

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

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BETJEMAN SOCIETY WARNS AGAINST 'HIDEOUS' REDEVELOPMENT OF LIVERPOOL STREET STATION

The **Betjeman Society** (www.betjemansociety.com) is warning against the latest scheme to redevelop London's iconic Liverpool Street Station. Network Rail's new plan includes construction of a 97m tower block, which would overshadow the Grade II Listed nineteenth-century station buildings, and demolishing Liverpool Street's existing roofs including its replica Victorian train shed roof. The Society describes Network Rail's scheme as "hideous" and "a missed opportunity".

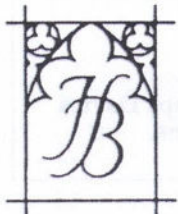
Following strong opposition to its previous redevelopment scheme, which was withdrawn earlier this year, Network Rail hopes that its newly unveiled proposals for the station site will be approved. However, the latest proposal is seen by heritage campaigners as just as harmful to the Victorian station and its surroundings as the previous scheme.

A coalition of heritage preservation groups – the **Liverpool Street Station Campaign** (LISSCA) – is rallying opposition to the scheme. LISSCA brings together a range of groups including the Victorian Society, Save Britain's Heritage, the Twentieth Century Society, the Georgian Group, the Spitalfields Trust, and the Betjeman Society.

Writer, broadcaster and conservationist Sir John Betjeman was the founder-president of LISSCA when it was launched in 1974 to fight against an earlier threat to the Grade II Listed railway station. The new President of LISSCA is the comedian and television presenter Griff Rhys Jones.

Betjeman Society Chairman Steve Jackson says: "Demolishing listed roofs and putting up an enormous office block that would tower over the station is not just an insult to conservationists but would set an incredibly dangerous precedent. If listed buildings can be casually wrecked in this way, in the heart of our Capital, ignoring the inherent value of such splendid Victorian architecture, what is to stop this happening to every other heritage building in London?"

He adds: "Instead of pushing this hideous redevelopment, Network Rail should see Liverpool Street Station for what it really is: a precious heritage asset that should be properly cared for and preserved. There are ways to breathe new life into older buildings, and with these proposals Network Rail are missing a golden opportunity to showcase this marvellous example of Victorian railway architecture. Next year (2025) is being celebrated as the bicentenary of Britain's railways, yet Network Rail seem content to be wrecking a key part of our nation's rail heritage."



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"Sir John Betjeman was the President of the original Liverpool Street Station Campaign (LISSCA) in 1974 and was a leading figure for many years in campaigns to preserve other Victorian railway stations. The Betjeman Society is proud to be associated with LISSCA and to play an active part in efforts to save Liverpool Street Station, just as Sir John did fifty years ago."

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For further information, please contact the Betjeman Society Chairman Steve Jackson, email sonjack1@aol.com, or the Betjeman Society 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.