



THE
BIRMINGHAM
CIVIC SOCIETY



RIBA 
West Midlands

Cllr John Clancy
Leader of the City Council
Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B1 1BB

6 December 2016

Dear Cllr Clancy,

'Birmingham's better off without its tatty 1960s Brutalist office blocks says city planner'
Birmingham Post, 28.11.16.

The Birmingham Civic Society, Twentieth Century Society, The Birmingham Modernist Society, Brutiful Birmingham, Birmingham Architectural Association, RIBA West Midlands and associated individuals are calling for a city-wide review of Birmingham's post-war architecture and we believe it is the responsibility of Birmingham City Council to actively support and enable this to be carried out.

Let us work together to put in place, before all is lost, a considered approach to how we deal with the architecture created in the post-war phase of the development of our city. There needs to be a conversation with all stakeholders about Birmingham's 1960's/70's buildings to fully understand the significance of this period of our culture. We need to formulate an appropriate approach as to how the council, developers, architects and the broader construction industry can work with these buildings as the city goes through a period of growth.

We cannot leave our best modernist buildings without any statutory protection and at the mercy of developers or the 'mindset' that we should complete the 'cleansing' that Cllr Barry Henley has recently suggested. We are in danger of sweeping away an important part of our built heritage - very much as Birmingham was quick to do with its Victorian buildings. We need a city that reflects, embraces and takes pride in all periods of our history.

It will be a challenge to improve the fabric of the modernist structures and to find new uses but it is possible. This was successfully achieved with the Rotunda and Alpha Tower - both Grade II listed post-war buildings that are good examples of what can be achieved. Both are still recognisable as iconic landmarks for our city but transformed with new uses and sustainable futures.

There is a growing appreciation of our modernist architecture and we cannot rely on subjective, personal opinions of decision makers to dictate that we are better off without these buildings. Furthermore, we can see how many of the buildings from this period inspire people today through numerous films, photographs and artworks created referencing Birmingham's best post-war architecture.

We call upon Birmingham City Council to take action in working with us and other stakeholders in preparing an independent and considered strategy for saving the best of our post-war architecture for the benefit of our city, its people and future generations.

We look forward to hearing from you.

We the undersigned, support and endorse this letter:

Gavin Orton, Chairman, The Birmingham Civic Society
Anna Douglas, Chairman, Twentieth Century Society
Michael Dring, The Birmingham Modernist Society
Mary Keating, Brutiful Birmingham
Michael Duff, President, Birmingham Architectural Association
Aaron Chetwynd, Chairman, RIBA West Midlands
Harriet Devlin MBE, MA(Cantab), AMA, PGCE, DipCons(RSUA), IHBC

cc. Neil Elkes - The Birmingham Post

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