



PRESS RELEASE 3 September 2013

## **SMITHFIELD GENERAL MARKET TO BE CALLED IN FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY DECIDES SECRETARY OF STATE**

Secretary of State Eric Pickles has decided to call in the application from Hendersons Global Investors, granted planning permission by the City of London corporation on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Hendersons propose to demolish the market halls of Smithfield General Market and replace them with an office block.

Yesterday SAVE submitted a 4,731 strong petition to Eric Pickles and Planning Minister Nick Boles, calling for a public inquiry.

By granting planning permission, the City was ignoring the conclusions of a previous Public Inquiry 2007-8 that concluded that the site offers an opportunity for regeneration of the kind undertaken at Covent Garden, Spitalfields, Greenwich or Camden Lock. Crucially, the Inspector concluded that the City should place the site on the open market in order to allow conservation-led schemes to come forward. This did not happen, despite the existence of such schemes.

There is a fully-funded, viable, conservation-led alternative for the General Market, which has been developed by market entrepreneur Eric Reynolds, a key witness for English Heritage in the previous public inquiry. The Reynolds scheme is light of touch and would preserve the General Market and Fish Market in their entirety and allow them to open within months as a food market and a place for cafes, retail, bars and restaurants. Reynolds has made an offer to the City of London for the site.

This 4,731-strong petition is in addition to the some 250 letters of objection the City of London received regarding this application. There has been considerable interest in the scheme among MPs nationwide,

and in the House of Lords, including letters from Glenda Jackson and Bob Russell MPs and the Lord Cormack and Lord Salisbury.

All this underlies that this is a case of national significance concerning an important London landmark.

**The Secretary of State** writes:

“The Secretary of State accordingly directs, under his powers in section 77 of the 1990 Act, that the application shall be referred to him instead of being dealt with by the Local Planning Authority.”

He continues:

“The matters which he particularly wishes to be informed about for the purposes of his consideration of the application are:

- 1) the extent to which the proposed development is consistent with government policies in requiring good feigns (NPPF section 7)
- 2) the extent to which the proposed development is consistent with government policy in planning for the conserving and enhancing the historic environment (NPPF section 12)
- 3) the extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area; and
- 4) any other issues the Inspector considers appropriate.”

Letters of objection to the Hendersons application were submitted by: the Victorian Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Twentieth Century Society, the Council for British Archaeology, the Ancient Monuments Society, the World Monuments Fund, the Heritage of London Trust, Islington Council, the Charterhouse and many others.

In addition, the campaign to save the market it is supported by Alan Bennett, Fergus Henderson of St John, Jeanette Winterson, Patricia Routledge, Julian Lloyd Weber and John Betjeman’s daughter Candida Lycett Green.

**SAVE Director Clem Cecil** says “this is excellent news. Very few applications are called in by the Secretary of State: it shows the

significance of the building for the nation and the continuing interest of ministers in it.”

**SAVE President Marcus Binney** says: “SAVE has been fighting for a sympathetic use for the General Market for 12 years and we have a complete scheme ready to go with finance to transform it into a lively food market.”





For more information and images, please contact the office on [office@savebritainsheritage.org](mailto:office@savebritainsheritage.org) / 0207 253 3500 or Clem Cecil on 07968 003595

**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.

Press release issued by SAVE Britain's Heritage, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.  
Registered Charity 269129