

**From:** Ian Macilwain  
**Sent:** 29 August 2013 21:34  
**To:** CineworldCityScreen  
**Subject:** Proposed sale of Belmont Cinema Aberdeen

I write as a concerned consumer to express my profound disquiet regarding the proposed sale of three cinemas as part of the Cineworld /Cityscreen merger investigation.

There is from my point of view a fundamental misunderstanding regarding the role of the Belmont cinema within the cinemas available to the Aberdeen public. There was never any significant competition between these two groups. Consequently their merger will not reduce competition which never existed. There is a completely different demographic among the patrons of the two groups. The multiplexes owned by Cineworld pitch their programmes at young people who want a diet dominated by Hollywood and high profile high earning blockbusters. Although it is true that these films figure to a degree in the Picturehouse (cityscreen) programme I know nobody who seriously considers viewing them in a multiplex as they don't like the atmosphere or the younger noisier patrons. What the Belmont offers is a constant supply of low budget often foreign, frequently subtitled films likely to appeal to older more culturally sophisticated audience who are repelled by the commercial atmosphere of the multiplexes. The young people who use the multiplexes would consider the Belmont small and old fashioned and would not seriously consider it as an alternative. The films which figure largely in the Belmont have never been shown and never will be shown in Cineworld cinemas. This is not a matter of ticket prices. Even a cursory inspection of the Belmont audience will suggest that low ticket prices are not a major element in viewing decisions. I and many people like me would willingly pay twice as much to see these films which form the major part of our cultural life. We are it should be noted over 120 miles from the nearest art house cinema in Edinburgh. We cannot, as might be common in the south, elect to see a film in a neighbouring town as there isn't one. The irony is that we successfully fought the town councils ill fated attempted sale of the cinemas contract to Edinburgh playhouse only last year. When they were forced by user pressure to go back to Cityscreen and renegotiate a new 10 year contract, we breathed a collective sigh of relief. Now your ill thought out proposals threaten to remove from us a trusted supplier of quality programming and substitute for it another unproven supplier without Picturehouse resources, even if one can be found, which seems doubtful.

I have no knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the other two cinemas in your proposal but as a long term resident of Aberdeen I would ask you to seriously reconsider the possible sale of the Belmont cinema as proposed. Please take a wider view encompassing the type of programme and variety of film rather than your current focus on ticket price alone.

Ian Macilwain

PS. What the committee needs to understand is that the current owners of the Belmont cinema in Aberdeen ( Picturehouse cinemas) supply a programme which the events of last year( attempted renegotiation of contract by the town council) demonstrate NOBODY else is able/willing to do.

If you force a sale I can guarantee that you will remove from us the variety and in particular the arthouse/international component which we prize so highly. Please attempt to find another solution.