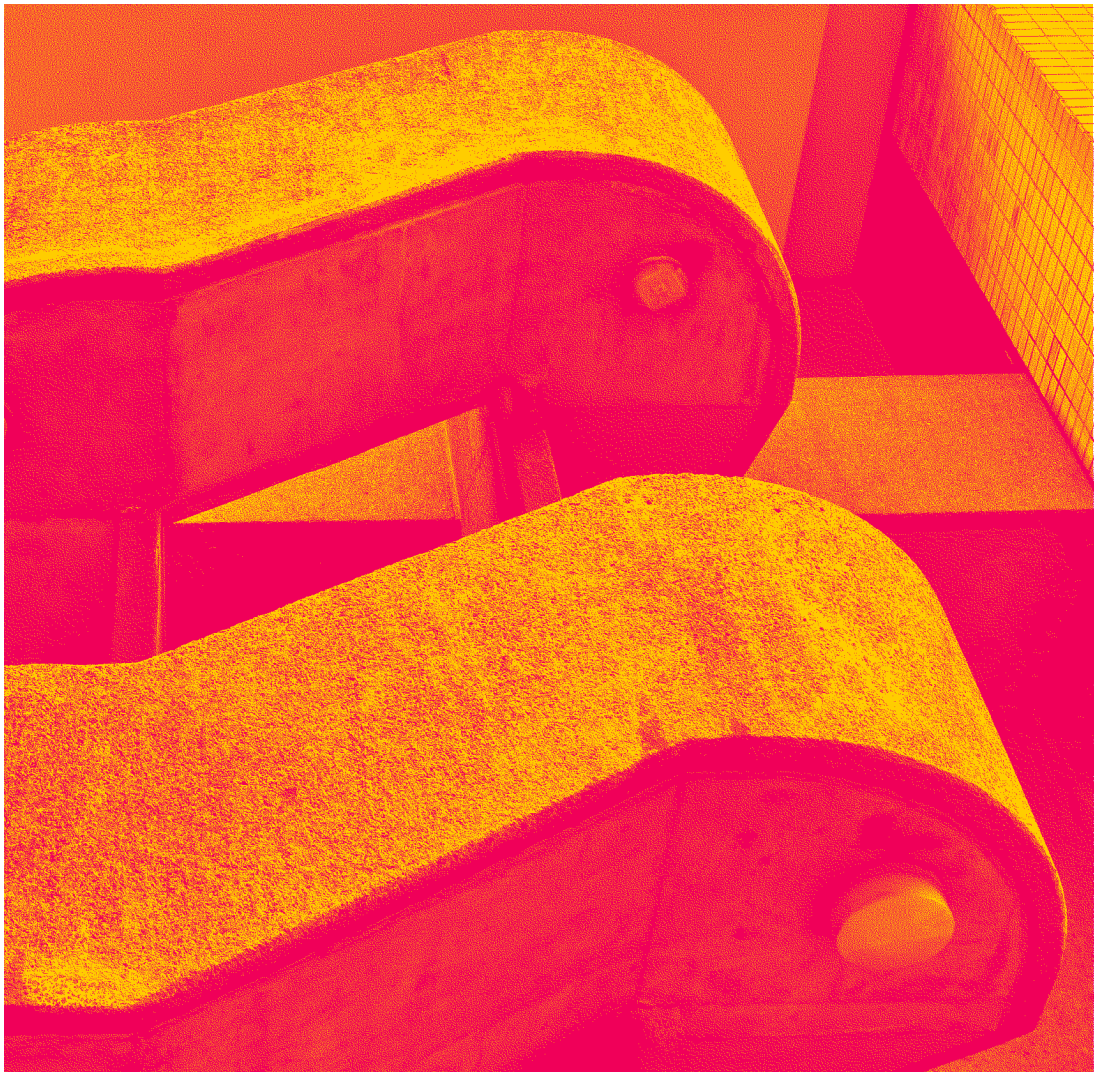
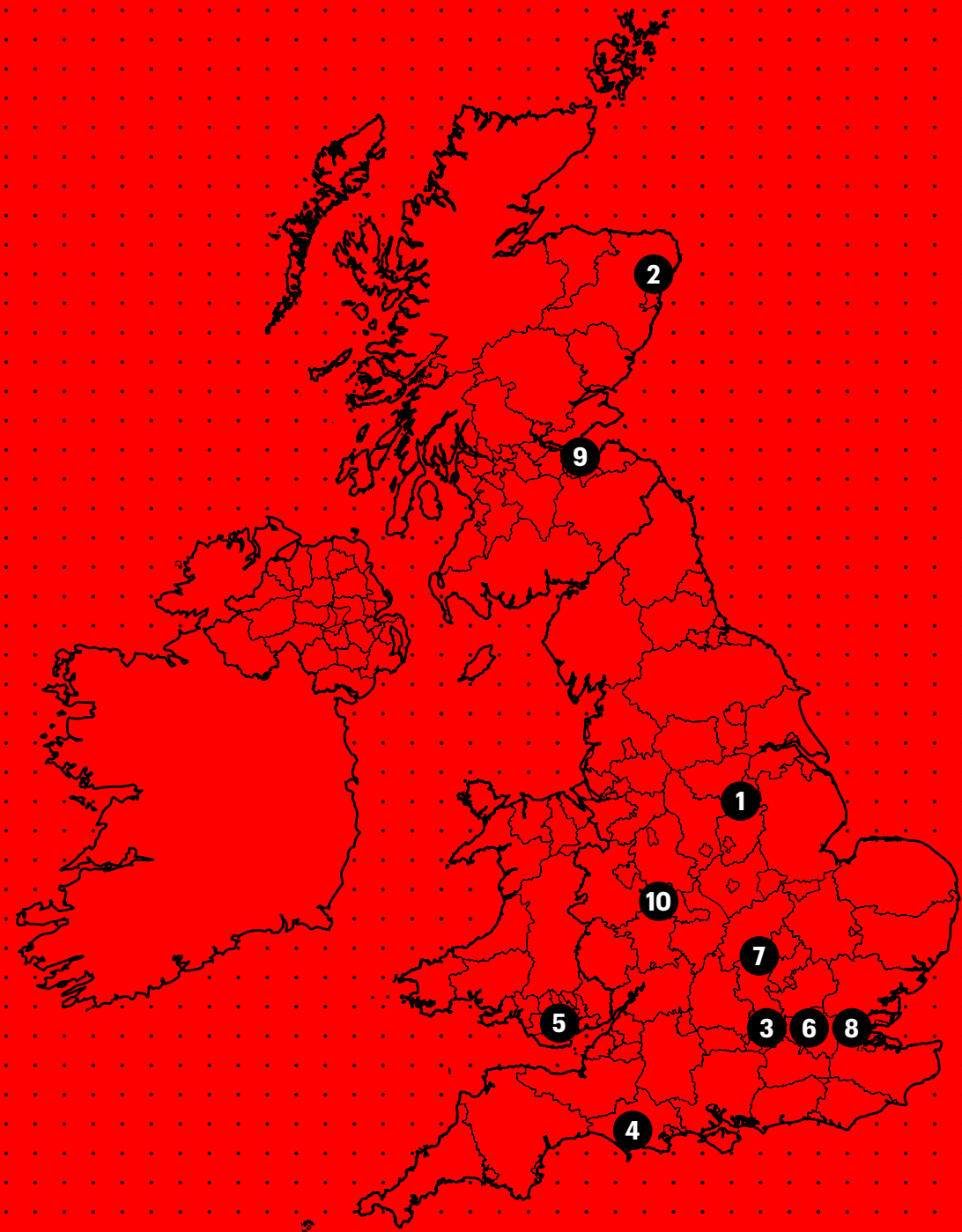


RISK LIST



BEAT THE BULLDOZER TEN BUILDINGS YOU CAN HELP SAVE IN 2023



ISSUE 1
TEN BUILDINGS
YOU CAN HELP
SAVE IN 2023

10

Ringway Centre
 Threat: total demolition
 Page 4

9

Scottish Widows Headquarters
 Threat: substantial demolition
 Page 6

8

Museum of London and Bastion House
 Threat: total demolition
 Page 10

7

The Point
 Threat: total demolition
 Page 12

6

Channel 4 Headquarters
 Threat: redeveloping or alteration
 Page 14

5

South Glamorgan County Hall
 Threat: future demolition
 Page 20

4

The Riviera Hotel
 Threat: decline and neglect
 Page 21

3

The Jagonari Centre
 Threat: further alteration and loss of features
 Page 22

2

Norco House
 Threat: substantial demolition
 Page 24

1

West Burton Cooling Towers
 Threat: Total Demolition
 Page 26



70 Cowcross Street
 London EC1M 6EJ
 020 7250 3857
 020 7251 8985
 www.c20society.org.uk
 director@c20society.org.uk
 coordinator@c20society.org.uk
 caseworker@c20society.org.uk

Registered charity number
 1110244

Editor
 Catherine Croft

Campaigns Manager
 Oli Marshall

Art Director
 James Hunter

Design
 Studio Hunter
 studio-hunter.com

Typefaces
 Graphik & Lyon from
 Commercial Type

Illustrations
 Mark Long

Advertising in The Risk List is sold on behalf of the Twentieth Century Society by Park Walk Media. For further information please contact:
Charlotte Agace
 charlotte@parkwalkmedia.com

MATTHEW PARSONS-BROWN

Cover: detail of a
 stairwell, Museum of
 London/Bastion House



**GOING, GOING,
GONE?
CATHERINE CROFT
DIRECTOR**

Welcome to the *Risk List*, our selection of ten amazing C20 buildings currently facing demolition or disfigurement. They range from a Bengali women’s resource centre in London’s East End to a magnificent set of power station cooling towers, higher than the Statue of Liberty.

This year only two out of the ten are listed: Scottish Widows in Edinburgh and the oldest building on our list, the Art Deco Riviera Hotel, Weymouth, from 1937. Another two have been put forward for listing – Channel 4 and Cardiff County Hall – but no decision has been reached and so they have no protection.

Six have been refused listing protection and four of those have a Certificate of Immunity, guaranteeing that they cannot be listed for another five years. The lack of listing of both The Jagonari Centre in Whitechapel and Norco House in Aberdeen demonstrates a strange topsy-turvy anomaly between the listing regimes in England and Scotland: the Jagonari listing has not proceeded because lack of specific redevelopment proposals means it is not regarded as being sufficiently at risk to assess, while Norco House has been assessed and found to merit listing, but the existence of proposals means that Historic Environment Scotland is holding off listing. C20 believes that neither policy is helpful, and calls for more active urgent listing, regardless of threat status.

The fact that only 20 percent of these buildings are listed demonstrates how undervalued and vulnerable our C20 architecture remains, and only around 3 percent of all listed building are from the twentieth century, fewer than for any other period. However, listing is only ever a lever to help ensure a building gets recognition: without local communities stepping-in to promote practical new uses and property developers realising the value of retained C20 heritage, there will be no successful outcomes. What every languishing or neglected building on our list really needs is love, enthusiasm and investment.

And there are wider benefits to be had too. In addition to being of architectural and historic interest, all ten buildings are the product of considerable past investment in building materials and construction resources. The embodied energy which this represents would be squandered by demolition – knocking them down would have a considerable and totally avoidable negative environmental impact.

The good news is that both the cultural and environmental value of the buildings we care so much about is finally gaining wider traction. C20’s *Risk List* was the subject for a whole round of questions on a recent episode of University Challenge, while comedian Angela Barnes picked

Since C20 campaigned for for the protection of Swindon Oasis, below, the leisure centre has since been listed and looks set to open again

British brutalist architecture as her specialist subject on *Celebrity Mastermind*, and the campaign for Swindon Oasis featured in the pages of *New Musical Express*. Meanwhile the latest music video by Harry Styles was shot on location at the Barbican and Lubetkin’s Penguin Pool, and the brutalist inspired staging on Lady Gaga’s latest tour gave twentieth century architecture a certain pop-cultural-cool like never before. C20’s relentless campaigning is helping to raise awareness and the fact that we are getting fabulous coverage all over the place demonstrates growing public awareness and fondness for C20 architecture.

The best way you can help is by joining the Society – C20 members directly fund our vital casework, and alert us to buildings under threat across the country. For each building featured in this year’s list, we also recommend a specific action which you can take now to highlight your support where it matters. Please show you care, act now.

Does the Risk List work?

Whilst in previous years, looking back at the fate of highlighted buildings has been a fairly depressing business, this year the tide seems to be on the turn. Throwing public scrutiny on these buildings does work. From our *Risk List* published in 2021, there’s lots of good news: Swindon Oasis has since been listed and looks set to open again, and London’s City Hall has had a COI refused (leaving the door open for future listing and a new tenant to enjoy it). A new scheme for Swansea Civic Centre that retains rather than demolishes the council buildings is being developed with Urban Splash, and the future of Derby Assembly Rooms looks promising. Looking further back, Durham’s Dunelm House – on our *Risk List* in 2017 – was listed in July 2021 and the university is reconsidering its potential, while a regeneration masterplan for the Alton Estate – on our *Risk List* in 2019 – has recently been scrapped, staving off the immediate threat of any demolition.

However, great buildings are undoubtedly still at risk and keeping a list like this helps us as a charity to demonstrate how severe the threat is to some of the very best examples of the architecture of our period. Once demolished there is no turning back, a unique creation is lost for ever. Whilst some of these buildings may need imaginative renewal, all are capable of inspiring and energising new uses. We need to make sure that none of these opportunities are missed. All ten of the 2023 buildings deserve to survive to make our lives richer and more interesting, the positive benefits of keeping them are immeasurable.



HISTORIC ENGLAND

**Become a member
Join the community
for modernity**



For over forty years, we’ve successfully saved countless landmarks for the nation: from iconic red phoneboxes to art deco lidos, brutalist bus stations to pop-art murals – even helping Bankside power station to become the cathedral of art, Tate Modern. We believe good design enriches lives and contributes towards thriving communities, yet our shared heritage is under threat more than ever before.

Our casework team tackle thousands of at-risk cases each year, helping to secure listed status

for remarkable buildings, while our campaigns lead the debate on the built heritage of the future, advancing environmental arguments and championing grassroots community solutions.

Our members have access to exclusive events, tours and publications. Together, we can save the best of twentieth and twenty-first century architecture for future generations. Join us today at:

c20society.org.uk/join

10

BIRMINGHAM RINGWAY CENTRE JAMES ROBERTS, SYDNEY GREENWOOD 1958–60

Birmingham's ribbon-like Ringway Centre was designed by James Roberts and Sydney Greenwood as part of the late 50s Inner Ring Road scheme. The premier example of post-war 'architecture' in a city that truly embraced the automobile, it was described by Pevsner as "the best piece of mid-20th century urban design [in Birmingham]".

Known for its dramatic 230m long elevation - thought to be the longest single retail frontage in the country - that curves along Smallbrook Queensway and sweeps over Hurst Street on great V-shaped piloti, it contains four storeys of office accommodation above a sheltered shopping parade at street level. The primary façade of glazed bands and precast concrete spandrels is its defining feature: decorative relief panels with a touch of Ben Nicholson, illuminated by bullhorn uplighters

that nod to Le Corbusier. The enormous scale means the concrete panels establish their own rhythms of light and shade, permitting any amount of brash signage without disrupting the overall grandeur. Indeed, it even acted as a stylish backdrop for a Clint Eastwood photoshoot when he visited the city in 1967.

In 2015 a proposal was submitted to part-demolish and refurbish the Ringway Centre, with the addition of a 26-storey tower block. C20 strongly objected and applied to list the building, yet planning permission was granted in 2017 following Historic England's recommendation that the structure did not meet the criteria for listing. The latest plans would see the entire building demolished to make way for three new towers between 44 and 56 storeys, accommodating 1,800 residential units.

BS010E01/WIKIMEDIA · ELAINE HARWOOD, PORTRAIT COURTESY OF BUSINESS LIVE



**THREAT
TOTAL
DEMOLITION**



Above left: detail of the decorative concrete relief, above right: architect James Roberts in his studio, left: the Ringway Centre curving along Smallbrook Queensway



While the building is currently covered by a COI (issued in March 2022 and valid until 2027), C20 has been developing alternative proposals with local campaigners that demonstrate how the building could be effectively expanded and retrofitted, while retaining its striking presence on the streetscape.

HOW TO HELP

Object to the planning application for the demolition of the Ringway Centre (Ref: 2022/08496/PA) and back our alternative scheme by writing to Birmingham Council at planningandregenerationenquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

S



Above: Plan consists of 12 linked hexagons beneath Salisbury Crags, opposite: Glazed curtain walls feature manganese bronze mullions

EDINBURGH SCOTTISH WIDOWS HEADQUARTERS SPENCE, GLOVER AND FERGUSON 1972-76

Built in 1972-76 by the practice of Sir Basil Spence, Glover and Ferguson, the Scottish Widows head offices building received the RIBA Award for Scotland in 1977 and was Category A listed by Historic Environment Scotland in 2006 as a 'a major achievement of international status for Spence and his partners'.

This is an extremely high quality modernist building, with double-skinned curtain-wall glazing with a brown solar glass exterior, complimented by mullions of manganese bronze, base courses of riven York stone, and pilotis of exposed concrete carrying the building over an ornamental pool - akin to Spence's work at the University of Sussex and the British Embassy in Rome. The six acre site was laid out by Dame Sylvia Crowe, the leading landscape architect of the time.

Dramatically situated beneath Edinburgh's Holyrood Park and Salisbury Crags, the design of the building cleverly references the basalt-heavy local geology in its interlocking hexagonal blocks, while conforming to the strict height restrictions of views both

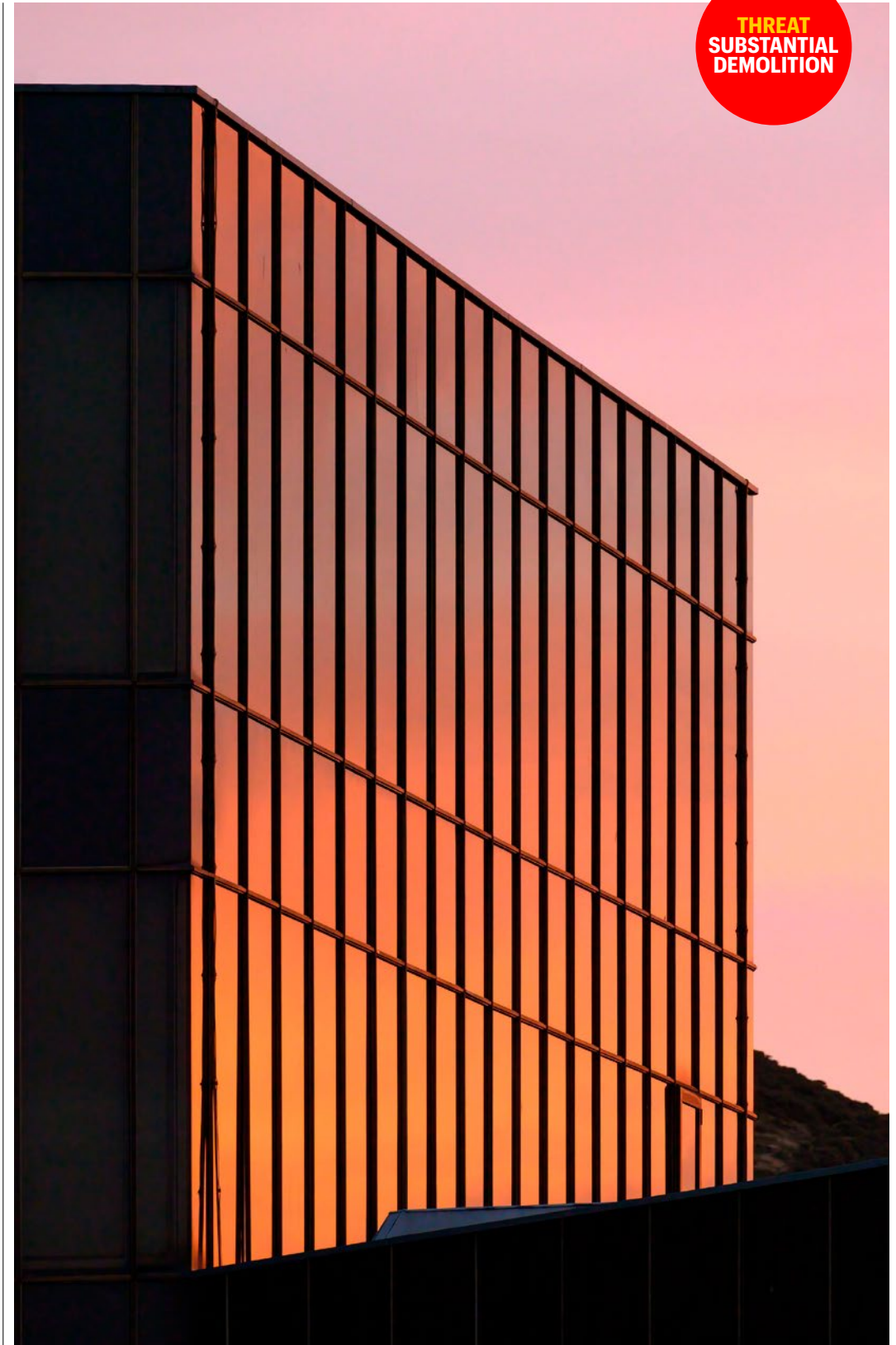
to and from the hills of the Royal Park. The site also sits within the Edinburgh South Side Conservation Area, facing the Royal Commonwealth Pool by Robert Matthew Johnson Marshall (1967-69, also Category A listed) on one side, with traditional 19th-century stone tenements on the other.

Scottish Widows vacated their purpose built HQ in Autumn 2020 after 45 years. The building owners are now proposing a £100m office and residential redevelopment of the site, which would see almost half of the existing listed building and landscape lost. C20 has strongly objected to the proposals and argued the building is flexible enough to be adapted to suit multiple new uses, without the need for extensive demolition.

HOW TO HELP

Object to the planning application for Scottish Widows (Ref. 22/04768/LBC) by writing to Edinburgh Council at planning@edinburgh.gov.uk

ALAMY, SPENCE ARCHIVE



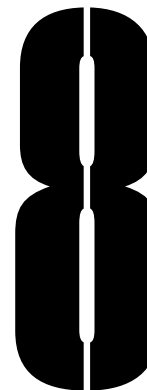
THREAT
SUBSTANTIAL
DEMOLITION





DOGWALKER/FICKR, JOHNEAST

**BARBICAN
MUSEUM
OF LONDON/
BASTION HOUSE**
POWELL & MOYA
1968-76



Opposite: Exposed concrete of the stairwell contrasts with the curtain walling of the slab block, above: the museum sits above a brick rotunda that references the nearby Roman walls of the City of London

The first post-war museum to be built in London and the largest urban history museum in the world, the Museum of London was designed when architects Powell & Moya were at the height of their reputation and prestige. Best known for the Skylon at the Festival of Britain they were one of the most significant practices in post-war Britain.

Housed within an angular and robust white-tiled concrete structure, the museum is skilfully placed on a considerably constrained site. Its solidity protects the interiors from the traffic noise outside and shelters a quiet courtyard garden, while a great dark brick-clad rotunda – referencing the nearby Roman city walls – rises from the centre of a busy roundabout, acting as an arrival point to the complex.

To the east is Bastion House, also by P&M, built as a speculative office development above the podium, as part of the new museum scheme. Standing on piers of biscuit-coloured concrete with Miesian bronzed curtain-walling, it is now a rare survivor of a hugely important part of the City of London’s post-war planning history. Both are now earmarked

for demolition, as the museum prepares to move to a new cultural quarter in the renovated Smithfield Market and the City of London seeks to maximise the development potential on the vacated site, located on the corner of the Grade II listed Barbican Estate.

Historic England has issued a Certificate of Immunity (COI) from listing, concluding that the museum and Bastion House fall short of the very high bar that buildings need to reach to be listed, while a highly contentious report by the City claims the buildings are ‘very much at the end of their design lives’ and no longer fit for purpose. C2o has strongly objected to the loss of the buildings and joined the ‘Barbican Action Quarter’ campaign group in calling for them to be retained, refurbished and adapted to suit new uses.

HOW TO HELP

Object to the proposals for the demolition of the Museum of London and Bastion House by writing to londonwallwest@barbican.org.uk and follow the @BarbicanQuarter campaign for regular updates.

T

MILTON KEYNES THE POINT BDP 1985



Designed by Building Design Partnership, the Point was reputedly inspired by the work of avant-garde provocateurs Archigram and became an instant Milton Keynes landmark upon its opening in 1985. As well as being one of the UK's first multiplex cinemas, the unconventional structure housed a games arcade, bingo hall and nightclub. These individual functions are externally expressed as stacked, mirrored boxes beneath the 70ft bright red steel pyramidal frame – illuminated at night as a space-age beacon across the low-rise city centre.

The Point went into a decline after the arrival of the giant Xscape MK entertainment complex in 2000, with the nightclub closing in 2007 and the Odeon cinema following in 2015. Outline planning permission

for a redevelopment of the site was first granted in 2014, yet expired in 2021 after several years of inactivity.

In the interim, the building has acted as a base for local charities and grassroots campaigners have launched various petitions and crowdfunding in an attempt to save the building, highlighting its community value, innovative design and landmark status. The Cinema Theatre Association – more usually seen fighting to save traditional cinema buildings – joined C20 in opposing the demolition. Richard Gray, CTA casework chairman, said that it is 'not only a stunning visual asset for Milton Keynes, but as Britain's first American style multiplex, it's a building of huge historical and architectural importance'.

Following rejection of our listing application and the issuing

PATRICK MCCARTHY, ANDY STAGG



of a COI by Historic England in March 2021, developers Galliard acquired The Point earlier this year, evicted the youth charity using the building and announced their intention to proceed with a £150 million housing development on the site.

HOW TO HELP

Request the Point be added to the Milton Keynes local list by writing to conservationarchaeology@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Above and left: The high-tech steel pyramidal frame is enlivened by quirky details and contrasts with the mirrored glass ziggurat beneath

WESTMINSTER
CHANNEL 4
HEADQUARTERS
RICHARD
ROGERS
1994

6





The Channel 4 Headquarters (1992–94) at 124 Horseferry Road, Westminster, is undoubtedly one of Richard Rogers' most significant public commissions in the UK. As with his Lloyds building, its services and structural elements are externally expressed to dramatic effect, with two four storey wings meeting at a full height atrium in curved curtain-walled glass – believed to be the first of its type in the UK.

The building contains primarily office space and only one television studio, as most of the channels output is produced by independent programme makers. The design successfully projects the intended

brand of the broadcaster: innovative, socially aware and willing to take risks.

In an effort to regionally rebalance their culture and output, Channel 4 announced in 2019 it was moving its national headquarters to a new base in Leeds. While the London offices remain for commercial staff, the decision heightened speculation that this landmark building may be at risk. While the Government is said to be reviewing their intention to privatise Channel 4, press reports indicated that the Westminster offices could be among the first assets to be sold in the event of a privatisation, with

Previous spread: exterior of building photograph by John East. Above: portrait of Richard Rogers by Phil Sayer, opposite and next spread: the dramatic glazed atrium.

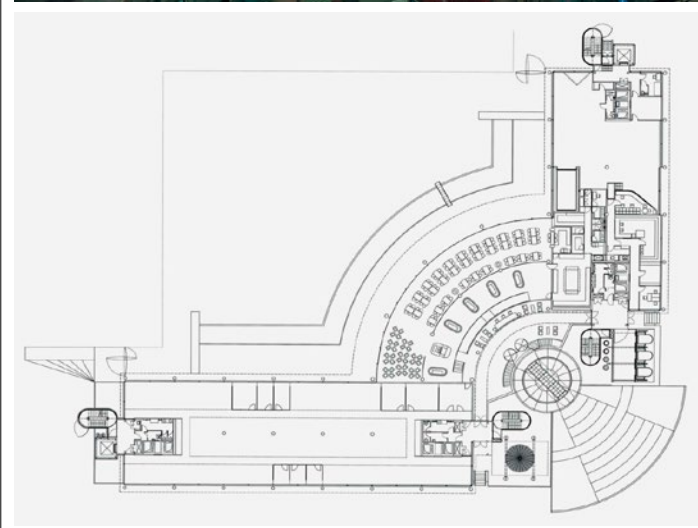


a valuation upwards of £100 million for the super-prime site. C20 has strongly supported the listing of the broadcaster's former headquarters, but as yet no decision has been reached and the building remains extremely vulnerable.

HOW TO HELP

Support our listing application for the Channel 4 headquarters by writing to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk) saying you think it is a building of architectural and historic interest.

JOHN EAST; PHILIP SAYER; RSHP; JOHN EAST



CHANNEL 4 HEADQUARTERS IN NUMBERS

£100m

Current estimated value of the site if sold on the open market

15,000

The square meters of the site containing office space, broadcasting suites, an underground car park and a landscaped

1

Unusually for a broadcaster's headquarters, the building contained only one studio – for news

5

Nationally listed buildings by Richard Rogers and Team 4, such as 22 Parkside, below





THREAT
FUTURE
DEMOLITION



**SOUTH
GLAMORGAN
CARDIFF
COUNTY HALL
COUNTY
ARCHITECT'S
OFFICE
1986–87**

Designed by J.R.C. Bethell from the County Architect's Office and built between 1986 and 87, South Glamorgan County Hall was an early keystone project in the regeneration of Cardiff's waterfront. Developed on 100 acres of derelict land at Bute East Dock, the scheme responded to the Council's design principles for a low rise quadrangle form, human in scale, and welcoming to the public yet with a clear civic grandeur. It provided 24,000m² of space for new offices, a council chamber, and accommodation for ancillary services.

The building's intricately varied façade in glass and brick with distinctive projecting roof-lines, recall Frank Lloyd Wright's influential designs at Robie House, Westcott House, and Arthur Heurtley House, with a crystalline or mineral quality that also befits the region's mining heritage. In the Buildings of Wales, John Newman records how County Hall sits within the tradition established by Hillingdon Civic Centre (1973–8, grade II) which 'showed how to characterise a civic building without making it domineer by its bulk or formal language'. Through these characteristics, Cardiff County

Above: Cardiff County Hall reflected in the water of the former docks. Opposite: The colonnaded Riviera Hotel looking out over Weymouth Bay

Hall can also be considered a close relative of Colin St. John Wilson and M.J. Long's British Library (designed 1975–8, built 1982–99, grade I) which combines a similar palate of materials, with expansive dark slate roofs and a formal redbrick civility.

In March 2022, the city council gave outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Bute East Dock and Atlantic Wharf site as part of a masterplan for a new indoor entertainment arena, which could ultimately see the Country Hall demolished for new housing and a hotel complex. While plans for a relocation of the Council services have yet to be formalised, C2o has submitted a pre-emptive listing application to Cadw.

HOW TO HELP

Support our listing application for Cardiff County Hall by writing to Cadw, cadwplanning@gov.wales, saying you think it is a building of architectural and historic interest.

JONATHAN VINING, JAMES O'DAVIES

THREAT
DECLINE
AND
NEGLECT



**WEYMOUTH
THE RIVIERA
HOTEL
L STEWART SMITH
1937**

The Riviera Hotel is a coastal Art Deco delight: a slender square tower is dramatically flanked by two continuous arcs, accommodating some 98 bedrooms over two storeys. The Spanish style balcony railings, blue and whitewashed walls, and colonnaded walkways give the feeling of a Mediterranean or Aegean holiday locale, not a slightly windswept outpost on the English Channel.

With the increase in car ownership during the 1930s, destination hotels began to appear beyond the boundaries of traditional resort towns. When the Riviera opened in 1937, Bowleaze Cove – 2.5 miles east of Weymouth town centre – was almost devoid of any development. The remote locale with its modernist design reflected an air of exclusivity that would appeal to an affluent, car-owning clientele.

After serving as a hospital by American Forces during the Second World War (many of the US troops for D-Day launched from the harbours of Weymouth and Portland), the hotel was taken over by Fred Pontin in 1958 and remained under his holiday camp chain Pontins until 2000. Grade II listed in 1997, Historic England

noted how the building epitomised the 'austere approach of the modernists in the immediate pre-war era, and suggests the designer's acquaintance with contemporary work in Rome and elsewhere'.

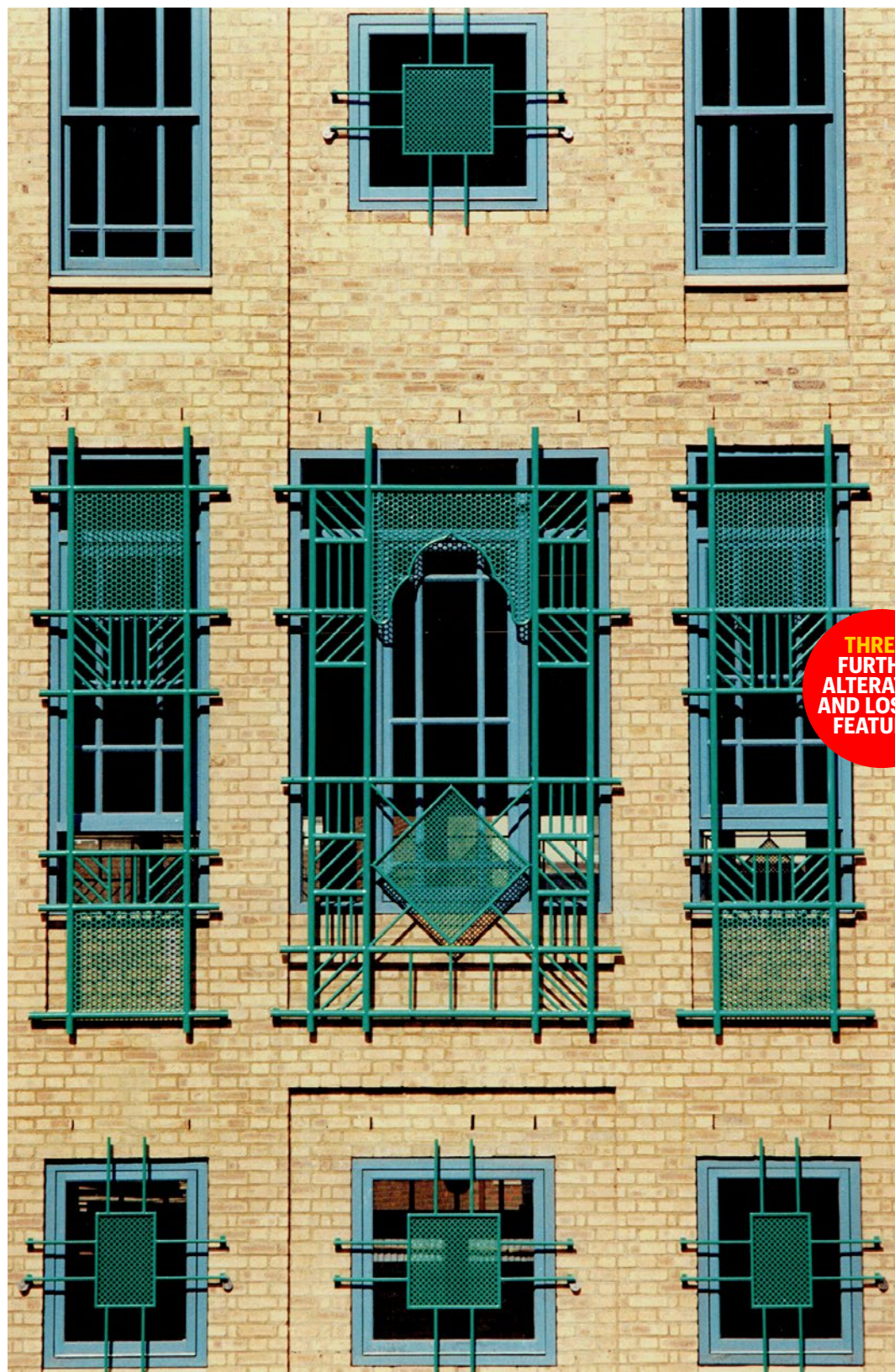
In 2009, the hotel was sold for £3.5 million to Saudi Arabian hospitality chain Diyafa Group and despite a phased programme of room renovations over the past decade, the building has slipped into a cycle of decline. With various visitor facilities permanently closed, the site was advertised for sale (at £5.5 million) then taken off the market due to lack of interest, and most recently suffered significant storm damage. The celebrated Midland Hotel in Morecambe demonstrates how a revived Riviera could once again be a glamorous destination, yet it is currently fast fading into obscurity. C2o is urging the hotel owners to present a proper vision for the building and reverse this decline.

HOW TO HELP

Express your concern at the neglect of the Riviera by writing to owners the Diyafa Group at Info@diyafagroup.com

5

4



PAM ISHERWOOD, JULIE MYERS

**WHITECHAPEL
THE JAGONARI
CENTRE
MATRIX**
1985-87

The idea for a Bengali women's resource centre in London's East End first emerged in 1982 and following funding support from the Greater London Council (GLC), an empty plot of land on Whitechapel High Street was developed into the Jagonari Centre - meaning 'women awake' in Bengali. It was designed by Matrix, an all-female collective of architects with a non-hierarchical co-operative structure, who worked solely on state funded social building projects in London between 1981 and 1994.

Prejudice faced by the Asian community in the East End of London was a big issue at the time, and the women involved in the Jagonari reported that nearly all of them had been subject to letterbox fires and abuse in the street. In the design brief they required safety, security, childcare provision, and 'sensitivity to women's cultural and religious needs while breaking some myths about Muslim women in particular'.

A highly participatory design process included activities like a 'brick picnic', where material choices and textures were discussed, and ultimately led to the incorporation of strong South Asian influences like the decorative 'jali' grilles over all the windows, a separate entrance

for women, ground level sinks for cooking on the floor, and a squat style toilet to compliment the fully accessible WCs on each level.

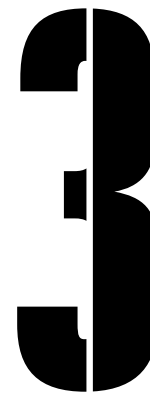
Due to financial challenges, the Jagonari Centre closed in 2015. The premises were subsequently taken over by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets for use as an alcohol recovery centre and is currently being operated by private providers of childcare provision. At some point in 2016 the main doorway was re-modelled and mosaic entrance panel by artist Meena Thakar was removed.

While the building itself is not thought to be under immediate threat, the unique design features and characteristics that distinguished the Jagonari are vulnerable to further alteration and loss under new occupancy. C2o supported an unsuccessful attempt to list the building in 2018, while Matrix and their legacy were the subject of a dedicated 'Reimagining Spaces' exhibition at The Barbican Centre in 2021.

HOW TO HELP

Request the Jagonari Centre (183-185 Whitechapel Road) be added to the Tower Hamlets local list by writing to planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The decorative 'jali' window grilles of the former Jagonari Centre



2

ABERDEEN NORCO HOUSE COVELL, MATTHEWS & PARTNERS 1966-70



THREAT
SUBSTANTIAL
DEMOLITION

Above: four robustly detailed ribbed concrete storeys, opposite: the use of local Aberdeen granite aggregate provides a material continuity with the historic streetscape

Norco House was built in 1966-70 by Covell, Matthews and Partners as a department store for the Northern Co-operative Society. After being acquired by John Lewis Partnership, it was refurbished and extended before re-opening in 1989. This was the most northerly John Lewis branch in the country and for many years outperformed its peers in Edinburgh and Glasgow. However the store closed during the Covid-19 lockdown and the retailer confirmed its closure was permanent in July 2021.

Probably the most distinctive post-war building in the 'Granite City' of Aberdeen, the four-storey, brutalist ziggurat presents a striking contrast to the smaller-scale traditional stone buildings that surround it, but uses a granite aggregate. Its elevations above the ground floor display windows are formed from sculptural and expressive angled vertical concrete ribs, with continuous clerestory windows. It represents the last wave of independent, stand-alone department store design in Scotland prior to the emergence of shopping centres.

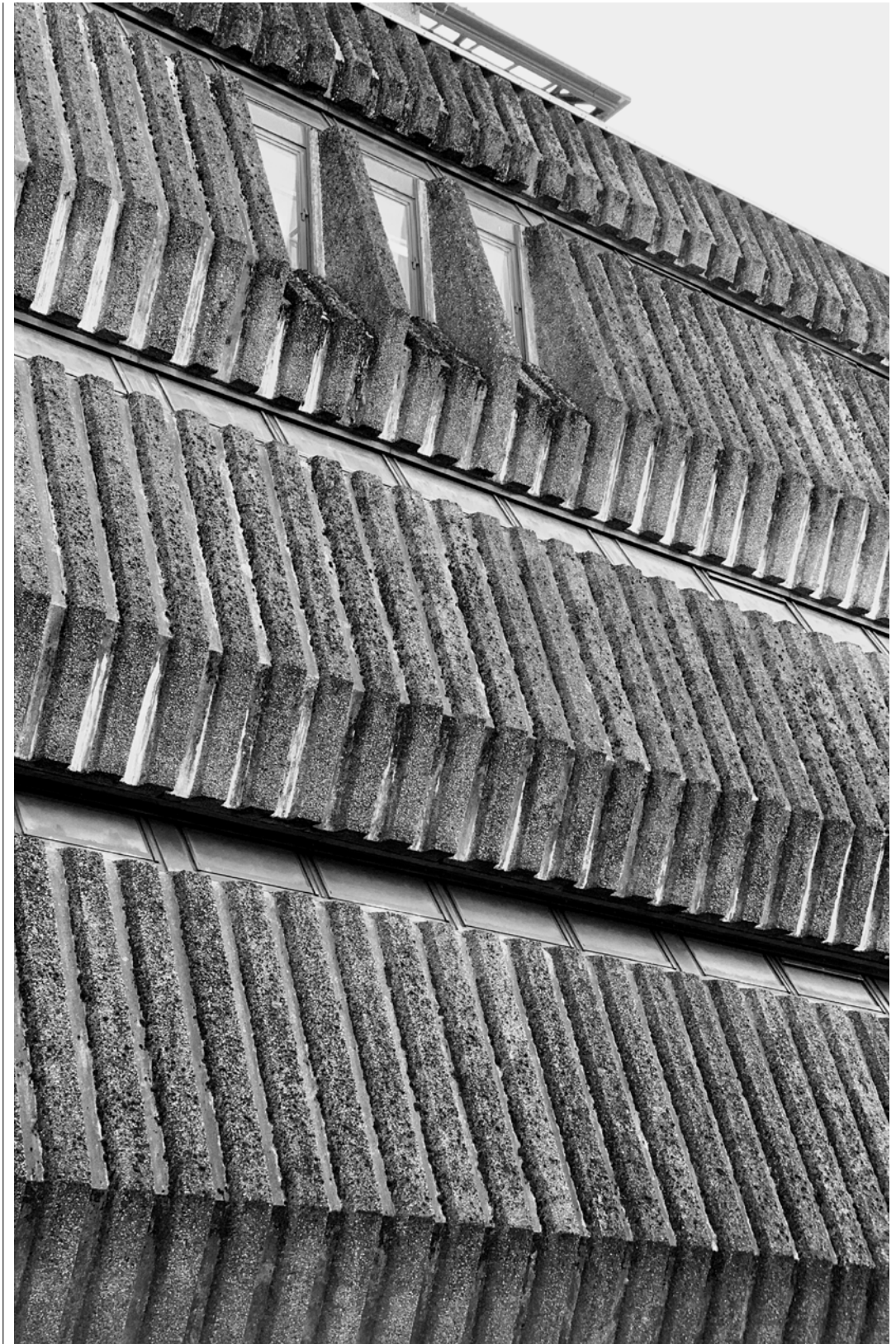
First considered for listing in 2007 as part of a Historic Environment Scotland survey

of Aberdeen city centre, it was rejected due to the extent of alteration to the building as a whole. It was assessed again in 2019/20 and although the George Street and St Andrew Street elevations were confirmed to be of special interest at Category B, it was again rejected for listing because of the potential impact on the building and neighbouring development proposals.

The site was most recently used as a temporary Covid vaccination centre and an ambitious proposal for it to house a Scottish outpost of the Natural History Museum was floated in February 2022, but discussions between city councillors and DCMS reportedly stalled. A new George Street Masterplan has proposed several options for both the retention and demolition of the building, but without listing its long-term future remains uncertain.

HOW TO HELP

A new George Street Masterplan has proposed several options for both the retention and demolition of the building, but without listing its long-term future remains uncertain.



SPOTTIEWATTIET7, ANDREW STEPHENSON

WEST BURTON
COOLING TOWERS
ARCHITECTS
DESIGN GROUP
1961-67





WEST BURTON COOLING TOWERS IN NUMBERS

17.8cm

The thickness of the concrete, like an egg shell it is its shape which gives it strength

400m

The gallons of water each cooling tower could handle per-hour

3

Number of large-set power stations with cooling towers that remain in the UK, of the ten constructed in the 1960s

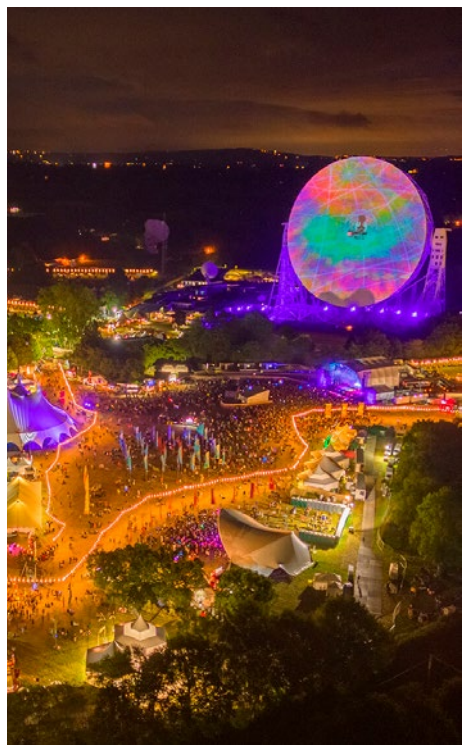
106

The height of the towers in meters – taller than the Statue of Liberty



Higher than the dome of St Paul’s Cathedral, yet with a concrete hyperbolic paraboloid structure often only seven inches thick, cooling towers have had a monolithic presence unlike anything else in the British landscape. Great ingenuity was taken to integrate them into the surrounding countryside, with Henry Moore advising on their placement at Didcot and Sylvia Crowe writing extensively on the subject in *The Landscape of Power* (1958). They are C20 icons.

There were originally ten British coal-fired power stations that started construction in 1960–63, today only three remain. The cooling towers at West Burton A power station are the oldest working examples in the UK and were the recipients of a Civic Trust Award upon completion – the first to be awarded to an English power station. The judges complimented them as “an immense engineering



Left: Blue Dot Festival at Jodrell Bank demonstrates the potential of such large structures as an imaginative backdrop for cultural activity, left: landmarks of power generation from different centuries coexist in the Nottinghamshire landscape

K7 PHOTOGRAPHY, JODRELL BANK/BLUEDOT, WILLIAM WARBY

work of great style which, far from detracting from the visual scene, acts as a magnet to the eye from many parts of the Trent Valley”.

As the country grapples with an unprecedented energy crisis this winter, Britain’s remaining coal fired power stations have been placed on standby by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy – ready to fire up at short notice, covering demand and ensuring the lights stay on. However this stay of execution is only temporary.

The government remains committed to decommissioning all coal fire power stations by 2023–24 and Historic England’s advice to date has been that cooling towers are not distinctive enough to deserve protection. No pre-war examples remain in Britain and a COI (Certificate of Immunity for Listing) has recently been renewed on all post-war examples, clearing the pathway to

their future demolition. While plans for a greener future focussed on renewable energy are to be welcomed, the loss of these silent sculptural giants should be lamented.

In Germany and South Africa, there are practical case studies of redundant towers being repurposed as the centre piece of extreme sports and amusement parks, while at the recent Beijing Winter Olympics, a set of towers became an unlikely viral hit, as a surreal backdrop to the ski jumping contest. Faced with an entire typology being wiped out, C20 is currently developing proposals for how British examples could also be imaginatively reused.

HOW TO HELP

Look out for C20’s forthcoming campaign where we explore potential future uses for cooling towers.





**GET INVOLVED
AND TAKE
A STAND**
OLI MARSHALL
CAMPAIGNS MANAGER

The Sunday Times 'Rich List' is one of the evergreen fixtures of the British media calendar. An annual keeping-up-with-Jones's that compares and quantifies the bank balances of a very privileged few, filling countless column inches and fuelling endless social media polemics.

Yet, where once the feature might have inspired a certain curiosity and awe, now it's more likely to leave readers aghast at how twenty-first century Britain has become a place of such crippling inequality. A country of the haves and the have-yachts, a creaking state and a hollowed-out public realm. Today, Berthold Lubetkin's belief that 'nothing is too good for ordinary people' seems like a distant whisper from the pages of history.

Libraries, schools, leisure centres, power stations, holiday camps, department stores, county halls, museums, cinemas, even the headquarters of a publicly owned broadcaster. These are the underappreciated pillars of our civic infrastructure and societal tapestry that are being rapidly eroded.

It is in this context that C20's Buildings at Risk register has had a rebrand for 2023: *The Risk List* is a knowing nod to the aforementioned glossy supplement, shining a light on ten of the most notable twentieth-century buildings that are under threat from demolition, redevelopment, underinvestment, or neglect.

We believe there is a better way. As we begin to fully understand the grave environmental cost of demolition, our modern architecture and design heritage stands ready to be repurposed and reimaged. Within the steel, glass and concrete walls of so many of these buildings, imaginative new uses can flourish, without the need of resorting to the wrecking ball.

What can you do to help? Join us, for a start. C20 has been campaigning for over forty years and has saved countless landmarks for the nation. But we can only do so with the generous support of our members, partners and benefactors. Every penny of your membership directly funds our casework, while your eyes-and-ears across the country are vital in alerting us to buildings at risk in your area.

Secondly, get involved any way you can. Sign that petition, join that march, share that tweet. Write to your MP, the secretary of state, the local council. Start a grassroots campaign, make a placard, take a stand. The irresistible force of ordinary people fighting for better still has few equals. In marginal cases, your voice really can make the difference.

New campaign

**Protect:
Cooling Towers**

Follow @C2oSociety
on social media
for the latest news
on our campaigns
and casework

