

SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

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SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society submit a full planning application to the City of London for Smithfield General Market and Annex.

This alternative scheme for Smithfield General Market and Annex involves no demolition and is based on a business plan from Urban Space Management, who transformed Camden Lock, and Spitalfields Market from empty heritage buildings with zero occupancy into thriving, vibrant cultural destinations.

In February (11th - 28th) there will be a Public Inquiry into the future of Smithfield General Market and stunning Annex building. This will determine whether Henderson Global Investors will be able to demolish most of the site and build two large office blocks.

The Public Inquiry is being fought by SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society against the GLA, the City of London and Henderson Global Investors. The Secretary of State called it in for Public Inquiry in September this year.



Illustration of Smithfield General Market reopened as a market hub. Illustration by Catherine Aldred

English Heritage, in a volte face, are supporting the Henderson scheme saying that it does not cause 'substantial harm' to the Smithfield conservation area, although they opposed the demolition of the General Market in a previous public inquiry.

The SAVE/Victorian Society scheme, drawn up by John Burrell of Burrell, Foley, Fischer, will save the General Market and its unique interiors and handsome top-lit market halls for the nation and create a new bustling hub in the heart of London.

Smithfield General Market was built in the late 19th Century by City Surveyor Sir Horace Jones, architect of Billingsgate and Leadenhall markets and Tower Bridge. Together with the meat and poultry markets the General Market makes up the grandest procession of market buildings in Europe. It is a public asset, owned by the City of London Corporation. They have let it lie empty and largely unused for some 15 years.



Farringdon Road Façade of the SAVE/Victorian Society planning application for Smithfield General Market. Drawing: John Burrell (Burrell, Foley Fischer).

SAVE President Marcus Binney says: "This represents a head to head challenge to the present scheme from Henderson Global Investors. This is a practical commercially fundable alternative, which will bring life and jobs to the area. Smithfield doesn't need yet more offices. Hendersons are already building a huge new office development on the next-door site. Their greed is insatiable."

SAVE Director Clem Cecil says: "We are delighted to be working with the Victorian Society on this planning application that is a crucial aspect of our case for the public inquiry. We are saying loud and clear that this heritage is important for London and the nation and can be protected and bring economic benefit."

Victorian Society Director Chris Costelloe says: "Smithfield Market has a character like no other part of central London. Preserving this

is a matter of national importance. Our viable scheme for the site would boost the local economy and give these important buildings a long-term future. By contrast the Henderson scheme would cause substantial harm. We are pleased to be standing side by side with SAVE Britain's Heritage in this campaign.”

Eric Reynolds, Founding Director of Urban Space Management

says: “We have worked with the Victorian Society and SAVE to produce a planning application that enables the re-launch of the buildings as a market based destination for independent food, creative business and cultural enterprise. We will build upon the site’s position at the heart of London, its unrivalled transport connections and Farringdon’s global reputation as a destination for creative business and British food.

The opportunity cannot be recreated in the atrium of a modern office building. The grand, top lit Victorian market halls of the General Market Building and Annex present a unique opportunity to London. Once lost they will be gone forever. We have to save them from the wrecking ball.”



Charterhouse Street Façade of the SAVE/Victorian Society planning application for Smithfield General Market. Drawing: John Burrell (Burrell, Foley Fischer).

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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.

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