



Sheffield City Council approves demolition of Grade II listed Edwardian Jessop Hospital despite objections from the heritage sector

PRESS RELEASE 04/03/13



SAVE objects to Sheffield City Council's decision to allow Sheffield University to demolish Grade II Listed Edwardian Jessop Hospital building, subject to approval by Secretary of State, Eric Pickles.

Flying in the face of robust advice to retain the listed building from English Heritage, the Victorian Society and other amenity societies, Sheffield University is plowing ahead with proposals to demolish, in order to expand its Engineering Faculty with an 80m 'landmark' building that is totally unsympathetic to its

context.

Jessop Women's Hospital occupies a prominent site in the Sheffield townscape. It was built under the patronage of Thomas Jessop, one of Sheffield's great industrial fathers, and designed by important regional architect John Dodsley Webster. It consists of two buildings, both by Webster, the latter of which is under threat. Both are in a distinctive Gothic Revival style, and complement each other well.

Sheffield University bought the site from the NHS in 2001, demolishing all but the listed buildings by 2007.

Local feeling is strong, for most of the population was born in the hospital. A petition addressed to Eric Pickles to save the building has been signed by over 2,700 people.

Emails accessed by the Save Jessop Hospital group with a Freedom of Information request reveal collusion between Sheffield Council and the University, to ease the proposal through planning.

A senior planning officer said in his email to colleagues: "The proposals have serious implications and constitute poor design and should therefore be refused in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. However, I understand the economic benefits are considered to outweigh such concerns."

He continued: "To ensure we do not look foolish as an authority and do not make it possible for us to refuse proposals on design grounds in future, we have to be clear about the balance being struck and the failings of the proposals."

He also said he could 'come up with very little' positive to say about the scheme and advised against the council endorsing it.

Sheffield Council failed to consult with all the amenity societies and was therefore forced to take it to committee a second time. The Ancient Monuments Society, said it was against the demolition and urged the university to incorporate the Edwardian wing within the new block.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings urged the council to 'review justification' for the demolition.

The planning report, in recommending the University application be accepted, relies on an unsatisfactory interpretation of clause 133 of the NPPF. Normally the owner of a listed building would have to demonstrate a thorough consideration of alternative uses or owners before demolition could be

considered: Sheffield University has not done this. Demolition will gain the new development an extra 10% space.

We urge Secretary of State Eric Pickles to reject this application. The loss of this handsome building will be to the detriment of Sheffield's built heritage. Indeed, Thomas Jessop supported the setting up of Sheffield Technical School, a precursor to Sheffield University.

For more information and the petition see:

<http://www.jessophospital.org.uk/>

For further press information and images, please contact SAVE Director Clem

Cecil on 0207 253 3500 or at office@savebritainsheritage.org

Or Nick Roscoe on 07786425559 or at nick@nickroscoe.com

NOTES TO EDITORS: 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.

Press release issued by SAVE Britain's Heritage, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.
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