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Blast it! Our work of art is defaced again

Concrete creation may be blown up - by Brian Unwin

The writing could be on the wall for a new town's 20ft high concrete work of art.

The structure, called The Pavillion, cost thousands of pounds as a spectacular feature across an ornamental lake surrounded by housing.

But residents living near leading artist Victor Pasmore's creation in Peterlee, County Durham, claim that it has become a graffiti scarred haven for hooligans - and want the council to remove it.

Now Easington councillors will meet on Monday to consider whether to clean it up "burst" it or blow it up.

Last night, 72 year old Mr Pasmore offered some advice "if the council can't appreciate a modern work of art and are not prepared to keep it, in a decent condition, they should certainly blow it up."

Terrible

The two demolition methods suggested in a report to Easington housing services committee by Chief housing officer Mr David Miller, are controlled blasting, which would cost £4,000 and hydraulic bursting estimated at about £32,000.

Mr George Cavanagh, of Oakerside Drive, Peterlee, whose home is a few yards away from the structure said "When we moved here 12 years ago I was proud to look out of my window on to the Pavilion. But now it is a monstrosity, attracting undesirable elements. Young hooligans are carrying on there day and night. I have been chasing them off at two o'clock in the morning. The noise and filthy language are terrible and we are sick of seeing all the graffiti."

Work of art may bite the dust

But Mr Pasmore, who was master of painting at Durham University fine art department from 1954 to 1961, and consulting architectural designer for Peterlee's south-west area from 1955 to 1977, warned that "demolition" would mean "the end of Peterlee".

"Without the Pavilion and the ornamental lake the area will degenerate into another typical slum council estate," he said.

He said that when Peterlee Development Corporation was responsible for the housing, the Pavilion and the surrounding landscaped area was kept in a first class condition.

"But now Easington Council is in charge they are not prepared to spend ratepayers money", he claimed.

Mr Pasmore, who was awarded the CBE in 1959, said he could not remember how much The Pavilion cost originally "but it would certainly cost a fortune today".

In the report to the committee, Mr Miller says the alternative to demolition would be extensive cleaning followed by an application of anti-graffiti coating which would cost about £2,500, plus further spending on periodical washing to remove subsequent graffiti.

Neither the chairman of the housing services committee, Coun. Robert Luke, nor the chief housing officer wished to comment on the report last night.