



3 June 2016

Press release: New expert report commissioned by Liverpool City Council and SAVE confirms that the Futurist facade is not a danger to the public – and can be retained

A new report jointly commissioned by Liverpool City Council and SAVE confirms that the façade of the historic Futurist cinema on Lime Street is stable, and emergency demolition is not necessary.

The report, issued today by Integral Engineering Design, states that the building is not in imminent danger of collapse and does not pose a risk to public safety.

It states: “In overall terms we believe that the building is stable for the time being. In the short term there are some minor works that should be carried to give comfort to those who have responsibility for public safety.”

In addition, the report does not require any major temporary works such as internal/external scaffolding to stabilise the building in the short term, ahead of the wider hearing at the Court of Appeal which is due to be heard on 22 June.

The independent third party report was commissioned last week after Liverpool City Council closed off Lime Street to traffic and insisted that the building was in imminent danger of collapse and required immediate and substantial demolition.

This position was against the expert advice of Ed Morton, the conservation structural engineer appointed by SAVE, who, back in April, proposed a method of stabilizing the façade which would not require any demolition, or the total closure of Lime Street.

In order to find a solution, both parties undertook at the Court of Appeal to cooperate to find a solution and appoint a third party expert to deliver an independent report on the current structural stability of the building, and to decide what further works, if any, were required.

Henrietta Billings Director of SAVE Britain's Heritage said: “This report is a vindication of SAVE's long held view based on the advice of a leading conservation accredited engineer that the façade of the Futurist is not in imminent danger of collapse.

“We are pleased that the building has been found by the independent engineer to be stable – and that demolition is not necessary ahead of the planning appeal on 22 June. We urge the Council to carry out the minor works set out in the report without delay and re-open Lime Street as quickly as possible.”

Marcus Binney Executive President of SAVE said: “The grand frontage of the Futurist, in the form of a Roman triumphal arch, is one of the very best examples of pre 1st World War silent movie theatre architecture. This new independent report means that its future is secure in the run up to the Court of Appeal hearing later this month.”



The Court of Appeal hearing relates to planning permission granted in 2015 which includes the demolition of the Futurist cinema and over ten flanking historic buildings, and the redevelopment of the site with an 11 storey student housing block which would impact the World Heritage Site.

Numerous objections have been raised against the damaging elements of the proposal from Merseyside Civic Society, the Historic Cinema Theatres Association and the Victorian Society, as well as SAVE. A public petition to Save the Futurist Cinema gathered over 4,000 signatures.

Last month we published our alternative vision for Lime Street, a panoramic image which shows the Futurist cinema façade and the original 18th and 19th century buildings on this key city centre gateway retained and brought back to life.

SAVE is continuing to appeal for funds to support the campaign. We have received nearly £6,000 so far in over 140 separate donations. We need £10,000 to cover our legal costs.

Please help us reach our target by donating here:

<http://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/savebritainsheritage/limestreet>



Note to Editors

1. For more information please contact Henrietta Billings, Director at SAVE on 0207 253 3500 or office@savebritainsheritage.org

2. The appeal relates to Liverpool City Council ('LCC') and Neptune Developments' proposals to demolish more than ten buildings on Liverpool Lime Street, which is located in the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone.

SAVE considers that insufficient consultation took place before the Council determined the future of Liverpool's gateway street from which the famous railway station takes its name.

SAVE also considers that the issue of how LCC consults with the UK's World Heritage Committee and DCMS is crucial in order to protect Liverpool's World Heritage Site in the future. This also has wider importance for other World Heritage Sites in England and Wales. The current system of consultation is not clear and is not achieving the necessary level of protection.

3. To support SAVE's campaign please donate here:

<http://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/savebritainsheritage/limestreet>

Press release issued by SAVE Britain's Heritage

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