

THE BETJEMAN SOCIETY

Patron: Jonathan Glancey

Past President: Bevis Hillier Founder and Vice-President: Philippa Davies

Vice-Presidents: Tim Betjeman, Prof Kevin Gardner, + Barry Humphries CBE,
Edward Mirzoeff CVO CBE, John R. Murray, Jim Parker, Martin Revill

PRESS RELEASE

17 August 2023

BETJEMAN BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WILL LAUNCH FUNDRAISING APPEAL TO SAVE LIVERPOOL STREET STATION

The **Betjeman Society** (www.betjemansociety.com) will use its annual birthday celebration for its literary hero Sir John Betjeman, at the end of August, to launch a major fundraising appeal for the recently relaunched **Liverpool Street Station Campaign** (LISSCA).

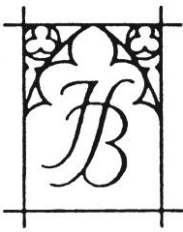
The event on Bank Holiday Monday, 28 August, will start at 2pm outside Liverpool Street Station and will include poetry readings and a guided tour of the station, before moving on to another Victorian railway station much admired by Sir John, namely St Pancras, where Society members will gather by the poet's iconic statue.

Sir John led the successful campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s to save both St Pancras and Liverpool Street stations, and was founder-president of LISSCA when it was formed in 1974. But a new threat has emerged in the form of Network Rail's latest plan to completely redevelop the Grade II Listed Liverpool Street Station and the adjacent Grade II* Listed Great Eastern Hotel.

So, to resist this latest challenge, LISSCA has been re-established, with the Betjeman Society joining forces with The Victorian Society, The Twentieth Century Society, The Georgian Group, SAVE Britain's Heritage, The Spitalfields Trust, Historic Buildings & Places and other conservation groups in a major campaign to save the nationally important heritage assets at Liverpool Street Station.

That is why the Betjeman Society believes that Sir John's birthday on 28 August is the ideal day to launch a crowdfunding appeal for LISSCA's campaign against Network Rail's heritage-wrecking plans.

Under the scheme, Network Rail and developers Sellar Property propose to demolish the station's ornate concourse roof and replace several historic buildings on the site with two overbearing high-rise office blocks which would wreck the London skyline and affect views of St Paul's Cathedral. The redevelopment scheme is opposed not just by LISSCA but also by the Government's statutory advisor on heritage, Historic England.



THE BETJEMAN SOCIETY

Patron: Jonathan Glancey

Past President: Bevis Hillier Founder and Vice-President: Philippa Davies

Vice-Presidents: Tim Betjeman, Prof Kevin Gardner, + Barry Humphries CBE,
Edward Mirzoeff CVO CBE, John R. Murray, Jim Parker, Martin Revill

-2-

Betjeman Society Chairman Steve Jackson explains: “This year’s birthday celebration for Sir John is an ideal opportunity for the Betjeman Society to focus attention on the monstrous plans for the redevelopment of a station that Betjeman loved and cherished. And the guided walk around the station led by our railway guru Don Kennedy will help us to understand precisely why Liverpool Street stood so high in Sir John’s affections and why he believed the station was so important.”

He adds: “The danger to Liverpool Street Station is even more obvious when you stand on its concourse and understand the significance of the station to the City of London. The proposed development would set a terrible precedent if successful and it is based on unfounded assumptions and claims. It would obliterate views through the glass roof and have the effect of diminishing the station completely, as well as disfiguring the wider City skyline. Disappointingly, there was no attempt by Network Rail to consult or engage with conservation groups when they were drawing up this new and hugely destructive scheme.

“As Sir John Betjeman was the President of the original Liverpool Street Station Campaign (LISSCA) five decades ago, and was a leading figure for many years in campaigns to preserve other Victorian railway stations, including St Pancras, the Betjeman Society is proud to be associated with LISSCA and we will be encouraging our members to play a full and active part in our efforts to save Liverpool Street Station.”

LISSCA has an online petition at **Change.org** entitled ‘Save Liverpool Street Station from Destructive Redevelopment’.

The fundraising appeal will be live on **Justgiving.com** from 28th August and is entitled ‘Save Liverpool Street Station.’

-ENDS-

For further information, please contact the Betjeman Society chairman Steve Jackson, email sonjack1@aol.com or the Society’s press officer Andy Smith on 07737 271676, email wordsmithreviews@yahoo.co.uk.

Editor’s note: The Betjeman Society was established in 1988 to advance the appreciation of the work of the poet, writer, broadcaster and conservationist Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984). It seeks to inform and inspire its members and the wider public through the study, awareness and enjoyment of Betjeman’s life, work and influence, both in the United Kingdom and internationally.