

## **Press Release: Cherish the Terrace – Turner Prize nomination is a deliverance from demolition**



**Assemble's proposed 'Winter Garden' in one of the empty homes**

SAVE Britain's Heritage congratulates the Turner Prize panel's recognition that Victorian terraced streets are true works of art: this nomination of Liverpool's Granby area for the prestigious award represents a deliverance for terraced housing in the north of England, long tainted by the shadow of demolition.

For too long many of these terraces have been seen as slums, rather than attractive and pleasant homes, as illustrated by Assemble.

SAVE has championed terraced housing since we were founded in 1975. Over the last ten years we have been doing battle with John Prescott's £2.2bn 'Pathfinder' policy, which targeted up to 400,000 homes across the English North and Midlands for demolition, 18,000 of them on Merseyside. Many terraces were demolished, but others were left derelict when the policy was abandoned as a failure in 2011, including Liverpool's Anfield, Granby and the nearby Welsh Streets.

A recent swing in favour of renovation, as opposed to redevelopment, has allowed Granby residents to take ownership of some empty land and houses in a local Community Land Trust (CLT). SAVE introduced the residents to social investors Steinbeck Studio, who in turn invited the innovative young architectural practice Assemble, based in London's East End, to the area.

Assemble's designs for the Granby Four Streets CLT have now attracted the attention of the Tate's Turner Prize judging panel, who this week announced their shortlisting alongside three other artists.

Assemble's idea of leaving some of the bare shells as elegant, glazed winter gardens is reminiscent of the street-greening projects run by residents determined to resist the dereliction imposed on them by Pathfinder.

Assemble goes with the grain of ruin, rather than against it, transforming parts of houses that have lost ceilings, into double height rooms. This vision counters the negative press terraced housing in Liverpool has had for so many years and, we hope, marks a new era in recognition of these buildings' adaptability and ability to please.

In the new scheme devised with the CLT and Steinbeck Studios, new and renovated homes will now be partly owned by both new and remaining residents. This is a positive departure from the top-down approach of Pathfinder, which handed publicly-acquired land to private developers and major social landlords.

**Liverpool-based town-planner Jonathan Brown**, who worked with SAVE on the campaign to save terraced streets, says: "Assemble's genius has been to tell the story of these sometimes bitterly contested places in a way which heals wounds, but doesn't hide scars.

"These beautiful houses and the communities they housed have not been dispersed and left semi derelict by some random act of God, or market failure, but by an expensive aberration in public policy that needed to be confronted.

"The real heroes of this confrontation are the householders on the front line who refused to budge despite decades of bureaucratic bullying and blight, and put up a creative alternative. It's great to see the art establishment step out of the gallery to engage with this.

"Alongside the resilience of residents, SAVE Britain's Heritage, Merseyside Civic Society and the Empty Homes charity deserve particular credit. They helped us open up the local campaigns to national media and political attention, and in fact introduced the investor who brought in Assemble."

**Steinbeck Studio Director Xanthe Hamilton**, who commissioned the Assemble project says: "We are delighted that this work has been given this level of recognition. We must now focus our attentions on making sure that the main beneficiaries of this process are the community and the wider neighbourhood, and that community-led and neighbourhood-scale, socially driven investment becomes a nationwide movement."

**SAVE Director Clementine Cecil** said: “None of this would have been possible without the vision and resilience of local residents living in these blighted areas, with whom it has been a privilege to work. Xanthe Hamilton of Steinbeck Studios and Assemble are the Theaster Gates of Liverpool. It is extremely positive that the Council chose to work with them, hopefully ushering in a new era of respect for the modest terraced house, and for the communities that choose to live in them.

“The nomination is also an opportunity to remind the public that the fate of the over 400 terraced houses, only half a mile away in the Welsh Streets, by the same architect Richard Owens, remain under threat of demolition. There is no need for this – they would make good homes for hundreds of people. However Liverpool council has launched a high court challenge to overturn the government’s refusal of permission for demolition of the Welsh Streets, a fight described by the Times as 'the planning battle of the century', which we won in a public inquiry held last year. We call on the council to take note of the positive response Assemble’s designs have received, and rethink their policy for the Welsh Streets.”

For those of you who haven’t seen it, please watch SAVE’s short film by Director Orlando Gili, about the Welsh Streets, commissioned for a crowd-funding project, now closed:

SAVE Welsh Streets video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbJDO-mXiyU>



**Cairns Street, Liverpool 8, designed Welsh architect Richard Owens  
Pic Ronnie Hughes, A Sense of Place – streets under renovation, 2015**





**Assemble masterplan for the Granby Four Streets CLT**



**SAVE's alternative Welsh Streets vision**

For more information and images, please contact the SAVE Office on 0207 253 3500 or [office@savebritainsheritage.org](mailto:office@savebritainsheritage.org), or Clem Cecil on 07968 003 595

**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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