

SAVE

PRESS RELEASE

14 October 2009

BID LAUNCHED TO SAVE STROOD'S EDWARDIAN GEM FROM BULLDOZERS

THREATENED BUILDING COULD TAKE PRIDE OF PLACE IN NEW DEVELOPMENT



Strood's new quayside? Artist's impression by Huw Thomas, commissioned by SAVE

As part of a campaign to preserve one of Strood's best Edwardian buildings, SAVE Britain's Heritage has published details of a new vision for the town's quayside. The plans show how the Aveling & Porter Building, threatened with destruction by Medway Council, could form the centrepiece in a new development of shops and apartments.

SAVE's scheme received a boost this week with a letter from one of England's most respected structural engineers which questioned figures produced by the council to justify demolition of the Aveling & Porter Building. After an external inspection Ed Morton, of the Morton Partnership described the building as 'in generally good condition' and stated that it 'could and should be retained.'

SAVE's new vision for Strood looks to take full advantage of the town's wonderful position on the River Medway with views across to Rochester Castle and Cathedral, two of the finest Norman monuments in England. At present the Strood waterfront is a desultory place with no more than a patch of grass and a large expanse of car parks backed by cheap sheds along a ring road.

With architect Huw Thomas, SAVE proposes a new quayside running 200 yards along the river and creek. The new quayside will be fronted by a broad riverside promenade with grass and seats looking across to Rochester. Beyond this an undercroft of shops and cafes could be formed with a first-floor boardwalk providing entry into the houses and flats.

The scheme will incorporate the existing historic Aveling & Porter Building beside the handsome bridge crossing the river to Rochester. This will be converted into apartments.

William Palin SAVE, Secretary says 'The council's argument for the destruction of the Aveling & Porter Building is based on highly questionable figures. It is a tragedy that short-term economics are being used to deprive Strood of one of its key heritage assets. This is a building of which local people are extremely proud. It provides an anchor to Strood's great industrial past and if retained could form the prestigious centrepiece of a new residential development.'

Marcus Binney, President of SAVE says 'The SAVE scheme, with the A&P Building at its heart, takes full advantage of the long riverfront, providing a good return for the council. The maximum number of residents will have good views across the river to the castle. This could give Strood a riverfront to match Rochester'.

The campaign to save the A&P building has been spearheaded locally by the City of Rochester Society, which presented a 1000-name petition to councillors demanding the retention of the building. The petition will be discussed at a council meeting on 15 October 2009.

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.

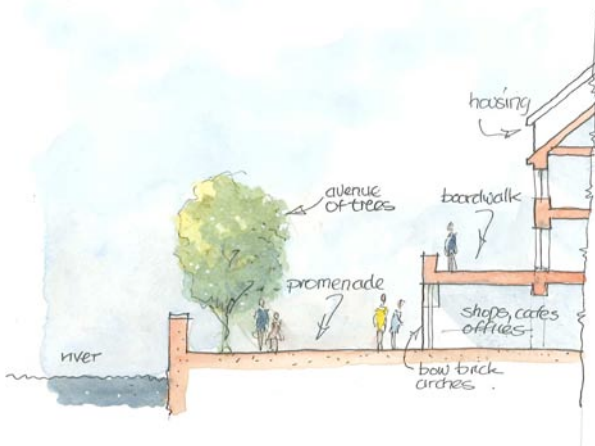
For further information please contact William Palin or Catherine Townsend on 020 7253 3500 or email office@savebritainsheritage.org

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Huw Thomas's scheme for the rescue of Peninsula Barracks in Winchester, commissioned by SAVE in the 1990s proved an instant success with all the flats and apartments selling immediately, in part thanks to the magnificent landscaping around a fountain garden created on the parade ground.

Huw Thomas Associates have been at the forefront of imaginative design for several decades. Their expertise in dealing with the long-term future of historic buildings has brought a new lease of life to many areas all over the UK. The practice is proud of its national reputation for the sympathetic transformation of neglected areas and buildings and has collaborated with SAVE on a number of important projects.

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A cross section of the proposed new boardwalk



The Aveling & Porter Building, threatened with destruction