

PRESS RELEASE

SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

TRIUMPH, DISASTER AND DECAY THE SAVE SURVEY OF LIVERPOOL'S HERITAGE

AN EXHIBITION AT THE RIBA GALLERY IN LIVERPOOL FROM 16 FEBRUARY TO 6 MARCH 2009



As Liverpool emerges from its year in the limelight as European Capital of Culture, a new exhibition, mounted by SAVE Britain's Heritage, takes a sobering look at the state of the city's architectural heritage. As ever-taller apartment buildings spring up along the waterfront, countless historic buildings are still being left to rot, or demolished in the name of 'regeneration'.

Less than a hundred years ago, Liverpool was a city of phenomenal wealth - its great dock system one of the wonders of the world. In the wake of World War II, changing patterns of industry and shipping led to steep economic decline, and in the decades that followed, the city's built heritage was to come under terrible assault. In 1958 the bombed-out shell of one of the city's finest landmarks, the monumental Custom House, was torn down to 'relieve unemployment' and countless Georgian and Victorian terraces were to follow - swept away for new housing estates. Shockingly, large clearance schemes were to continue into the 1970s and 1980s, with Grade II-listed Clayton Square in the heart of the city demolished in 1986 to make way for a shopping centre. Today, whole terraces of good-quality Victorian houses are being cleared again, for the Edge Lane road-widening project, and for the Government's Pathfinder housing scheme.

In 1984, SAVE's report *The Agony of Georgian Liverpool* documented the plight of dozens of Georgian houses. 25 years on, it is sad to report that many of the buildings featured in the report have been demolished, while others still cling on today in a desperate state of decay. Encouragingly, a number of fine inner-city Georgian terraces were saved in the 1980s through refurbishment programmes grant-aided by English Heritage, which more recently has conducted extensive research into Liverpool's heritage and helped to fund a much-needed Buildings at Risk Officer.

Marcus Binney, SAVE's President says, 'We have fought two of our most memorable campaigns in Liverpool, first rescuing the beautiful Regency Lyceum Club after consent to demolish had been granted and, second, taking legal action to stop the imminent demolition of the spectacular church of St Francis Xavier'.

This new exhibition will highlight the importance, as well as the vulnerability, of Liverpool's architectural heritage - drawing attention to the alarming number of historic buildings still at risk in the city, as well as celebrating recent successes. Contemporary and historic photographs will be accompanied by commentary from leading historians, conservation experts and residents of Liverpool.

The exhibition will run from 16 February to 6 March at the RIBA Gallery, 82 Wood Street, Liverpool L1 4DQ. It will be open Monday to Friday, and on Saturday 21 February.

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Dereliction on Duke Street



A future for the Futurist Cinema?