

SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

Press Release 10 February 2014

The Victorian Society submits listing applications to English Heritage for the General Market and Fish Market at Smithfield in London on the eve of the Public Inquiry that opens tomorrow.



The Interior of the General Market, January 2014

“London’s greatness is fuelled by its landscapes. Its churches, its palaces and parks, its markets and squares, these great buildings inspire us, remind us of our history. Remove Smithfield and we lose that history forever, it’s no longer ours to enjoy anymore. Don’t tear down Smithfield General Market and Annex with their wonderful market halls, or London will become a duller place.”

Actress Helen McCrory who starred in Skyfall, shot at Smithfield Market

The Victorian Society has today submitted listing applications to English Heritage for the General Market and Fish Market at Smithfield in London, considering that previous listing assessments of the buildings had serious flaws. The listing applications have been submitted for consideration to the Inspector of the Inquiry.

Chris Costelloe, Director of the Victorian Society, commented that: "We consider that the engineering importance of the market hall of the General Market, due to be demolished under current plans, has not been adequately addressed. This is an innovative and ingenious structure, based on the modular structural system pioneered by the Crystal Palace. English Heritage researchers have stated that the General Market 'is a building of substantial engineering interest.' Its interior is also a magnificent space that very few Londoners have been able to see for many years. We hope that English Heritage will now take this opportunity to give the General Market and Fish Market the protection that they deserve."

In a Public Inquiry that opens tomorrow, SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society are challenging Henderson Global Investors, the City of London and GLA over a proposal to demolish the majority of the General Market and Fish Market, and replace their magnificent market halls with offices blocks.

Witnesses for SAVE and the Victorian Society are: on architectural heritage – Director of the Victorian Society Chris Costelloe and Dr Jenny Freeman; on town planning and planning policy - Alec Forshaw and Roger Hepher; on viability - Eric Reynolds of Urban Space Management and Ian Lerner; and on design- architect John Burrell.

In addition, innovative mixed-use developer Cathedral Group plc is submitting evidence in support of SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society's case for retention of the original buildings.

Cathedral Chief Executive Richard Upton says: "At the request of SAVE, Cathedral Group and its team of professional advisors has undertaken a full viability assessment to establish a clear economic argument for a retention scheme which will enable the spirit and fabric of the historic Smithfield

Market buildings to be preserved.

"We are confident enough of this assessment to have requested an opportunity to present our detailed evidence to the Inspector during the forthcoming Public Inquiry."

The Henderson proposals leave no more than three of the perimeter buildings wrapped around an entirely new interior largely filled with new office accommodation. SAVE has called it 'the worst mutilation of a Victorian building for 30 years.'

The existing interior consists of handsome parallel ranges of arched truss roofs with toplighting and louvred ventilation supported on X-trusses and elegant tall 'Phoenix' columns.

Patented in 1862, the Phoenix column was a hollow cylinder much lighter and stronger than the solid cast iron columns hitherto used in industrial architecture. They made it possible to support wider spans with fewer columns and without internal load bearing walls and unlike cast iron columns could rise to two or three storeys in height.

SAVE President Marcus Binney says: "The current proposals by Henderson Global Investors will replace the largely intact market halls of the Victorian General Market and Fish Market Annexe, with their characteristic iron columns and glazed roofs, by a new interior masquerading as an original with just a few rearranged and truncated Phoenix columns".

SAVE Director Clem Cecil says "We've had huge public support for our alternative planning application that leaves the buildings intact. Working with 'enlightened' developers Eric Reynolds and Richard Upton we have proved that our scheme is viable and deliverable."

Please follow the public inquiry on our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveSmithfieldMarket>

For more information and images, please contact:
The SAVE office on 0207 253 3500/office@savebritainsheritage.org
SAVE Director Clem Cecil on 07968 003595/
clem.cecil@savebritainsheritage.org
SAVE Caseworker Mike Fox on 07538 833445/
mike.fox@savebritainsheritage.org

Notes to editors:

The Public Inquiry opens at 10.00 am on Tuesday, 11 February 2014, and is scheduled to last for 12 days, until Friday, 28 February.

Taking place at the Basinghall Suite at Guildhall the inquiry is open to members of the public, and we would be very appreciative of a show of support from the public galleries.

Further details of the inquiry, including all the witness evidence submissions, can be found [here](#)

Or via the [SAVE](#) and [Victorian Society](#) websites

Sign up for updates: <http://www.savebritainsheritage.org/smithfield>

SAVE Britain's Heritage has been campaigning for historic buildings since its formation in 1975 by a group of architects, journalists and planners. It is a strong, independent voice in conservation, free to respond rapidly to emergencies and to speak out loud for the historic built environment.

SAVE Britain's Heritage, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ

Registered Charity 269129

Tel. 020 7253 3500 www.savebritainsheritage.org

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