

the glass and steel concoction they were poised to inflict on Sidmouth.

Waverley Mill, Galashiels



Just as SAVE was celebrating the decision to retain and restore Paddington's magnificent Span Four in August, trouble was brewing north of the border in Scotland. The Waverley Mill stands on the Gala Water within a stone's throw of Galashiels town centre, and until September of this year housed the fully functioning Lochcarron weaving mill. This remarkable ensemble of buildings charted more than two hundred years of development in the Scottish textile industry. Modest mill cottages built in 1805 from local stone and flint rubbed shoulders with more imposing red sandstone Victorian and Edwardian mill buildings.

SAVE was alerted to the submission of a planning application to raze to the ground this historic mill complex in its entirety. In its place would be a retail park comprising of four white-clad, megastore sheds organised into a shopping 'strip'. The initial (if somewhat naïve) presumption was that Historic Scotland would surely assess the site, granting it the listing it deserved and so ensuring its survival. On the contrary, thanks to a longstanding policy that prevents buildings being listed when subject to live planning applications, Historic Scotland's hands were completely tied.

The only hope was for a group of responsible, conservation-friendly members of Scottish Borders Council to push through a building preservation notice, stopping developers Terrace Hill in their tracks. No such luck – the council insisted that the legal and financial ramifications of this would be enormous, especially given Historic Scotland's lack of involvement.

In spite of a SAVE press-release with encouraging local and national press coverage (and a brief flirtation with ITV), it soon became apparent that the characters in this saga were not budging. With a council that seemed to have little regard for the history or even sense of place of its main town and an almost totally inert Historic Scotland, the mill's fate was sealed. With undue haste reserved matters that remained on the planning application were passed (nominally the retention of a rare water wheel to stand in a retail forecourt) and full permission was granted by the Council on the 21st August 2006. Demolition began in early September.

SAVE requested that Historic Scotland provided an assessment as to whether the building met the criteria for listing. The answer, which was positive, clearly demonstrates that the existing policy is a nonsense, making it impossible to list buildings of listable quality when they are in danger. The position is the worse because this particular planning application had been live for the best part of the decade and listing criteria had clearly changed in the meantime. SAVE is hopeful that this realisation will provide the key for reconsidering the policy.

Middlesex Guildhall, London

Middlesex Guildhall is not a minor building, nor one that is inappropriately used – it is currently a Crown Court, occupied very happily by its resident judges, with an interior that reflects the full majesty of the law. However, it easily goes unnoticed, nestling behind shady plane trees on Parliament Square among buildings of the highest order of importance, such as Westminster Abbey, Parliament and the Treasury. It is this very location which makes it so vulnerable.

Listed at Grade II*, it is a masterpiece of the Gothic Revival, completed in 1913. Its exterior, in white Portland stone, is sparingly adorned by muscular angels, delicate foliage and heraldic scenes designed by HC Fehr, one of the leading sculptors of the day. The interior carries on this theme, but in grander style – the principle rooms, courts one, two and three (formerly the council chamber) represent a high point of the Arts and Crafts Gothic Revival, the secular equivalent of Liverpool's Anglican cathedral.

With all this in mind one would have expected the building to be safe. But no. As a part of Government's piecemeal reform of the constitution, it has been deemed that the UK requires a Supreme Court separate from the legislature, both in terms of power and location, a consequence of which is a need for somewhere for their lordships to sit. Following an internal study at the Department for Constitutional Affairs, Middlesex Guildhall was settled on as the ideal location for the UK Supreme Court.



Westminster City Council weakly gave into the demands of the Lord Chancellor and passed listed building consent for a scheme which will strip out a large part of the very fine woodwork in the main court rooms, leaving a hollow building ready to be fitted out with slick new courts and a library (sunk through the floor of court one). Nearly all of the magnificent fittings will be removed, the best stored in a display in the basement. At the council's planning committee meeting, one of the members suggested that the council might be able to find a home for some of the other splendid fittings in Westminster City Hall (the bastard child of the redevelopment of Victoria Street in the 1960s and 70s). The DCA's agents were allowed to make an in-camera presentation to the members of the committee. Objectors were not. The pictures of the proposals for the interior speak for themselves.

At issue here is not whether a Supreme Court is necessary, but whether Government should be allowed to ignore its own rules regarding historic buildings. This important building should not be sacrificed. The dignity of a new Supreme Court demands an appropriately dignified new building (£34 million is earmarked for the conversion, to be paid for through a levy on all court users: over £50m has been spent by the DCA on management consultants over the last ten years, according to evidence given by Keith Vaz MP to the Commons Constitutional Affairs Committee).

Our new report "*The Guildhall Testimonial*" will be launched in the very near future.

English Heritage did not oppose the scheme

Newark Works, Bath

The privilege of being booted out of the Royal Institute of British Architects is reserved for comparatively few, but amongst that small number is Thomas Fuller. Following his expulsion in the 1850s for some misdemeanour or other, Fuller moved to North America, where he designed the splendidly over the top French Revival New York State Capitol in Albany, NY, before being employed as Chief Architect to the Domain of Canada. In this position he was responsible for some of the most important buildings in the country, such as the parliament building in Ottawa. His remarkable sense of grandeur developed early on in his career with the construction of St. John's Cathedral in Antigua (1845), and can be seen at its most powerful at the arsenal in Toronto.

The Newark Works in Bath dates from the 1850s, and consists of a well composed central section, three bays wide, with the works spreading out to either side. The works sits outside the main conservation area and world heritage site in Bath, in spite of it representing an important period in Bath's history, as industry developed. Indeed the works represents a wider and even more important period in the industrial revolution, with direct links to Abraham Darby's works at Coalbrookdale, and the growth of the major engineering

concern that became Stothart and Pitt – their cranes can be seen in every major port in the world.

With all this in mind, one would have thought that the building would be listed, and that the development of the site, were it needed, would be done with respect to the building, its architect and the site's history. However, the very wealthy James Dyson has offered major funding for an engineering academy and Bath and North East Somerset Council have gone for it, identifying the works as the perfect site for a spangly new building by Wilkinson Eyre, of London Eye fame. Within their domain are other towns which probably need the investment the academy represents rather more than Bath. The controversy has raged in the local press, with the local MP Don Foster calling for its demolition and practically everyone else calling for its retention.

SAVE has called for the spot listing of the works – it is one of the most clear-cut cases we have come across in the last few years. A failure to list would be a failure by the Minister to follow the duty to list laid down in law. The former head of Heritage and Conservation for the Province of Ottawa's stated view is that if built in Canada, it would be regarded as a national treasure and appropriately protected. The process of trying to get the building listed has uncovered some interesting practices on the part of DCMS: it has consulted B&NES Council's development control division on listing. Why not then the conservation team within that authority? As a result SAVE has requested, under the Freedom of Information Act, an explanation of the procedure DCMS follows in relation to requests to spot list.



The central section of the Newark Works, which would be just as at home on the Grand Canal in Venice

STOP PRESS: On November 7th, it was announced that after all it is possible to incorporate the façade of the building into the academy. Wilkinson Eyre revealed fresh plans – which do exactly that, although with a new glass building behind. At least some compromise is now apparently willing to be made. SAVE cautiously welcomes this and will continue to monitor the situation.