



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

29 May 1979

*My dear Archbishop.*

When you came to see me on 24 May, you left with me a letter about the future of the Island of Iona, enclosing the text of a motion adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council.

George Younger has been keeping an eye on developments. He tells me that the property on offer is essentially crofting and farming land on the Island: the Abbey and other historic monuments are in the hands of the Trustees.

I understand that the property was put on the open market this week, after unsuccessful attempts by the National Trust for Scotland to conclude a private treaty sale with the Argyll Trustees. As a result, the Hugh Fraser Foundation announced on 23 May that it was prepared to put up £1½ million. I understand that the offer has been made and accepted in principle. What remains to be clarified is whether the Island is to be passed to the Secretary of State or to the National Trust.

I hope that this latest turn of events meets your concern about the future of Iona. I am grateful to you for drawing my attention to the question, and I agree that it is important to prevent any radical alteration of the present character and use of the Island.

*It was a great pleasure to see you.*

*Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher*

His Grace The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

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cc SO  
Mr Peterson  
- Home Affairs

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