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## **SAVE LAUNCHES CROWD FUNDING INITIATIVE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE WELSH STREETS, LIVERPOOL**

<http://digventures.com/projects/save-the-welsh-streets-2014/>

On June 17th a public inquiry begins in Liverpool into planning application to demolish over 400 Victorian terraced houses in Toxteth, L8, including most of Madryn Street, where Ringo Starr was born.

The streets are to be replaced with drastically fewer semi-detached and detached houses with gardens, dropping the density by some 45% percent despite the proximity of the area to the city centre. Only forty houses are to be refurbished.

SAVE has been campaigning to save the Welsh Streets for over 10 years. In 2011 SAVE bought a property there - 21 Madryn Street, the former home of Ringo Starr's aunt. SAVE bought the house to show that with minimal investment it is possible to make these terraces into comfortable homes. A young couple has been happily living there ever since.

The grounds for the public inquiry include whether it fails in terms of national housing and planning policy, issues of design, sustainability and architectural significance.

SAVE has made several significant discoveries in the course of gathering its evidence for the inquiry.

One of the chief among these is that the Welsh Streets were laid out and built by prominent Welsh architect Richard Owens, who master-planned large areas of Liverpool in the last quarter of the 19th century. Owens was the embodiment of the strong Welsh element that contributed to the history and construction of Liverpool at its great moment of expansion in the late 19th

century. The Welsh Streets are named after Welsh landmarks, the houses were built and partly inhabited by Welsh builders, and the area was a Welsh community for many years.

This evidence has been uncovered for the first time by one of our witnesses, Gareth Carr, who completed a PhD about Richard Owens at the Liverpool University architecture faculty this year.

Another aspect of SAVE's evidence is how deeply connected the wider area is to Ringo Starr's background, and not only the house where he was born. Starr was born at No.9 Madryn Street, and spent his first five years there; his grandparents lived at the other end of the street, his aunt lived at No.21, and his best friend at No.10. Following this he moved two streets away where he lived until he went to London after becoming an international mega star with the Beatles.

While an agreement between former Housing Minister Grant Shapps and Liverpool Mayor Joe Anderson was made in 2012 to save 16 houses on Madryn Street, SAVE holds that it is important to keep the entire street in tact.

In addition, SAVE holds that it is viable to refurbish the houses, and presents a more sustainable approach. This position is supported by a recent survey of the site, undertaken jointly with Liverpool Council. Evidence from our surveyors and QS indicate that refurbishment will cost between £51,000 and £60,000 on the properties - with scope for this figure to drop if individuals take on refurbishment of their own homes, or if a developer refurbishes a groups of houses. Evidence from estate agent Paul Sutton indicates that the houses would sell for between £75,000 and £85,000.

SAVE needs to raise £40,000 to fight the inquiry, and has embarked on a crowd-funding initiative with Dig Ventures, a platform that has successfully raised money for several UK archaeological digs. Supporters of our campaign are eligible for a variety of benefits including tailored Beatles-themed or architectural tours of Liverpool, tickets to a party at The Empress pub that features on the front of Ringo's solo album A Sentimental Journey, a tea towel that is being especially designed for the campaign, membership of SAVE and SAVE publications. The top prizes are tea at 21 Madryn Street which is at present being redesigned by Tilly and Wayne Hemingway of Hemingway

Designs, and participation in a discussion about the future of No9 Madryn Street, held at 21 Madryn Street with members of the team.

Fighting public inquiries is an expensive business, and SAVE is a small independent charity that receives no public funding. Our experts are giving their time for free or at greatly reduced rates, investing some £200,000 of donated time to this fight for which we are hugely grateful. We still need to raise another £40,000 to cover legal fees, the cost of a survey of a number of houses on the site, towards the redecoration of the house, and other expenses.

**SAVE Director Clem Cecil** says: "This is the first crowdfunding campaign of its kind in the UK, and we are really looking forward to involving everyone who supports us in the fight to save this neighbourhood. We're offering great campaign benefits, and raising awareness about what is happening here among Beatles fans, and those interested in Welsh-Liverpool history. This is a way for them to get actively involved."

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**SAVE's vision for Madryn Street**

## **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.

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