

IMMINENT SALE OF THE SPODE FACTORY

TCC Member Action Needed

We recently learned that the Spode factory site at Stoke on Trent, England, has been sold, subject to planning permission being obtained for future development (probably not related to pottery) of the site. Those TCC members who attended the convention in Stoke three years ago will remember the factory as a centerpiece of our meeting and the wonderful tour we enjoyed, particularly the pleasure of seeing how transferware is manufactured. In addition to the factory closing, we understand that the superb Spode Museum, located within the factory grounds, has no future home for its collections and archive material.

The Spode site as a manufactory dates to before 1751. Many of the buildings within the area of the old bottle oven are of historic interest and some may date to the mid-1780s. Spode seems to be the last of the famous ceramic manufacturers still occupying the site on which it was founded in 1776. It has tremendous value to Stoke-on-Trent for tourism and heritage.

So many of the old factories have been abandoned and torn down that the history of the potteries is being lost. A taxi driver recently told one of our members: "In 5 years time, this will all be gone, and no one will ever know the pottery industry was here."

Unfortunately, the factory site is not at present listed with the English Heritage. It is possible that it could be torn down and replaced with a shopping complex. In an effort to try and preserve these buildings, concerned folk are encouraged to contact Jane Corfield, Senior Design and Conservation Officer, Regeneration and Heritage (see address below). As part of the City of Stoke-on-Trent Local Development Framework, Ms Corfield is at present undertaking a review of the Conservation Area boundaries.

Time is running out as written representations by Ms Corfield are due before Monday 18th September. English Heritage is currently reviewing historic buildings in Stoke-on-Trent and the factory site will be included in that review. If you would like to encourage this body to look favorably on the site, please write Ann Lovejoy (see address below).

The Spode Society was told that a number of letters from individuals, all personally expressed, will have greater impact than only one coming from the Society and representing all members. We hope members of TCC will write a letter and/or email Jane Corfield and the others listed below, ASAP. Following is a summary of important contacts:

Jane Corfield, Senior Design and Conservation Officer, Regeneration and Heritage, PO Box 630, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs., ST4 1RF. jane.corfield@stoke.gov.uk

Development Planning Department, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent. ST4 1WR

Anne Lovejoy, English Heritage, S.W. Region 29, Queen Square, Bristol, BSI 4ND U.K

The Georgian Group, 6 Fitzroy Square, London, W1P 6DX

The Victorian Society, 1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, London, W4 1TT

Spode Society: Bill and Marguerite Coles, 75 Stafford Street, Market Drayton, Salop., TF9 1JD

Royal Worcester Spode: Church Street, Stoke-on-Trent, UK ST4 1BX; spode@spode.co.uk

Mark Fisher, MP Stoke on Trent Central, 76-80 Lonsdale Street (Cromavision) Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4DP; markfishermp@parliament.uk

An airmail stamp costs 84 cents to the U.K., and it can take 5-7 days from posting for a letter to arrive. Please act now!

Compiled by David Hoexter with particular thanks to Connie Rogers, Robert Copeland, and the Internet.