

PRESS RELEASE

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SAVE LEGAL CHALLENGE SECURES REPRIEVE FOR VICTORIAN SCHOOL

SAVE Britain's Heritage is delighted to announce that Clarence Street School in Bolton has been granted a reprieve after the Council conceded that its decision to demolish it for a temporary car park was unlawful.

In a dramatic turn of events, and with demolition underway, SAVE's lawyers, Susan Ring of Richard Buxton Solicitors and Barristers Richard Harwood and Caroline Allen of 39 Essex Street, successfully obtained an injunction preventing the council from continuing with the demolition pending a judicial review. The council has now conceded that it failed to take into account its own Development Brief for the site when granting itself consent for redevelopment and has accepted that this consent should be quashed.

SAVE now hopes that the council will revisit its excellent Development Brief which praises the 1890s former school as 'of architectural merit', 'a significant landmark feature' and of 'high value in terms of its contribution to local distinctiveness' and explore ways this handsome building can be brought back into use, and provide a catalyst for the conservation-led regeneration of the area. SAVE has already commissioned the architect Huw Thomas to produce an outline scheme for the conversion of the building and rejuvenation of its setting.

William Palin, Secretary of SAVE, says 'This is very good news for Clarence Street and for Bolton as a whole. We now hope that Bolton Council will follow the advice of its own regeneration team and actively seek ways in which this building can be brought back into use. SAVE has been campaigning for the preservation and reuse of historic buildings for over 30 years and we are eager to offer our experience and expertise to help this project forward. As some damage was done before demolition was halted it is now imperative that the council acts fast to secure the school from the elements in order to halt any further deterioration.'

Marcus Binney, President of SAVE says 'From the beginning SAVE has been willing to take

up the cause of buildings in extreme danger, repeatedly initiating legal proceedings to stop imminent demolition. This is the first time we have stopped a demolition that has already begun, thanks to lightning action by our lawyers. We are determined this prominent landmark should be given the new lease of life the council originally intended. This case illustrates a wider threat to numerous solidly built and well-designed older buildings which are not protected by listing.'

Brian Tetlow, Chairman of the Bolton and District Civic Trust says: 'We are delighted by this news. The Civic Trust does all in its power to preserve Bolton's rich architectural heritage and it is regrettable that a building of substance and quality could have been considered for demolition when the council had recognised its value. We would sincerely hope that moves can be made quickly to repair the building and bring it in to beneficial use.'

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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.

In 1995 SAVE published the report, *Beacons of Learning; Breathing New Life into Old Schools, SAVE Britain's Heritage*, which lists 128 schools built between 1870 and 1900 which have now been converted. The report focuses on the plight of urban schools in England and Wales and contains essays and illustrated case studies of demolished, converted and empty and threatened school buildings (£11.50 / £9.20 incl. p&p).

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