

## Press Statement

Bach Homes Locarno (BHL) has today submitted a planning application to demolish the Locarno.

Land owner Gael Mackenzie (GM) said.

“I have been trying incredibly hard to find a viable solution to restoring the buildings since I purchased the property in 1999. It is with considerable disappointment I find myself with no alternative following discussion with English Heritage and my advisers, other than to support an application for the buildings being demolished.”

Steve Rosier a director of BHL said.

“A factual account of the efforts to find a viable solution to retain the buildings was issued on 15 April 2011. This information was posted to the security hoardings in front of the Locarno but was removed by SBC on the 19 April. Should anyone wish to fully appreciate these efforts I would recommend reading the full account which is available on [www.thelocarno.com](http://www.thelocarno.com). “

GM continued.

“SBC suggested 10 years ago we seek a redevelopment solution for the Locarno by incorporating the public car parks. In September 2008 BHL the development partner selected by SBC and myself, secured planning approval for a mixed use scheme. The banking crisis and economic downturn understandably has prevented a commencement on site. Personally I have little doubt as the economy improves this scheme could have commenced in the next couple of years.

In June 2010 in full agreement with the landowners SBC and me, BHL submitted a new planning application incorporating a Sheraton hotel, this scheme if approved would have provided an earlier start on site. Unfortunately SBC made a dramatic “U” turn in January 2011 when withdrawing support for this application and walking out of the established partnership with BHL and myself”

Steve Rosier added.

“Councillor Mike Bawden said to the Advertiser on 11 February 2011 *“that a meeting is needed with Mr Mackenzie to take stock of where we are.”* Gael has been waiting patiently for 12 weeks and not heard a word from Bawden or actually anyone at SBC. Personally I find it surprising SBC did not discuss the reasons for the U turn with Gael before making any decision.

Gael has been working hand in hand with SBC for the last 10 years. SBC have decided for reasons not known, or explained, to terminate this partnership, leaving us to find a viable development solution without the car parks. Planning policy PPS5 supports the demolition of historic buildings providing every option to secure a viable future for the asset has been exhausted. SBC have been actively involved for 10 years and not established a viable development solution. It would be fair to say all efforts have been exhausted. Sadly there is no alternative available other than demolish what remains of the buildings.”