

SAVE **BRITAIN'S HERITAGE**

70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ

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JEREMY CLARKSON AND OTHERS RALLY FOR THREATENED BRUNEL PUMPING STATION, TOTNES, DEVON: ENGLISH HERITAGE ACCUSED OF "WHITEWASHING HISTORY"

TV's Jeremy Clarkson has spoken out against Dairycrest's attempt to demolish Brunel's historic pumping station at Totnes in Devon, an all too rare survival from the engineer's 1840s atmospheric railway. Clarkson's brilliant advocacy on TV's "Great Britons" nearly won Brunel the accolade of Great Briton of all time. (He was beaten by Churchill by a whisker).

Mr Clarkson said, "Dairycrest is a jolly big and important company, I'm sure. But its chilled products will never worm their way into the fabric of Britain quite like Isambard Kingdom Brunel did. And, nor, I suspect, will whatever they propose to build when the pumping station has been pulled down. I urge them therefore to think again."

Marcus Binney, President of SAVE, in 1980 led the rescue and restoration of Brunel's original railway terminus at Bristol Temple Meads. He said, "Brunel was not only Britain's most famous engineer but he had his own highly distinctive architectural style - bold, rugged and making excellent use of natural materials. Every building he designed, great or small, is a landmark in its locality."

Earlier this week the Department for Culture Media and Sport took English Heritage's advice and refused to list the building. The two other remaining pumping stations at Starcross and Torre are listed at Grade I and II* respectively.

Shadow Arts Minister Ed Vaizey MP said, "This is a shocking act of cultural vandalism. This is one of just three unique pumping stations, built by the country's greatest engineer, and it should be listed and preserved"

Industrial archaeologist, from TV's 'Coast' series, Mark Horton said, "The world would be a poorer place if this building was demolished. It is vital to understanding the atmospheric railway and tells how Brunel planned a much more ambitious scheme that was thwarted by the directors, which is not found in any of the documents or indeed standard accounts of his life. One might as well just burn one of his notebooks"

'Very little of our industrial heritage is now safe if this extraordinary decision is allowed to stand. English Heritage are effectively whitewashing history, with the view that the Atmospheric Railway did not contribute to technological development - a very debatable point'

ENDS

Contact:

Adam Wilkinson, Secretary, SAVE Britain's Heritage 020 7253 3500, 07973 382 948

Councillor Pruw Boswell, Totnes Town Council 01803 862 870

Images available on request

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