



Mr Dave Harris
Development Control Manager
Medway Council
Gun Wharf, Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR

29 July 2009

Dear Mr Harris,

Aveling and Porter Office Building, Strood

SAVE is alarmed to learn of proposals by Medway Council to demolish the A&P building as part of plans to clear and sell the riverside site for residential redevelopment.

Although unlisted, the Aveling and Porter headquarters is a prominent local landmark and a building of quality. Its designer, George Bond, was a local architect of some standing and a number of his other works are listed. Dating from 1906, it is one of only a handful of buildings of architectural and historic significance in Strood. It is in excellent condition, having been well-maintained by Medway Council, and retains many original features including, significantly, all its windows - an indication of the quality and robustness of its construction.

Hundreds of buildings of this type and period all over the country have been the subject of successful conversions to a range of new uses over the last few decades. The solidity of construction that characterises many late Victorian and Edwardian institutional, commercial and industrial buildings, gives them great flexibility and often minimises the need for major structural improvements or repairs. It is our view that the A&P building is crying-out for reuse, and that once converted it would form an elegant and prestigious centrepiece for any new development as well as providing a crucial link to Strood's social, commercial and architectural history.

Medway Council has the opportunity to preserve this much-loved local landmark and promote its integration within a wider development scheme. To show how this might be achieved SAVE would like to commission (at our own expense) an architect to draw up a blueprint for the conversion of the building. SAVE has employed this approach a number of times in the past to great effect, delivering projects which satisfy owners, developers and local people. We would therefore ask you to agree a 'stay of execution' until we have been able to produce a sketch scheme for reuse.

The A&P building has enormous potential and in our view could deliver substantial benefits for the people and businesses in and around Strood long into the future. It is SAVE's view that its destruction would be wasteful and tragically short sighted.

Yours sincerely

William Palin
Secretary

cc Heloise Brown, Victorian Society; Bob Ratcliffe, City of Rochester Society; Neil Davies, Chief Executive, Medway Council