



*pr*

Prime Minister (1)

*Daft letter to Sir Hugh  
Flagg  
Casson attached, for  
signature if you agree?*

PRIME MINISTER

**ROYAL ACADEMY APPEAL**

*Dubs  
6/7*

After our meeting with Sir Hugh Casson on 19 June I undertook to consider with Patrick Jenkin whether there was anything more that the Government could do to help. I have also consulted Peter Rees.

As you know, the present situation confronts me with a two-fold difficulty. I have no money available this year, and shall not know until late in the autumn whether the resources which Peter Rees can make available to me for 1985-86 will accommodate a grant to the Royal Academy without undue damage to the rest of my programme. Secondly the national museums and galleries, for which (unlike the Royal Academy) I carry the funding responsibility, are crying out for money for their buildings and will bitterly resent anything which looks like a diversion of resources to the Royal Academy.

For both reasons I had hoped that it might prove possible for the Department of the Environment or the PSA to take on, or at least contribute to, the task of helping the Royal Academy. I am sorry to report that Patrick Jenkin sees no possibility of this for reasons which I can only accept. The DOE has no vote which could legitimately be used for this purpose. And since the Royal Academy occupy their Crown building on a peppercorn rent and a full repairing lease, the only way in which the PSA could help would be by doing work for it free of charge. That would be a bad precedent and would also give the wrong message to the private sponsors whom the Academy rightly wishes to stimulate.

A further grant would therefore have to fall, like the last one, on my own Vote. That being so, I shall be prepared to try to find a further contribution to be made next year, though that must depend upon how far Peter Rees can help me in the autumn to find a bit of room for manoeuvre within my programme.

Meanwhile, I suggest that your letter should challenge the Royal Academy to do more to help themselves. That would be entirely consistent with the line you took at the meeting and would provide a good reason for delaying a decision until the end of the year. I think too that there is a real

point of substance here. On the building side, the Academy had £250,000 from the Government two years ago, but so far have only been able to raise some £200,000 more from private sources. That does not yet provide very convincing support for the thesis that a further Government grant would be effective in unlocking private purses. So I recommend that your letter should press the Academy to do more, and to let you know how they get on, before the Government comes to a decision; the attached draft letter to Sir Hugh Casson includes a few suggestions. This would also help me a little with my problem vis-a-vis the national museums and galleries when the time comes.

Copies of this minute go to Patrick Jenkin and Peter Rees.

*JG.*

LORD GOWRIE

5 July 1984

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO SIR HUGH CASSON

ROYAL ACADEMY APPEAL

When you and your colleagues came to see me about the Appeal on 19 June, I undertook to reflect on whether there was anything more which the Government could do to help.

*As I see it, you*  
*If I may summarise the position*

You set out the case very fully and fairly in the documents you sent me and <sup>in</sup> your oral explanation of the problems which you face. <sup>L</sup> Your Appeal has achieved substantial success on the endowment side, but <sup>as you recognise</sup> is going much more slowly in raising funds for the improvement of the building. Although the Government <sup>did of course</sup> provided £250,000 for this purpose in 1982-83, <sup>and you must be disappointed not to have attracted</sup> you have so far only succeeded in attracting an <sup>L</sup> ~~additional~~ £200,000 or so from private sources, ~~against~~ <sup>more than a further</sup> towards your need for £2m (or £2½m with an allowance for contingencies). <sup>carefully explained your view</sup> You believe that a further contribution ~~from the Government is needed to stimulate private donors.~~

*chat*

I warmly support the objectives of the Appeal. The Royal Academy has a magnificent record in presenting exhibitions of the highest quality, and it is important that you should bring the building to a standard which enables you to maintain and enhance that record in the future. <sup>Moreover, my</sup> ~~And,~~ my colleagues and I <sup>greatly</sup> appreciate and, ~~if I may say so,~~ fully ~~endorse~~ your determination to keep the Royal Academy as an institution which is largely independent of Government financing. <sup>the question is</sup> So we share a common approach to the present problem: it is a question of how the Royal Academy can best help itself, and whether the Government can take a further step to enable it to do so more effectively.

That being so, I suggest that your first step should be to strengthen the evidence that the Royal Academy really is doing everything it possibly can to press the building side of its Appeal. I make this suggestion for two reasons. The first is that the Government is not ~~in any case~~ in a position to make a further grant in the current financial year, for which ~~as I am sure you will understand~~ the Arts budget is <sup>I am afraid</sup> already fully committed. Secondly, I ~~do not think~~ <sup>am not sure</sup> that the record so far ~~provides enough support~~ <sup>really proves</sup> for the thesis that a further promise of Government funding (which would have to be on a fairly modest scale) would have the desired effect on other potential donors. I think, if I may say so, that you need to buttress that side of an otherwise persuasive case.

How you set about that is of course a matter for you to decide. But one or two thoughts occur to me which I offer for any help they may be:-

(1) I wonder whether it would be profitable to make a further systematic approach to firms in the construction and heating, lighting and ventilation industries. Some companies have in the past made very generous responses to appeals for help with such matters as lighting, and it should be possible for the Royal Academy to provide a permanent recognition of such contributions by means of notices or plaques in the exhibition rooms concerned.

(2) You opened negotiations in 1981 with the then Historic Buildings Council, whose functions have now been taken over by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, for help with the fabric. I am told that these negotiations have gone slowly and

that the HBMC still await your detailed submission and estimates. I hope that you will pursue that line of approach with all speed and vigour.

(3) You may think that it would be worthwhile to approach the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Its decisions are of course entirely a matter for the Trustees, and I understand that help to improve your ability to display heritage objects (among others) in suitable conditions would be something of a new departure for the Fund. This may therefore be a long shot, and I can obviously make no prediction about its prospect of success. But should you not try it?

As you know, the Government will be drawing up its spending ~~plans~~<sup>plans</sup> for 1985-86 in the autumn. It would be wrong for me to make any promise in advance. The Arts budget will again be very tightly stretched and we must look at the prospects for public expenditure as a whole. But Grey Gowrie will then look carefully to see whether anything can be done, in the light of the progress which you have been able to make between now and then. *Perhaps*  
~~you could aim to let him suggest that you should let me~~ have a further report before the end of October?

I am so sorry not to be able to give you an immediate 'yes' ~~for~~ But I know you understood how great are the other pressures on our arts expenditure - and I do hope you will not underestimate either the capacity or the willingness of the private sector to help out.

to such an eloquently argued case.

Arts + Amenities: Royal Academy Appeal June 84

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26 JUL 1984

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file  
ECLAAR

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 June 1984

I enclose a letter recording this morning's meeting with Sir Hugh Casson and others about the Royal Academy's Appeal.

After the meeting, the Prime Minister said to Lord Gowrie that she thought it would be essential to give the Academy some help. Lord Gowrie explained that the Academy was not one of his direct responsibilities, and that his programme expenditure was fully committed for the current financial year. Nevertheless, he undertook to give further consideration to the Royal Academy's case in the course of the discussions he would be having with the Chief Secretary in the autumn about public expenditure provision for arts and libraries in 1985/86. He also undertook to consult Ministers at the Department of the Environment.

BF

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the preparation of a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to Sir Hugh Casson, in the light of Lord Gowrie's discussions. It would be helpful if this letter could be comprehensive, even though it may not be possible to give commitments in advance of the discussions which will take place this autumn, or on behalf of non-Governmental bodies such as the HBNC.

I am sending copies of this letter to Alan Davis (Department of the Environment) and to John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office).

David Barclay

Mrs Mary Brown,  
Office of Arts and Libraries.

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