at some CGI pictures of the auditorium. These really capture how it would feel to be in there:

Slide 62

Check out these pictures of the stage:

Slide 63

Slide 64

Slide 65

Let's just have another look out at the seating plan for the auditorium:

Slide 66

Again – some may argue that 800 seats are far too many. There's an answer to that, which is quite simple. Just close off the balcony for smaller performances. Let's see it from more angles:

Slide 67

Slide 68

Slide 69

Slide 70

We think that this is part of our heritage which deserves to be preserved. Just look at all of the big names that have treaded these boards in the past. It can be great again. If we build it, we can attract the bigger names. Just look at how many people turned out to see Elton John at Brunton Park last Summer? If we get the names, Carlisle has such a large catchment area that it can attract a large quantity of people.

Slide 71

Moving on ... This is Steve's design for the first floor, which I have set aside for you to examine later. What we would like to have on the first floor is:

Slide 72

- Void over stage for lighting scenery
- Glazed dome to auditorium cleaned and repaired as necessary
- Front/Lower balcony seating.
- Display galleries
- Artists studios

- Restaurant
- Storage area

When we were thinking about a restaurant, we discussed several designs and themes. However, Edna's idea of a 1950s soda fountain kept on coming up. Although the building is Art Deco and 1930s, we really wanted to celebrate the golden age of the silver screen, and we felt that a 50s diner would be appropriate, perhaps even with waitresses wearing roller boots. We were looking at things like this:

Slide 73

Or this:

Slide 74

We passed on these ideas to our artist, Philip Moore, who came up with this idea:

Slide 75

For those of you who can remember The Lonsdale as a cinema, just prior to its closure, this would be in the main foyer of the cinema leading toward Cinema 3. It seems wider, because prior to its closure, The Lonsdale had created false rooms to the right hand side for ice cream storage, cleaning cupboards, staff room etc. These could realistically and legally (taking the Grade II Listed Status into account) be opened up to create more room. Now, Philip has created the space larger than I would have imagined, but I would have used the room to the right hand side front of the picture for gallery space. Along the walls, we could showcase local artist's work and also liaise with the new University of Cumbria for their work. There would also be room for display cases to provide a history of The Lonsdale and cinema/theatre in Carlisle. We could liaise with Tullie House to showcase work they have relating to this which they have no room to display.

The restaurant would provide good income for the arts centre, but would also be integral to the vibe of the arts centre. Presently, in Carlisle, we have The Source Café, which has recently been under threat of closure. The Source showcases performance art i.e. open mic sessions, the experimental music collective, poetry reading evenings. We could hold similar events in The New Lonsdale Restaurant and create a fertile meeting place for creative minds to gather and celebrate art in all its forms.

There are also toilets on the second floor. As discussed, the lift from the ground floor would create disabled persons access.

There are many other ideas for a restaurant. For instance, were the Council to acquire the entire block of the Post Office, White House, Mary Street etc. one could almost imagine a lovely Café Bistro in a pedestrianized Barton's Place, the lane leading from Warwick Road to Mary Street, but for now, this shall have to suffice.

To the left of the Restaurant/Diner would be the entrances to the balcony of the theatre auditorium, which you saw on a previous slide.

As discussed, there would also be room for artist's studios. This would also ensure a return on investment and people in Carlisle are crying out for artists studios. Danny Ibbotson pointed out in our meeting of 24th July that Eleventh Hour Studios are working well as a business. Following the closure of West Walls Studios, artist's studios are becoming scarcer and a prime location in the city centre such as The Lonsdale would be most desirable.

Moving on to the basement:

Slide 76

As I have said, all of these plans are available for your perusal, but going through this with you, it is envisaged that the basement will include room for:

Slide 77

- Changing Rooms
- Green Room
- Toilets
- Washroom
- Service Ducts
- Small Theatre/Cinema
- Further Artist's Studios

Now ... when you look over the plans, Steve has made them flexible enough, so if it were felt that we needed more "service rooms", we could use some of the space reserved for artists studios etc. without destroying any of the fabric of the building. The way that Steve has designed this entire project is to take into account all legislation regarding Grade II Listed buildings, so don't worry about contravening any of those laws.

However, he has included more artist's studios. This is to make the return on the investment as discussed above.

But we come now to the cinema – one of the most important parts of the building and, indeed the building's original design. Although we must also take into account the present market for cinema. We all know that it would be futile to rise up in competition to the Vue Cinema on Botchergate, nor would we want to. We want a cinema to fulfil a different need. We want our cinema to be:

Slide 78

- A safe place for the vulnerable in society
- A showcase for student's films
- Alternative cinema
- Pensioner's club
- Parent and toddlers club
- Double as a small performance space

So the cinema in the New Lonsdale Arts Centre would be on a much smaller scale and in the basement. Again, there would be disabled access via the lift in the ground floor foyer. Any of you old enough to remember will know that the basement of The Lonsdale used to be a night club, so there is space in there. We would imagine having a cinema about the size of one of the City Cinema screens:

Slide 79

Of course, for special events, larger screenings etc. the upstairs theatre could be used as a larger cinema:

Slide 80

Wow! Can you just imagine watching "Gone with the Wind" or "Lawrence of Arabia" in this? Don't laugh! It's what people used to do! They still do it now. In recent years, I have been to see several old classics at Reghed, because I love to see my favourite films on the big screen. In fact, in the souvenir booklet which was given out on 21st September 1931, celebrating the opening of The Old Lonsdale, it boldly claims:

Slide 81

“The Lonsdale can, if necessary, present opera, drama, ballet or variety as efficiently as it can show pictures.”

IF THEY COULD DO IT THEN ... WHY, OH WHY CAN'T WE DO IT NOW?????

Slide 82

The upper floor would contain all lighting and control points with access to the roof and glass dome.

So, here you have it ... our vision for The Lonsdale. We have set out what we want in the building and where. We feel we have adequately displayed in visual detail what we would like in a way we feel is possible. Nobody can ever accuse us of not having a vision.

Is this possible?

Absolutley.

And why should our Council invest in such a scheme? To begin with, Councillors are elected to represent the public and in this case, the public have spoken loudly and clearly saying ... no shouting ... “WE WANT THE LONSDALE”. If you were unaware of our march before, we have shown you some photographs today.

Secondly, Carlisle City Council have said repeatedly, loud and clear: “WE ARE COMMITTED TO HAVING A THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE IN CARLISLE”. What better way to put their money where their mouth is than investing in a scheme such as this.

Thirdly, Carlisle is now a University City. Carlisle is an expanding city and it's actually quite shameful that at present there is nowhere centralised for the arts. Yes, I can travel to Glasgow, Newcastle etc. but why should I spend my money elsewhere when I could be ploughing it back into Carlisle's economy. This scheme would also be an incredible educational resource for our University and schools.

Fourthly ... we have been told several times that Councils simply do not invest in such schemes. Well, that's not true, because thankfully a local council had the foresight to invest in this:

Slide 83

The Rex, Berkhamstead was an Art Deco cinema under threat of closure, restored to its former glory.

Slide 84

The Forum Cinema, Hexham was an Art Deco cinema under threat of closure, restored to its former glory.

Slide 85

The Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, was an Art Deco cinema threatened with closure, now restored to its former glory.

I could go on, but I won't bore you. There are more instances where a building has been threatened with closure, and the Council has stepped in. All of the above are now working at a profit. Not only that, but they serve as museum pieces for their

locality. In each of these buildings are showcases depicting the history of cinema in their town and information as to how the buildings have been saved and restored.

Cinema is the most recent art form. Surely, we deserve to have a monument celebrating this in our town.

I went to visit another town which has gone through Renaissance ... Scarborough and we saw this:

Slide 86

At the bottom of the slide, you may be able to make out: "Scarborough – a Renaissance Town". It also says on this sign: "High Quality Renovation of the Grand Hall and Theatre" and "Restoration of Listed Buildings". We inspected further by visiting their information centre. It turns out that Scarborough's Renaissance places a firm priority on restoring Grade II listed buildings. As I said earlier, once they're gone, they're gone.

And would you believe it, a short walk from where we were dropped off at the bus lead us to this:

Slide 87

A beautiful Art Deco theatre/arts centre! Well, what a surprise! And the ironic thing about this is that I used to holiday in Scarborough as a child and this very building is where we used to go to the cinema:

Slide 88

In its latter days, this is what The Odeon, Scarborough looked like. Take note – it's far more dilapidated than The Lonsdale is now, and yet, it has been restored. Let's look at some of the restoration. Before moving on, I'd like you to just pause and take another look at this slide. Yes, it does look in a worse state than The Lonsdale is in now.

Slide 89

Here they are restoring the auditorium.

Slide 90

And here they are restoring some of the original plasterwork.

Slide 91

And here is the foyer today, restored to its Art Deco glory. Yes, it's a pay desk – people come here and *pay* to come to the theatre. It also has a restaurant and adjoining cinema. Scarborough is very proud of this ... it's certainly good enough for Alan Ayckbourne to premier his plays here.

Slide 92

And here is a list of sponsors, displayed for everyone to see.

Which brings us onto the topic of raising funds etc.

Slide 93

I have told many people about our scheme and one of the first things they say is: "Have you had it costed out?" Well, the answer to that is a simple "No". The reason for this is that I am not a quantity surveyor. I think we've done pretty well at creating this scheme – something which others have so far failed to do, even though they have had ample opportunity. Now, we could have gone ahead and paid for a quantity surveyor to cost this out, but there would be little point if it turned out that there was no enthusiasm for the plans we have just presented you with.

On 28th June 2007, Carlisle City Council passed a motion to give Save Our Lonsdale “support and assistance”. As yet, we have received none, neither have we asked for any until now. We would like some support and assistance in costing out this scheme, please.

We could have sponsors like the SJT Theatre in Scarborough. If Cumbrian entrepreneurs are willing to invest in schools, air ambulances, football teams etc. they may be just as likely to invest in an arts centre/theatre.

We could also have patrons. I give an amount of my wage to Amnesty International each month via direct debit – people could just as easily donate to the New Lonsdale like that.

A few years ago, The Green Room conducted a “Buy a Brick” scheme in order to raise funds – the New Lonsdale could also do this.

Memorial seats – people could pay for a seat and have a brass plaque remembering a loved one.

When I say volunteers, I don’t envisage them actually running the arts centre. We do envisage something more professionally run than that. What I mean is volunteers to take place in the restoration work alongside professionals – people who would be willing to donate their time and energy to the restoration work. Volunteers take place on archaeological digs and various community projects – they could just as easily be drafted in to help restore a building which is so loved by the community of the City of Carlisle.

Now ... I am no fundraiser, I know little of such things, so I’m sure with a bit of experience and imagination, other people could come up with fundraising ideas.

It could also run alongside Renaissance projects. Save Our Lonsdale are not against Carlisle Renaissance. We actively embrace Renaissance as a marvellous opportunity for our city and would like to be a part of this scheme by proposing something we feel the people of Carlisle truly want and need. We are not merely resistant to change. The scheme SOL have just proposed is a BIG change. The New Lonsdale could be seen as the flagship for Renaissance rather than an irritating distraction to Carlisle Renaissance. By supporting the plans we have just introduced, it would be a great way of selling Renaissance to the people of Carlisle. Bringing something to Carlisle in keeping with the architecture, and befitting a University City.

Also, let’s not forget that Carlisle City Council keep on reiterating that they are committed to a theatre/arts centre for Carlisle. Now, it’s a bit of a no-brainer that the scheme we have proposed here is going to cost a hell of a lot less than the £21m proposed by DCA in their feasibility study. So, please don’t go for New Build as an excuse for not doing anything – the scheme we have proposed is possible and within reach and Carlisle City Council would stand to gain a lot of credibility if they went along with this.

I hope that this presentation has led you all to believe that Save Our Lonsdale do have a vision for The Lonsdale. With the help of architect Steve Butler, graphic designer

Paul Carrick and artist Philip Moore, we have created this vision. I hope it has also led you to believe that this is possible. It does help to visualise what we have in mind as it's very difficult looking at The Lonsdale as it stands now to see it how it deserves to be. This building is so important to the cultural history of this city. Many people have so many special memories connected with this place. You have the power to retain this building and give Carlisle a monument they can be proud of. As we move into the question and answer session, I'd like to leave you with this lasting image of what is within our grasp:

Slide 94