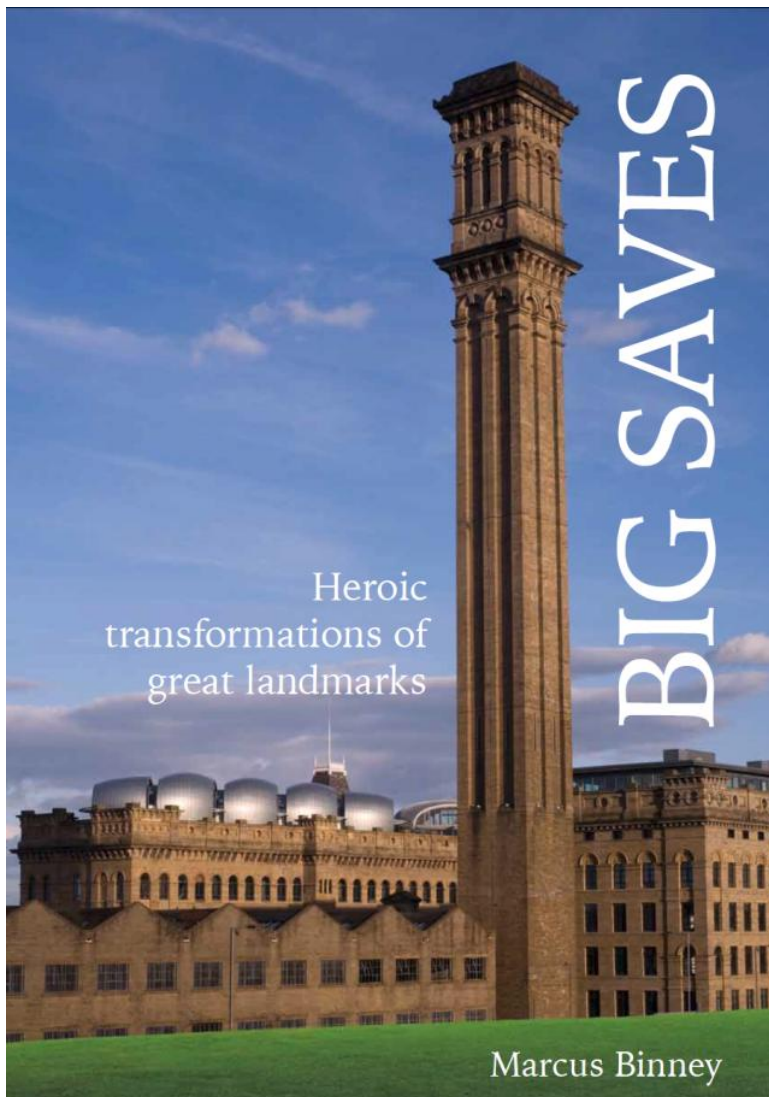


Press release: SAVE publishes *Big Saves: Heroic transformations of great landmarks*

Pre-order your copy now from SAVE's [website](#)

SAVE's latest publication shows how Britain has led the way in breathing new life into great historic buildings, from naval dockyards to textile mills, grand hotels to hospitals, town halls to power stations, and many more.



The cover of *The Big Saves*.

Lister Mills in Bradford was transformed by David Morley Architects, with the addition of striking zinc covered penthouses.

Marcus Binney tells the stories of these rescues in over 50 detailed case studies, many of them the direct or indirect result of campaigns and projects launched and commissioned by SAVE.

These are buildings which half a century ago would rarely have survived. Their revival is a creative process showing that all over Britain and beyond, historic buildings can be beacons of new life in both booming and declining economies.

Once repaired and transformed, sometimes after years of decay, they provide places to work, live and visit. More than this they are powerful regeneration projects in places which need investment.

The book is a blueprint for action showing how to save an architectural marvel, and the many examples featured can be an inspiration to everyone who cherishes a local landmark.

***Big Saves* is due to be launched on 1 June 2016. It can be pre-ordered via SAVE's [website](#) and is priced at £25 (£20 for SAVE [friends](#)) plus £2.50 postage.**

Review copies are available both in electronic form and as hard copies.

Marcus Binney, Executive President of SAVE said: "*Big Saves* chronicles 40 years of campaigning to show how new life can be breathed into great landmarks. Victorian covered markets, mighty mills, warehouses and factories, naval dockyards and military barracks, hospitals and town halls fall out of use but need not be pensioners on the State. With the help of imaginative architects and enterprising developers they can become good investments and earn their keep for years to come."



Warley Hospital in Brentford has been transformed by City & Country, a family run development company. At Warley the introduction of expansive lawns and flowerbeds shows off the handsome buildings to great effect.



CHAPTER 4
MARKETS

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The restaurant and glass roofed hall of the former Billingsgate Fish Market was originally constructed for a grand ballroom, modelled on the grand ballrooms of the grand houses and hotels of London. The City Corporation's plan to demolish the market buildings to make way for a new development of offices and residential housing.

Billingsgate Market, London

Our report **SAVE Billingsgate** was published in July 1980; three months earlier **Michael Heseltine** had listed the former fish market to the fury of the City Corporation, which promptly requested permission to demolish it.

Billingsgate Fish Market stands gloriously on the edge of the Thames looking downriver to Tower Bridge. But in 1980, the City Corporation was relocating the market to the site of Doge and considered the site of the river-side site for redevelopment essential so covering the costs of the move, estimated at £7.4 million. In our report we put forward an alternative plan which would provide the market with a new purpose, opening up views over one of the most scenic stretches of the Thames in London. By constructing a new building on the adjoining leury park, it is possible not only to cover the cost of repairing and adapting the market, but to offer a financial return, comparable to a wholly new development over the same site. It was a bold statement that proved to be completely correct.

Though Old Billingsgate Fish Market had been designed by Sir Horace Jones, the City Corporation's own surveyor and architect, The Corporation saw no merit in the building as all. When Heseltine listed the building the centre had been immediate and fierce. At the press conference held eight days later the joint committee of traders and employees claimed the listing had put the former employment of about 200 who worked there in jeopardy, so *The Times* reported the next day. On television it was claimed that the former of the entire British fishing industry was under threat!

Most popular of all was the story that Billingsgate would collapse when the cold snow in the basement would begin to drip. "What happens when London's giant iceberg melts?" ran the headline in the *London Evening News* Magazine on 21st March 1980; this story was printed hundreds of times and would appear all over the world. The article by Keith Bogg contained: "32,700 square feet of deep freeze, plus an estimated 20,000 square feet of permafrost, built upon layers upon chilling layers over half a century, have now joined the venerable foundations in supporting the towering iron columns and soaring gilded nave of this great temple to the capital's fishing trade." There was more in the same colourful vein: when the iceberg melts, run one

theory, Billingsgate will topple like a house of cards. First the walls will crack, then the pillars will lean at a crazy angle and finally the roof will crash 60 feet onto the concourse below."

A cold stone expert was quoted saying: "lockwork deeply permeated by fets was like a strawberry, which looked perfectly good after it had been frozen, but the cells had been destroyed. Once the thing melts, the thing turns to mush. As if the ice story was not good enough there was another hardly less colourful error given for demolition in *The Corporation's Year*, 1979: "Although the present Billingsgate Market is less than a hundred years old, the corrosive effects of fish juice mean it has to be rebuilt."

SAVE took a risk with Billingsgate because we were convinced that a sensitive proposal for reuse would work economically. If we could prove this restoration scheme to the City of London could work, where development values were high, it would aid arguments for saving building in city centres all over the country.



The cover of the 1980 **SAVE** report on Billingsgate. In November the City Corporation moved away from demolition and used our alternative planning permission instead of the time of the **SAVE** project.

Architecturally, the glory of Billingsgate is its riverfront site. Amidst the great cliffs of all office buildings, between Southbank Bridge and Tower Bridge, Billingsgate, with its columns, roof gables and gilded dolphins makes an immensely freer scene, this marked only by a collection of sheds that ran in four of it. From the river terrace, there is one of the most spectacular views of the river in London, with Tower Bridge seen in full silhouette and HMS Belfast moored off the far bank. Further west are the splendid restored warehouses of Hays Wharf.

Inside, Billingsgate consisted of two parallel market halls, divided by a double line of Doric columns. The porosity-type effects down the centre and along the southern side had marked

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Billingsgate Fish Market, London, where SAVE fought a long battle to save the market buildings. Working with Ian Ritchie and Alan Stanton of Chrysalis Architects, SAVE produced an alternative scheme, which was broadly adopted by the City Corporation



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Battersea Power Station, London

Battersea Power Station is a colossal, much the largest building **SAVE** has ever campaigned for. Undaunted we obtained the first planning permission for leisure and sports use, working with the architects **Martin Richardson and Graham Morrison**. Although the power station decayed while a coalition of owners struggled to find a viable solution, an **ENHANCE** restoration and conversion scheme is due for completion in 2018 by the new Malaysian owners. After so many setbacks some remain sceptical, but there can be no doubt that when it opens tens of thousands will throng to see it.

In 1972, **SAVE** was rung by the BBC with breaking news: "Battersea Power Station is being demolished - should it be saved?" was the question. Yes, was my resounding answer. At the audio, before we were live, the interviewer told me he had been dreading a Glaswegian friend over Chelsea Bridge and pointed to the Power Station saying "there's one of London's great architectural monuments". There was a long pause before his companion replied, "they're taking the piss."

He was not alone. Several months later I was told by an enterprising lady who had rescued a Cornish farmhouse "has it proved preservation." But when *The Times* Diary jokingly offered a prize of £10 to the reader with the most practical solution for its future, the response was overwhelming, prompting the Diary to opine, "One thing is certain, Londoners love Battersea Power Station." [New 37]



The Power Station from the river. This shows the new central chimney in the rebuilt west wall.

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SAVE obtained the first planning permission for leisure and sports use at Battersea Power Station in 1982. After many setbacks Giles Gilbert Scott's masterpiece is now on course to be revitalised as apartments, offices, and retail spaces.

Note to editors:

1. For more information please contact Mike Fox, Deputy Director at SAVE on 0207 253 3500 or office@savebritainsheritage.org

2. *Big Saves* features major cases from across the UK, including London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bradford, Bristol, Exeter, Harrogate, Norfolk and Derbyshire, as well as international cases from Spain, China, Germany and the United States of America

3. *Big Saves* has been sponsored by David Morley Architects, whose work at Lister Mills in Bradford is included in the book, as well as being featured on the front cover. Sponsorship has also been received from Urban Space Management, Battersea Power Station, and City & Country. SAVE is very grateful to all our sponsors, as well as all those who have helped with research and pictures.

4. SAVE Britain's Heritage has been campaigning for historic buildings since its formation in 1975 by a group of architectural historians, writers, 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.

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