

**SAVE**  
BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

**THE VICTORIAN  
SOCIETY**

Press Release 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013

**SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society  
join forces in an attempt to save Jessops Hospital in  
Sheffield.**



The Victorian Society and SAVE Britain's Heritage have issued joint Judicial Review proceedings with the aim of saving the Grade II listed Edwardian Jessop Hospital building from demolition, that was granted to the University by Sheffield City Council.

The two conservation charities have started judicial review proceedings against Sheffield City Council's decision.

The Council voted in March this year to approve Sheffield University's plan to demolish the building despite local outcry and the objections of local and national conservation groups. The Victorian Society and SAVE are applying for judicial review of the decision.

This is a robust test for National Planning Policy: SAVE and the Victorian Society represented by Susan Ring of Richard Buxton Environmental Law and Richard Harwood QC, are challenging the tests that were applied when balancing damage to a heritage asset against public benefits, as stipulated by the new Planning Policy. SAVE and the Victorian Society believe that the wrong tests were applied. This case will set an important precedent by clarifying how rigorously Councils have to weigh the loss of listed buildings under new planning guidelines.

The public benefits proposed by the University, on the basis of which the council granted planning permission, consists of jobs during the period of construction of a new engineering block on the site. SAVE and the Victorian Society believe that the building, a landmark in Sheffield, is eminently capable of re-use, like the Victorian block beside it that predates it by 25 years and is by the same architect. This is in use as a university building.

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.

"It is essential that this perception that old buildings are a brake on progress should be dropped. Listed buildings are a finite resource that cannot be replaced – this is a valued historic building in one of the country's major cities – something that should be celebrated and taken advantage of rather than destroyed." SAVE Director Clem Cecil.

"It is sad that a learned institution like Sheffield University should be demolishing a cornerstone of its own city's industrial and philanthropic history. This is an ideal opportunity for the University to incorporate a fine example of Edwardian architecture into its new engineering building. We hope that the University will change course, even at this late point," said Chris Costelloe, Director of the Victorian Society.

Valerie Bayliss, Chair of the South Yorkshire Group of the Victorian Society and active in the campaign to save Jessop Hospital said "The Victorian Society was one of the National Amenity Societies who the Council first had to consult and we were vehemently opposed to the plans. Legal action like this is unusual and such a joining of forces between conservation groups like this more-so. This is an indication of just

how seriously national organisations are taking this case, fearing the precedent that it could create for other listed buildings."

### **Notes for Editors:**

The former gothic-revival Jessop Hospital, commissioned by steelmaker Thomas Jessop, was designed by John Dodsley Webster in 1878 and extended in 1902.

Constructed in red brick with stone dressings, the design of the 1902 block sympathetically takes its material and stylistic lead from the earlier Victorian block which has been turned into the University's music department.

The use of stone mullioned windows, a double string course between first and second floors, incised lintels and machicolated eaves, to name but a few, are attractive and common features of both wings. The Edwardian structure is a thoughtfully crafted and handsome building in its own right making a positive contribution to the character of the area. It is prominently located and the design and detailing of the north-west corner facing Broad Lane has, by its buttressed corner-turret, clearly been attentively composed to provide interesting views from a variety of angles.

**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.

**The Victorian Society** is the national charity campaigning for the Victorian and Edwardian historic environment. It fights to preserve important Victorian and Edwardian buildings and landscapes so that they can be enjoyed by this and future generations. It provides expert advice to churches and local planning authorities on how Victorian and Edwardian buildings and landscapes can be adapted to the way we live now, while keeping what is special about them. It also advises members of the public about how they can help shape the future of their local Victorian and Edwardian buildings and landscapes. It provides information to owners of Victorian and Edwardian houses about how they can better look after their precious buildings. It helps people understand, appreciate and enjoy the architectural heritage of the Victorian and Edwardian period through its publications and educational programmes.

For more information and images, please contact the SAVE office on [office@savebritainsheritage.org](mailto:office@savebritainsheritage.org) or 0207253 3500 or The Victorian Society 020 8994 1019

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