

A Report into The University of Sunderland's
decision to close and demolish
The National Glass Centre, Sunderland



Compiled by the Campaign to #Save The National Glass Centre

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Who are #Save The National Glass Centre?

We are a group of people who've come together to campaign against the demolition of The National Glass Centre (NGC) by its owner, The University of Sunderland (UoS). We want to see the NGC survive and thrive and we believe that if the community, politicians, other interested organisations and the UoS work together in a spirit of positive engagement we can create a stronger, sustainable future for the NGC. This report represents our evidence and findings so far.

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Disclaimer

We are all busy people with a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences and professional qualifications. All that we know and understand has been gained from extensive research and collaboration, Freedom of Information requests (Fol), communication from the UoS, and with other professional bodies and politicians. We have endeavoured to work from an evidence base and to be as accurate as possible. As our research is ongoing, we consider this document as a work in progress, and it will continue to develop because for example we are currently awaiting Fol returns. If this report contains unintentional inaccuracies, please bring them to our attention and we will correct them. Most importantly we are more than willing to engage constructively in this debate, share our evidence and explain our findings to any interested parties, please ask.

1 **Precis**

The UoS has set about a process with the goal of removing the NGC from the edge of its campus, and of benefitting from use of the site in future years, but without specifying what that future use will be. We are concerned that there has been a lack of,

- a) consultation with the community, staff or users
- b) reasonable care in announcing the UoS's plans which have weakened the offer to current and future students, threatened the livelihoods of staff and caused confusion amongst visitors to the NGC; all of which contributes to managed decline
- c) consideration or weight given to the economic, cultural, educational, societal and historical damage inflicted by the removal of "a world class-cultural asset"
- d) guarantees that any aspects of the many and varied activities and functions of the building will be retained anywhere
- e) a clear rationale articulating as to how the site will be developed if the NGC can be demolished
- f) stewardship and care for the fabric of the building, resulting in a backlog of repairs
- g) due diligence in the process and decision making which currently has been derived from narrow, selective evidence and is based on an assumption its plans are feasible within planning law, this could expose the UoS to risk as its plans are undefined and costs are unquantifiable
- h) consideration by the UoS of the benefits they have accrued from the gift of the ownership and use of the NGC and its resources
- i) guardianship, as the UoS is a Founding Partner of Sunderland Culture (Charity number: 1184073), and an appreciation of the responsibility to act for the 'public benefit' as a charitable enterprise
- j) alignment of their actions with their stated Values and previous statements, with the consequential potential reputational damage to the UoS

2 The Current Functions of the Building

What is the NGC? Defining such a complex, multi-functional organisation with a myriad of experiences and levels of meaning to so many is challenging in itself!

It is a place...*to inspire our next generation... to experience the results of others' creativity... full of facilities and expertise to support a wide variety of artists and help them create... that connects nationally and internationally through creative practices... to meet friends and family...that acts as a hub for a wider creative economy... to stop for a coffee or to grab a bite... to start or finish a walk or cycle to or back from the beach...to relax and watch the boats on the river... to welcome visitors... to have a cheap family day out... to watch the seals and dolphins in the river... to enjoy a trip out from school, whilst learning something new in an exciting environment... to pick up a card or choose a unique gift... for a rainy day visit... to learn something new and create... to start a business... to start a future career... to celebrate a wedding... to meet in conference... to better understand, celebrate, treasure and connect with our history... to connect and share with other people... to make memories... shelter, heal, breathe, and grow.*

3 The Community Response to the Closure and Demolition Plan

Over 32000 people have signed the campaign petition to #Save the NGC, and a wide variety of artists, experts and cultural organisations have expressed support. In total the argument for the societal, cultural, educational and economic importance of the NGC has already been well made, if you are in any doubt as to the strength of feeling take a moment and read the comments section contained within the petition (<https://www.change.org/p/save-glass-blowing-in-the-historic-st-peter-s-ward-save-the-national-glass-centre/c>) or the campaign group's blog (<https://savethengc.art.blog/>).

4 The Background

The C20th Society published an excellent piece containing some of the history of the NGC, <https://c20society.org.uk/news/backing-for-campaign-to-save-sunderlands-national-glass-centre>

5 The UoS Case for Demolition and Our Evidence in Rebuttal

5.1 Responsible Ownership, Guardianship as a Founding Partner of a Charity and the Civic Responsibility of Stewardship of a Community Asset

After owning the NGC for several years, the UoS have now decided they no longer want to be 'proud owners' of 'a world class-cultural asset'; that it is not part of their 'core function', even though the NGC is, and has been since it opened, an education facility for the whole city and the wider community, not just the UoS. Many local schools visit the facility as part of their syllabus allowing the children to learn about the 1350 years of glass making in the city and how forward-thinking St Benedict Biscop was to bring glass making technology to Sunderland from France in the 7th century. The NGC attracts visitors and artists not just from the local area, but from all over the country and, indeed, the world. It should be remembered that when Sunderland was bidding to become the City of Culture, the bid highlighted the NGC as being the jewel in the City's crown.

Recently Vice Chancellor, Sir David Bell, in a letter to Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, dated 24/08/23, described the UoS's civic obligations to Sunderland as 'the burden'. This is completely at odds with his statement in Sunderland Culture's Annual Review for 2021-22,

'I was particularly delighted to see emerging research activity around social prescribing – which brings together social and medical approaches to wellness – involving Sunderland Culture and colleagues from the University's Faculty of Health Sciences and Wellbeing. Arts Council England often talks of the partnership approach to culture-led regeneration in Sunderland as unique. That is certainly my experience and so I am delighted that the University of Sunderland is part of the effort to bring outstanding experiences and opportunities to our students, our staff, and those of us who live and work in this fast-changing city.'

<https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/annual-review/> (13/09/2023)

<https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Sunderland-Culture-Annual-Review-2021-2022-C.pdf> (updated link, 08/10/2023)

Surely the commitment to sustain and develop the community asset was made plain when the transfer of ownership took place, the UoS cannot believe that the ownership of the NGC was a licence to do as it wished with a valuable piece of land. Most importantly as Founding Partners of the charity, Sunderland Culture, (set up to deliver the creative programme for the NGC, the NGCA and other creative venues) the UoS, Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust and Sunderland Council have a responsibility to support its remit,

'Our mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture. To do so, we are driving five step changes: improved profile and reputation of the city; a more vibrant creative economy; raised outlook and aspiration of young people; improved health and wellbeing; and a more socially cohesive city.'

<https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/annual-review/> (13/09/2023)

The actions of the UoS could expose Sunderland Culture to risk as its sole function as a charity is to act 'for the public benefit'. The potential loss of two of five of the charity's assets (the NGC and the NGCA) diminishes its ability to carry out its remit under what The Charities Act 2011 calls the '*public benefit requirement*'. All the Trustees of Sunderland Culture must act '*in accordance with your charity's purpose (so not operating outside of that purpose)*'. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-benefit-rules-for-charities> (13/09/2023).

The closure of the NGC and NGCA would meet the requirements for what the Charity Commission describes as a reportable 'serious incident', defined as,

'...an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to your charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with your charity through its work (who are collectively referred to throughout this guidance as people who come into contact with your charity through its work)*
- loss of your charity's money or assets*
- damage to your charity's property*
- harm to your charity's work or reputation*

For the purposes of this guidance, "significant" means significant in the context of your charity, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.'

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity#what-to-report> (13/09/23)

The lack of any commitment by the UoS and Sunderland Council to the future of the NGC and the NGCA is in direct contradiction with Sunderland Culture's legally defined purpose,

'For the benefit of the public to advance the arts and culture and to advance education in the arts of performance, music, drama, poetry reading, sculpture, painting, photography, handicrafts, literature, glassmaking, history, film and all other associated arts (The Arts) in particular but not exclusively by:

- 1. Encouraging public participation in The Arts and by the presentation of concerts, performances, exhibitions and festivals, provided that the promotion of such festivals and events is undertaken solely for the public benefit;*
- 2. Developing new and innovative ways of delivering The Arts;*
- 3. Participation in and, where appropriate, management and oversight of, cultural operations, venues and activities primarily in the City of Sunderland to ensure maximum benefit and return, provided that such participation and management is undertaken solely for the public benefit;'*

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5115589/governing-document> (13/09/23)

5.2 The Long-Term Plan

There has been a lack of reasonable care as there has been no substantive plan or guarantees that any aspects of the many and varied functions of the NGC and the NGCA, under the stewardship of the UoS, will be retained anywhere: the galleries, the collections, the public engagement and educational activities, the visitor facilities, the academic courses, the specialist artists' facilities, the tenanted studios, all could be lost.

In failing to define their desired outcome for the site we are struggling to understand how they have exercised requisite effort. This could lead to exposing the UoS to risk; plans are yet unspecified, cited as being due to current workload,

'I know that some of your constituents are concerned about what will happen to the land on which the NGC is located, given that demolition will be necessary in due course. I cannot answer this question at the moment for three principal reasons.

First, our priority must be on the relocation of the existing activities within the NGC. As you know, Andrea is leading a number of 'workstreams' to ensure that we adopt a comprehensive approach to this priority and that is currently consuming the majority of our time.

Second, the NGC sits adjacent to the St Peter's campus of the University where we are planning to undertake significant capital works over the next five years. As yet, we have not begun any kind of 'master planning' for what the whole area – including the NGC – might look like. Such work is not likely to commence for a few months yet. And third, the NGC is not likely to close its doors to public activities until at least 2025 at the earliest. It is also highly unlikely that demolition would begin immediately either. Whatever is proposed for the site though would be subject to the normal planning process but, to repeat, the University has not yet identified any future options and, for the reasons, noted above, is unlikely to do so in the immediate future.' (Our highlighting, letter from Vice Chancellor, Sir David Bell to Julie Elliott MP dated 14th May 2023, released under a FoI request.)

5.3 Clarity of Intent

The opacity of the UoS's plans, even if they are successful in emptying the building and demolishing, further increase the community's lack of confidence with their actions. Aside from the catastrophic loss of a much-loved cultural destination and the subsequent economic damage to Sunderland's visitor and cultural economy, what will the community see in its place; is the site earmarked to be developed as part of the St Peter's Campus expansion, as lucrative student accommodation or is the intent to sell to developers to realise it's potential as a valuable, serviced prime riverside location for further development, commercial or housing? Are we really to believe that no thought has been put into this?

5.4 A Future Unknown

Gaining planning permission to demolish and redevelop the site is not guaranteed, which will result in the UoS being exposed to additional, unquantified costs as they will be left with an empty building they will still need to secure, repair and maintain and find an alternative function for, with resultant cost implications; have they exercised requisite care, risk assessed, and costed this as part of their strategic planning or reviewed what will they do in those circumstances? We remain deeply concerned that the answer is no from the evidence we have received,

'As yet, we have not begun any kind of 'master planning' for what the whole area – including the NGC – might look like. Such work is not likely to commence for a few months yet.' (letter from Vice Chancellor, Sir David Bell to Julie Elliott MP dated 14th May 2023, released under a FoI request.)

5.5 The Given Cost of Repairs

The UoS understand that repairs are required and have published the cost of those works as a prohibitive £45 million as one of the key factors in its decision to close and demolish the NGC; on closer examination, however, comparative costs stated for other local projects leads to us questioning the basis for that costing, for example, approximately £42 million for the new City Hall, an estimated £25 million for The Culture House, both completely new buildings with new foundations, structure, and state of the art facilities. Unfortunately, the publicity surrounding the figure of £45 million will have been extremely off-putting to any interested parties able to assist with capital investment, we hope that that was not the desired intention.

5.6 The Age of the Building and Liabilities

We have struggled to comprehend that a building which is less than 25 years old is in such a bad state of repair as is reported, and if it is this begs the question - has the building been adequately looked after and maintained over those years. The UoS commissioned a 126 page Feasibility Report (dated July 2022) which looks at various options for the future of the building. In the report each of the consultants giving input into it highlight that, in their opinion, original specifications were inadequate in some areas and the construction was not carried out in accordance with the specifications to some extent, leading to a building which was not fit for purpose. Under these circumstances surely there should be recourse to the original team. If the UoS has looked at this and, taken the statements in the report at face value, their conclusions should be that there is a way of gaining some sort of recompense from the original parties for repairs because of the highlighted failings. This report lists specific design life span for elements of the building as follows:

- a) Concrete – 100 years

- b) Steel – 60 years
- c) Glazing - 30 years

We note that the almost 25 year old building is easily within each of these timescales, and wonder if this has not been raised as an issue with the relevant responsible parties?

The Maintenance Regime

The UoS has stated that the NGC has cost them £14 million over the years, (without stating the income for the same period) however it has enjoyed the economic benefit of use of the NGC facilities for example, by siting academic courses in the building and in the process freeing up space in its other buildings for other usage; ownership and usage brings with it the responsibility to run an appropriate maintenance regime. There is strong evidence that over ten years the UoS has identified and understood that there has been a failure to adequately maintain the building, in 2013 the then university head of estates stated, *'the centre has suffered as a business and its maintenance regime hasn't been as robust as it could have been'*, as reported by the C20th Society, <https://c20society.org.uk/news/backing-for-campaign-to-save-sunderlands-national-glass-centre> (23/08/23)

Ten years later the same situation still exists, in the UoS's current documentation they identify,

'a previously identified strategic risk (SR8) that we fail to plan, invest and maintain the University's physical estate to ensure that its size, shape and structure are aligned to the University's strategic ambitions, is environmentally sustainable and compliant with relevant health and safety legislation.'

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/images/external-websites/www/about/strategic-plan/Environmental-Sustainability-Plan.pdf> (21/08/23)

Through a Freedom of Information request we now understand that "The University does not have an Operation and Maintenance document for the NGC." (FOI2324/01/10) This explains why there has been no systematic maintenance routine; a potential factor in the current state of disrepair and the resultant increased costs to rectify the situation.

In October 2022 the Executive's evidence, the Roof Level Feasibility Report (2022), led to the University making major structural changes to the NGC's main glass façade by removing the brise soleil and external frame. This was done without planning permission or the involvement of Building Control. Contractors removed the bracing that stiffened and strengthened the façade and protected it from the force of the wind. Damage occurred in October 2023 during high winds, but before the main impact of storm Babet. Luckily no one was hurt when a large panel of glass dropped out of position. It is the very definition of a near miss; for a year thousands of people worked, walked, sat, ran and cycled past tonnes of glass held in a potentially weakened structure due to the University's maintenance choices. It led to the University declaring the façade as a "dangerous structure". Whilst Sir David Bell has continued to insist that it was: "...simply untrue to suggest that the University has failed to maintain the building adequately." (letter to the office of Julie Elliot MP, 26.10.2023). Even a simple visual survey of the external facade reveals the poor condition of the paintwork and steelwork. The consequence of this inaction is inevitably increased repair costs as deterioration has occurred unchecked, and the opportunity to carry out vital work to improve sustainability has also been missed.

5.7 The Feasibility Report and Cost Estimate

It is also worth noting that the Feasibility Report covers three options for the building refurbishment, none of which equate to the £45m option which the UoS constantly refers to. The cost estimate produced by Identity Consult has four options, one of which is the UoS's preferred £45m option. We have struggled to understand this figure as there is no design report to go with this costing, even though the report indicates that it is based on an RIBA Stage 2 design. As this is not covered by the Feasibility Report, clarification from the UoS for the information on which this cost estimate is based would be appreciated. It is difficult to comment in too much detail on a cost estimate without the design information.

5.8 Building Costs

The rates used appear to be extremely robust, understandable if Identity did not have a Stage 2 design to base the price on. In our opinion an example of this robustness is the

work to the steelwork priced at over £1m (inc VAT). The structure is mainly concrete, with steelwork at the southern end. Whilst the external steelwork is in poor condition, with the worst part of this being the overhang at roof level, this is a minor part in quantity terms of the overall structure. Therefore, the cost of £1m, to clean off the rust, repair any degradation of the steelwork and apply a suitable finish appears excessive. It is worth noting that the Feasibility report states that the existing paint build up to the steelwork is inadequate for the location due to the marine environment. This highlighted failing goes back to the specifications given by the original design team. A further item to highlight at this stage is the Mechanical, Electrical and Process systems price. This is based purely on £850/m² for the stated floor area which also appears very robust.

5.9 Net Carbon Zero

An overall uplift in cost of 25% has been added across the board to achieve Net Carbon Zero. This adds in excess of £4m (incl VAT) to the construction costs. Whilst we acknowledge sustainability should be built into the design of any building, the question remains whether adding a blanket 25% to the construction costs is realistic and warranted. If Net Zero Carbon really is adding 25% to construction costs on all new projects, then many projects across the country will falter due to funding issues. It would be interesting to know what extra elements Identity believe are required which make up this 25% uplift.

5.11 Preliminaries and Main Contractors Oncost and Profit

Any contractor would be extremely happy to work for the rates quoted. Identity Consult does make the point that the UoS has a framework agreement in place which we are sure has much more competitive rates than those included in the cost plan. Surely this is what should have been used in the estimate?

5.12 Project/Design Fees

A 10% addition has been made for design fees adding £2.5m (inc. VAT) to the construction costs. This is high, particularly bearing in mind that the structure already exists, so structurally the Engineer needs to check loadings from any revised layouts and check

subcontractors' design where applicable, so there is a much-reduced scope to what would be expected on a new build project. It would be interesting to know how this percentage looks in relation to the UoS's existing framework fees arrangements.

5.13 Other Development/ Project Costs

A further 15% addition has been made for this adding a further £4.2m (inc. VAT) to the construction costs. We have struggled to understand what other project costs will be incurred which will amount to such a high figure for the refurbishment of an existing, well understood building. It is worth noting that the UoS advised Identity to add in this figure.

5.14 Risk Allowance

A further £6.4m (inc. VAT) has been added to seemingly already robust figures for additional risk. The level of pricing already includes a healthy amount of risk allowance without adding such a large sum. It should be remembered that there is an existing team in place who understand how the current building works, what its limitations are and what needs to improve. This team would have input into the design from an early stage which would help eliminate much of the risk.

5.15 Market Testing

It appears that through a lack of information, an extremely conservative view has been taken throughout which has led to the final projected cost being so high. We would urge the UoS to carry out some market testing, and a review of costs against the existing framework which it already has in place to see what savings against the £45m can be made at this stage. We believe they would be significant, particularly if a value engineering exercise was carried out, and a cost/value analysis was carried out on any proposed enhancements to the building.

5.16 Architectural Merit

The UoS's solution is based on a speculative premise that permission will be given to demolish the building and redevelop the site; there are several hurdles to overcome before demolition could take place, not least because The NGC is housed within a building of outstanding architectural merit, as internationally renowned architect, Piers Gough commented,

'The National Glass Centre does so many things so right. It exploits the sloping topography between Roker Terrace and the Wear by inviting the visitor straight onto the roof to first get a sense of the panoramic setting. Whilst entry to the building, signalled by two soaring chimneys, is invitingly sliced into the slope [in the manner of the great Oscar Niemeyer] The roof of course turns out to be a tour de force of glazing giving a unique birds' eye view of the spaces below. The multi function interiors are inviting, spectacular, well lit and flexible enough to allow for many existing and future uses. The lowest level space opens seamlessly onto the quayside from where the whole building can be perceived as akin to a glass aircraft carrier including its quirky below deck control turret. This reference to Sunderland's ship building heritage as well as glass making past makes this unique building special to its particular location. It is the best and most apposite 21st century building of the region.

'Sunderland cannot afford to lose such an icon. It would seem ideal for a forward looking university to use or repurpose but should it be superfluous another more appreciative owner should be found.' Supplied by the C20 Society

<https://savethengc.art.blog/tag/piers-gough/> downloaded on 23/08/23

5.17 Building Preservation Order

The presence of *'the best and most apposite 21st century building of the region'* in a city keen to conserve its heritage and capitalise on it could result in Sunderland City Council (SCC) issuing a Building Preservation Order (BPO).

5.18 Environmental Impact

The NGC was built on a site previously used for heavy industry, any demolition and redevelopment risks exposure and release of contamination potentially impacting the local area, River Wear and North Sea. Has the UoS considered, and risk assessed the potential hazard with disturbing ground which is currently stable?

5.19 Listed Buildings

A successful application could be made to list the NGC. Whilst it is a relatively young building, it meets many of the criteria set by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's criteria as laid out 'Principles for Selection of Listed Buildings',

'Architectural Interest: To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its design, decoration or craftsmanship. Special interest may also apply to particularly significant examples of building types or techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms. Engineering and technological interest can be an important consideration for some buildings. For more recent buildings in particular, the functioning of the building (to the extent that this reflects on its original design and planned use, where known) will also be a consideration. Artistic distinction can also be a factor relevant to the architectural interest of buildings and objects and structures fixed to them.'

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757054/Revised Principles of Selection 2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757054/Revised_Principles_of_Selection_2018.pdf) downloaded 23/08/23

5.20 A Recently Rejected Planning Application

We are struggling to determine how the UoS will address demolishing (releasing huge amounts of embodied carbon in the process) and redeveloping a site in an "environmentally sustainable" manner. The landmark decision by Secretary of State, Michael Gove, to refuse permission for M&S to demolish and redevelop it's Oxford Street store, which is thought would generate almost 40,000 tonnes of embodied carbon, marks a shifting in the balance in favour of retrofitting existing buildings rather than demolition and new development. Mr

Gove, in overturning the planning decision, contended that this strategy conflicted with policies on heritage and design, specifically highlighting the embodied carbon impact and waste from demolition. The refusal stated that:

'He does not consider that the applicant has demonstrated that refurbishment would not be deliverable or viable and nor has the applicant satisfied the secretary of state that options for retaining the buildings have been fully explored, or that there is compelling justification for demolition and rebuilding.'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1172463/23-07-20_DL_IR_456-472_oxford_street_london_w1_-_3301508.pdf (23/08/23)

6 In Summary

Assembling evidence of this kind can be somewhat dispiriting. Like so many we see the NGC as a wonderful place which has, perhaps in some respects through neglect, still to fully adapt to changing times but certainly as a place which, with the right input and leadership, will grow and thrive and be placed on a much more sustainable footing for the future. The strength of community feeling, the skill and commitment of the staff, the stunning location, the importance of the tradition and heritage it protects, the vital role it plays in educating future generations, these factors should be relevant to a reimagining of the NGC as a unique, multi-functional destination which plays a full part in the local visitor and culturally driven economy.

In Sunderland Culture's Annual Review 2021-2022 Sir David Bell describes how the *'University's partnership with Sunderland Culture has gone from strength to strength in the past year'* presumably due to the *'single, independent, and resilient delivery model'* established by the Founding Partners, (MAC Trust, UoS and Sunderland Council). The reality is that the future of the NGC and the NGCA is completely dependent on the whims of the UoS, whilst Sunderland Council stands by repeating that it is the responsibility of the UoS as they own it and completely ignoring the opinion of over 31000 people, the delivery

model they put in place and the responsibility it places on them. As Sir David Bell said in Sunderland Culture's Annual Review, '*Arts Council England often talks of the partnership approach to culture-led regeneration in Sunderland as unique*'. There is a strong case for revisiting the thinking behind that statement as the missing elements currently appear to be resilience, understanding, leadership and dynamism on the part of the UoS and Sunderland Council.

7 Case Studies

Luckily there are plenty of other instances where people are getting it right. The following are three of many inspirational projects where owners, the community, politicians and other organisations have worked together creatively to safeguard, enhance and create culturally vital and historically important assets. The final example illustrates the devastating consequences of the failure to protect our heritage, but also the strenuous efforts of the community and local council to prevent its complete destruction and possibly its renewal.

The Sill, Northumberland

An ambitious and innovative partnership between Northumberland National Park and YHA England and Wales to create an iconic, multi-functional, environmentally sustainable building and visitor attraction. Funded by several supporters, see website for more details.

'We hosted a series of open events and workshops where we discussed site layout, materials and architectural style. The participative design process gave the local community a chance to get involved, voice their opinions and feel some ownership of the project. It also allowed us to draw on a vast wealth of local knowledge and expertise. The whole team at JDDK are incredibly proud of what we achieved at The Sill. Our brief was for a landmark building which would become the hub of visitor activities, welcoming visitors and supporting communities throughout the Northumberland National Park. Sustainability and public consultation were at the core of the design process with the finished building inspired by the rugged Northumbrian countryside.'

Alison Thornton-Sykes, project architect, JDDK Architects <https://www.thesill.org.uk/>

Castlefield Viaduct, Manchester

A groundbreaking phased project focussed on community engagement to reimagine part of the city's industrial heritage, under the management of National Trust and supported by National Highways Historical Railways Estate Team, Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester, People's Postcode Lottery and the local community, businesses and supporters.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cheshire-greater-manchester/castlefield-viaduct>

Seaton Delaval Hall

Acquired by National Trust in 2009 after a concerted £6.3 million fundraising campaign which was fully supported by the local community, now restored as a much loved and highly successful visitor attraction.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/north-east/seaton-delaval-hall>

The Crooked House, South Staffordshire

A highly treasured pub, destroyed by arson and subsequent demolition without permission, centre of a determined campaign to protect the remains from further damage,

‘Roger Lees, the leader of South Staffordshire district council and local councillor for Himley, said: “The council is continuing to work behind the scenes with the relevant organisations and it’s important our focus is on a robust and thorough investigation. I would ask that we are given time to do so and I can reassure the public that we are doing everything in our power to investigate the matter thoroughly.”’

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/22/paranormal-society-nights-watch-crooked-house-pub-site> (24/08/23)

Save The National Glass Centre Petition Comments as of 06.03.2024

" too much has gone, we must endeavour to preserve."

"It creates a real point of difference in the City and will continue to be an asset as the new developments come to fruition."

"The National Glass Centre is one of the few possibly only national attractions we have in the city. It strengthens the city's position as a destination... part of the councils plan for the future. ..with the theatres and Fire Station venues culture centre and arena to complement our amazing coast line. We desperately need more quality attractions to fill our hotels not less. It's a travesty that this building and space which I have spent many happy hours in is to be lost after a short 25 years. Come on University of sunderland...use your influence and imagination to partner up with others, secure the funding to repair and maintain this (should be) asset. Its also time we had a living ship building museum (Beamish style) and coal mining museum (think woodhorn) to go with our celebration of industries past."

"It's part of our regional identity and national heritage"

"It's so important to save the developing community of Glass Artists and the continuing Glass Heritage in the North East. Glass artists should be consulted about this."

"For all the reason stated by petition. I have traveled to visit because of the centre, enjoyed exhibitions and understand value of preserving glass making jobs and important heritage skills locally and for the future"

"It's a beautiful and culturally important building that attracts visitors from within and beyond the region"

"We are new to the area however going to watch glass being blown is an amazing experience. If I were younger I would have enrolled at the university for a course. We take all our family and friends to see the amazing work when they come to stay."

"I'm concerned that this hasn't been thought through and is hasty and rash."

"The glass industry has been an important part of Sunderlands history and having the National Glass Centre in Sunderland recognises this, and should remain here in recognition of the heritage."

"The Glass Centre is such a representation of the city's glass heritage, its setting & design are second to none & in my view cannot be replicated anywhere else to have such a stunning presence in its environment"

"The NGC is famous throughout the UK and draws many people to it. The north east cannot lose this important cultural, creative centre."

"I believe the Glass Centre location is perfect and brings visitors to the North side of the City"

"Several members of our family have attended courses here and got a lot from them. Also, it's fascinating to look around and see glass making. A great feature to honour the glass making history in Sunderland."

"The Glass Centre is a vital part of Sunderland's culture, and the site is an important aspect of this. If the building must be demolished, a new one should be built on the same site, so that the Glass Centre and student facilities for glass and ceramics are integrated with the St. Peter's campus, bringing creative arts and the glassmaking traditions together."

"♡♡"

"When it's gone it's gone! We can't even make a wheel or boiler for a steam engine anymore!"

"So much of our city is being demolished and replaced that we're in danger of losing our history. The NGC is not in itself an old building (which makes the state of it even more shameful) but it is at least on the site of our glass blowing industry and I think it's important that this link to the past isn't lost."

"The National Glass Centre is an important part of Sunderland history. It needs to be saved."

"We need to protect and build other skills it offers"

"Crafts need to be saved for future generations"

"Save the National Glass Centre! The arts are vital to health, creativity and generate a lot of wealth."

"We must pass on our historic crafts & skills to future generations."

"The National Glass Centre is a world-class facility- truly an international destination for makers. The show stopping building communicates a dramatic presence that heightens the experience that something great happens within. The strong modern structure makes clear that tho the history of Sunderland glass and, by extension UK glass, the art form is very contemporary. The forward looking image we oils like our institutions of higher education to project."

"We can't just stand by and let it go!"

"It's is a wonderful place"

"It's very wrong that we lose this resource"

"The national glass centre is the biggest and most inspiring hub for glass artists in the UK. It's will be absolutely devastating for this craft is the centre is closed."

"It is fundamentally important to keep the Glass Art Movement represented in such an Iconic Building as the National Glass Centre,Sunderland has such an incredible historic link to Glass making and stained glass since 674AD.It is hugely worthy of support and indispensible to all upcoming and established glass artists ."

"It's a beautiful place that needs to stay"

"National Glass Centre is a facility of excellence unmatched in the UK"

"my family have spent many a lovely day at the glass centre over the years doing various activities. It's a big part of our city's history and would be such a shame to see it closed and future generations to therefore miss out on that part of our heritage."

"The glass industry is a massive part of Sunderland's history and it's such an amazing place for glass blowers and artists to showcase their amazing glass work. It's so fantastic to watch them working with the glass and to be able to take part in glass making activities with our children and families to keep that passion going and to help inspire young children to take up glass work as a career. It will be such a big loss to our city if it is forced to close down."

"My daughter is a student based at the glass centre and it is a fabulous institution which must be saved for future generations"

"Glassmaking is part of our heritage, the National Glass Centre is such an important feature of the North East, an important tourist venue and hub for glass making and art in general. It is used and beloved by so many people. It would be such a shame to disband it and all the people who belong to it, removing Sunderland from the map in the Glass art world"

"It's a local tradition of national importance! It's the National Glass Centre!"

"...there is no point in the Glass Centre being moved; so this proposal will merely be an exercise in futility, at great expense."

"it's a nationally important building running classes and using resources that we are allowed to hire. People come from far and wide to use it's resources"

"It makes me proud , I take everyone there that visits me , it really makes me sad that soon it won't be there , I think it should be saved no matter what it costs , it's why people come to Sunderland to visit THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE. It's part of our heritage ."

"This is such an important place that keeps the tradition and legacy of Sunderland's glass blowing alive. So important to be able to see and learn from skills in action like this."

"It's the jewel in Sunderlands crown"

"What a great attribute to the city. Let's not lose it"

"Because its iconic and would not be the same elsewhere"

"This is the first location that glass was actually made on British soil when Glass makers from the continent were bidden to come and make their glass in situ instead of sending it "prefabricated" with all the presumed attendant complications. It was THIS site that was used! It's iconic! It's immovable! It's to be celebrated and publicised. The University has produced some wonderfully accomplished glass artists who have made some brilliant glass artworks here at the workshop area of the Glass Centre. All are to be celebrated! But it wasn't a University entity at it's conception. Professor Flavia Swan, Sunderland educated and then resident at the Arts Department of Sunderland University, was one of the main movers at it's inception. She recognised the importance and potential of setting up a NATIONAL Glass Centre as a public entity. Initially it housed the craftsmen of the recently defunct Hartley Glassworks. Monkwearmouth Monastery, the sholarship of St Bede and the learning embedded in the surrounding areas were a shining beacon of light in the Dark Ages and are universally recognised by scholars as being of immense importance in post Roman and early Anglo Saxon times. It is not just the Stadium of Light that should shine on for Sunderland. In the Post-Industrial world Cultural Tourism and Leisure are the the new bywords for prosperity. It would be another shockingly missed opportunity and a Cultural Crime to demolish this building which itself is iconic! I sign with passion!"

"It will be a travesty if the glass centre has to close."

"... knows what's important to community togetherness. This is important to her."

"Another part of our heritage under threat!"

"Because it would be a massive loss to Sunderland if this was to go"

"Much of Sunderland's history is disappearing. We need to keep our heritage alive. Many local families have been part of the glass history. Don't let this important part of Sunderland fade away. It brings so much happiness to so many people."

"Art in all its forms matters, it makes us better humans."

"Heritage is important."

"It is our local and National heritage centre and I live in Sunderland . I am very proud of glass blowing history and it should be preserved in one of the oldest parts of our city ."

"The Glass Centre is a great meeting place of all ages especially the older people in the community, it's a wonderful modern much needed tourist attraction, and a valuable source of Sunderland history material - all too frequently overlooked. The glass blowing team have much needed skills which people of all ages participate in and enjoy- please don't abandon this -"

"It is a unique building, placed in a historic place, near St. Peter's campus, near the river Wear. It would also keep the glassblowing course alive and the artists that rent their space to do their amazing work. Let's give our best to save this place !"

"Important to keep the heritage of glass making alive."

"Wonderful place to visit"

"The levelling down of the NE is dire. We need investment, not the reduction of arts & cultural institutions."

"The Glass Centre is a really important feature in the life of Sunderland and represents a proud history of glass making. It is important to the continuity of glass-making skills and education and is of much larger significance to the well-being of the town than the short term policy objectives of the university."

"It is an important building and a massive contribution to the city . It isn't for sale it belongs to us all or should do . The university should be ashamed"

"I frequently visit The Glass Centre, love it there."

"Unjustified closure purely for financial reasons. The UK will lose a great national resource; the North-east will lose a fantastic visitor attraction; and Sunderland will lose employment and it's last historic link with glass making."

"It's such a shame to close such a unique gallery"

"The NGC is not just a sunderland beacon - and there are few enough in the city, it is a National and indeed International gem. How miopic can the university and the city be. ?"

"I can't believe it's going to cost that much money to repair feel that other reasons are the cause also it's such a asset to Sunderland we get many tourists"

"Sunderland's NGC is a landmark. It showcases a proud history of glass making that goes back hundreds of years. Prince Charles opened this centre describing it as a 'centre of excellence'. Closure would result in a huge loss to the city & the country."

"It's a brilliant venue for culture and learning"

"We must not let old skills disappear."

"It looks like something worth saving"

"I value glass blowing and fine arts as an integral part of civilization."

"This our iconic national glass centre. Don't downgrade Sunderland any more please !"

"Architect: Gollifer Langston Architects Project architects: Andy Gollifer, Mark Langston Client: Tyne and Wear Development Corporation, National Glass Centre Project manager: Turner and Townsend Associate Architect: Ryder Architecture Main contractor: Kvaerner Quantity surveyor: Gardiner and Theobald Structural engineer: Techniker Ltd M&E engineer: Battle McCarthy Fire consultant: Arup Fire Exhibition designer: PLB Design Landscape architect: Liversedge Landscape architect: Wardell Armstrong Access consultant: Burdus Access Management Modelmaker: Naoki Shimura Clerk of Works: Stuart McTaggart M&E engineer: R W Gregory and Partners Facade engineer: Arup Suppliers Glass Roof: Space Decks Concrete structure: Leven Bridge Construction and Civil Engineering Joinery and steelwork: Kvaerner Brickwork: Malborough Brickwork"

"Let's see if the folks mentioned can be prosecuted!"

"My son is a student at Sunderland University studying art and design, glass and ceramics and this will be a huge loss to both him, his peer group and his tutors."

"We now need to find out which greedy nasty piece pieces of work are responsible for building our faulty National Glass Centre. Anyone up for it?"

"The glass centre is a national center for glass making and history."

"We need to save the few things we have left in Sunderland"

"This is part of our heritage and integral to this part of the world.If this is lost it is gone forever"

"I am a glass Artist and fully recognise the importance of the gallery and institution."

"Keeping alive the 1300 year old tradition of glass making is vital to the cities heritage, culture and identity."

"I believe it is imperative to retain an independent National Glass Centre in the historic location of glassmaking in this country. I support the call for alternative or additional investment if the University Of Sunderland cannot bear the cost alone."

"I was born in Sunderland and have a tremendous pride in our glass heritage. I am a Friend of the NGC and attend a fused glass course on a weekly basis. The historic location, the amazing glass blowing, the innovative artistic talent, education and the world class exhibitions make this a jewel that must be retained in our City"

"It attracts pepole toSunderland and the surrounding area."

" I am a glass maker that has visited the National Glass Centre and am well aware of its importance as a centre for visitors, a resource for students, and some where to see and purchase wonderful hand crafted glass."

"It's an absolute disgrace to condemn a new building. The builders should be held to account and the management should be ashamed. Is anyone competent on the committee? I am signing because I believe it is time for people to save the site and the great enthusiasm of the founders and people of Sunderland (also stakeholders)."

"The Shipbuilding and much of the heavy industry that created the wealth and indeed the 'heart' of the city has gone... why would we want to lose the National Glass Centre? A cultural space that was built to enhance the City and celebrate Glassmaking, another Sunderland heritage industry? It will be extremely difficult to find a comparable site in the city centre and the students education will surely suffer at some point. Is there no Government 'Levelling Up' funding, now that we have stupidly lost the financial backing of the European Union?"

"I value visiting the centre, its role in education, its place in the community. It's a fantastic asset for Sunderland tourism as well as local people."

"I love glass and the history of glass making is a part of our heritage that needs to be told."

"I am a glass artist. Glass is an important cultural heritage craft, an art form and we have a growing and key studio glass movement in the UK. The building houses both studio and gallery facilities in an iconic cutting edge architectural statement which draws visitors from the UK and globally."

"Really enjoyed my trip there last year and as someone who enjoys working with glass would be sad to see it go"

"The arts are important"

"History of glass is part of our heritage. As such, it needs its Centre so that it can continue to tell us its story."

"Glass education is crucial, life changing and provides meaning and employment for communities"

"My friend is a glass artist and I believe we should preserve crafts."

"I feel strongly that losing the building will be a great loss to Sunderland. It is an important iconic architectural building with its twin towers and glass roof and links to some of England's oldest glass making history with St. Peter's Church just across from it. It's too easy just to condemn buildings and move sites rather than repair and restore! Despite promises of relocation supposedly not affecting the glass course I don't trust this to be the case - too many times have promises been made to appease people from petitioning and protesting poor decisions only later to be changed when it is too late. There's barely any specialist glass courses remaining now that the UK's oldest glass course in Glasgow has recently closed. As a former glass student and resident of Sunderland this building and its function will be greatly missed and yet another cultural loss to the UK!"

"It would be such a shame if this closes!"

"I am a glass artist, glass collector and I appreciate the opportunity to support our industry."

"J'aime les oeuvre d'art en verre. Je veux encourager les artistes !"

"This is important cultural and historical resource to the locality"

"I was lucky enough to take part in a residency at the centre a few years ago, it's a brilliant facility!"

"Great place to visit"

"It's an exceptional and unique place for learning not only for Sunderland but Nationally and Internationally"

"Sad to see this state of affairs. The national glass centre started out with such positivity bringing a hub for creative glass making to Sunderland."

"Sunderland Glass Centre is a jewel in the Crown for our city and a fantastic facility for us locals and visiting tourists. It would be a catastrophe to demolish it just because the university wants the land for other purposes."

"The word is Heritage, we have lost so much that make towns and cities so very individual and able to draw in visitors, let's keep this important venue for the arts and in particular, glass."

"Most of my mother's family were employed in the industry. It is really important to keep this reminder of the town's amazing history."

"It's important to retain what we have especially something unique"

"I use the glass centre often. Glass making is part of Sunderland's history and is a great asset to our city"

"Since Benedict Biscop brought stained glass to Sunderland, the first appearance in England, glass has been important to Sunderland's development. The National (note National) Glass Centre and the works within it are important in celebrating glass, not just past successes but current techniques and products. We can't let Sunderland's history disappear."

"I used to buy my stained glass from Hartley Wood glassworks, beginning in the late 70's and the legacy of glassmaking in Sunderland is something to be treasured. Billions are spent in London. The true face of central government's levelling up policy."

"We need to retain the glass heritage of this area. And develop this centre as a tourist resort."

"The Glass Industry has and continues to be a really important part of our heritage. I cannot understand how a business like Sunderland University can be allowed to make a massive decision like this without intervention from Sunderland Labour Council and our three MPs. Councillors fought for years to help it survive financially before it was gifted to the University who it seems have their own agenda especially when they have £250 million to spend on upgrading/rebuilding their other properties. This is a most prominent important building along our riverside. Goodness knows we have little to be proud of along the riverside. What on earth is the current Leader thinking about to let this happen? As someone who is Sunderland born and bred I can only add that this beggars belief. It is in fact outrageous !!!"

"I have signed this to help save this glass blowing place of work as I have lost £30,000.00 this year thanks to the UK Gov banning the work I do. What are people in the UK meant to do for work and pay tax so we can have an NHS, good schools, pot holes filled in and other ?? Thank you."

"It's of National and international importance"

"I have been to the centre and feel it's contribution is unique."

"Art lets us know we are alive, that we can see beyond ourselves. Glass art is a most incredible statement of our soul and our hope for a more perfect world."

"I am an ex glass student. Glassmaking is a wonderful process. It needs to be seen and celebrated."

"Please save this historic glass blowing."

"This is a world renowned institution. It should be invested in and maintained."

"I fuse glass and love it..."

"Preserving the identity of regions is so important, it is very important not just for locals but also to draw people from further afield to the area and preservation of skills like this is so vital"

"As part of our quayside heritage and our future generations it has to be saved"

"Historic buildings need to be retained as well as the skills of the glass blowers."

"Attended many classes there as member of the public. It would be a great loss."

"Visited earlier this year. Absolutely fantastic!"

"As we try to change the past we inevitably create a future that's devoid of history! Why can't we have both? It's a truism that the past influences our future. The younger generation needs it more than at anytime. Our politicians support stuff that's giving away money for useless projects every day! THE PAST SHAPES OUR FUTURE. Nuff said."

"I want to save this wonderful place"

"It's an important part of Sunderlands history we need to retain such places for future learning."

"This historical site on the banks of the Wear needs preserving giving locals pride in Monkwearmouth next to St Peter's Church which was at the forefront of bringing glass making to the UK"

"We need heritage in our city great day out"

"We need to keep historical trades alive in this country it is important to remember our history"

"No more glass blowing? What a shame that would be!!"

"Our heritage is important"

"Developing our cultural heritage is crucial for a creative country like UK. This region of the England needs investment & an opportunity to show its skills & potential."

"Recently visited and it's a wonderful place. These crafts cannot be ignored and watching the tutors and students was fascinating. I've been telling everyone to visit because it's so good"

"I am an archaeologist with a specialist interest in the beginning of glass-making in Egypt and Mesopotamia in the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. and the spread of glass to prehistoric Greece. The National Glass Centre in Sunderland should absolutely not be closed, both for the sake of glass studies and for the sake of Sunderland. H H-B, Oxford"

"My granddaughter starts at the Uni there in September and it would be a great loss to all students both current and future"

"the history of glass is a big part of Sunderland history. The creative work done in the Glass centre needs to go forward for future generations."

"Sunderland needs all the levelling up that it can get."

"Retaining skills in historic crafts, both nationally and regionally, is hugely important. They have great cultural value and provide strong foundations for future technologies."

"It's a crying shame that such a great facility can be lost so soon."

"I saw this on Facebook and love all kinds of glasswork... I'm in the USA but I support you all .. tagging my favorite NW glass artist #prestonsingletary maybe he has some ideas!! Hope you stay open 🇬🇧❤️🇬🇧"

"This is part of our local heritage. It is one of the significant places I took relatives visiting from Australia to showcase Sunderland and to make a connection with their heritage. They were entranced by the glass blowing."

"Fully agree. It would be an absolute sin to lose the only Jewel in the Crown of Sunderland and the true NE of England, a world class heritage site. The history in our region, great courses for children and beginners, facilities i.e. hiring of kilns to our very talented local glass makers/artists (my heart goes out to you), unique exhibitions. I really cannot understand why no-one has ever been held to account for the appalling problems with the structure of the building. SCC obviously thought that off-loading the facility to the University of Sunderland then absolved them from having to address the problems (WILY?) that have existed for many years e.g. walking on the glass roof (- cracks had to be repaired shortly after opening!!), and actually do something about it, they NEVER address the real issues that matter to local people. Typical local government - they will expect Council Tax resident payers (minority in Sunderland) to stump up for their clueless inefficiency. The site is the best for many reasons and no matter what all these 'Academics' and SCC et.al.! are saying - IT SHOULD NEVER, EVER BE MOVED OR TAKEN AWAY FROM ST. PETER'S BASIN. HOW DARE THEY? Isn't it time for Labour SCC to step up and actually do something for our very special region?"

"I love The Glass Centre and it's so important to Sunderland. Seems completely mad to scrap such a new building!"

"Tourism and I love going"

"We must protect glass and creative peoples needs"

"All craft skills need support as part of the UK' s Cultural Heritage suport"

"I'm signing because its of national importance to have the centre of an area's heritage recognised, as such!"

"It is important that heritage and history is not forgotten or overlooked"

"Yet again penny pinching miseries are killing off part of the area's history."

"It's a wonderful building that showcases part of Sunderland's history. It as very busy when I was there on a trip back 'home' a couple of weeks ago, closing it would be a terrible waste."

"I agree, glass blowing / glass centre needs to be relocated."

"It is important to retain our manufacturing and skills base."

"I tour the UK in a motorhome. Sunderland is not really a destination that you would pick out when thinking of destinations, but I have been intrigued by the Glass Centre for some time and trying to make a tour of that immediate area based on it being there. Its loss would impact peoples decusions."

"Everything in sunderland is coming down or neglected while other major works carry on. If this comes down then a museum dedicated to the shipbuilding and glassworks should be erected."

"Completely bizarre how this can be allowed to happen while Sunderland Uni increases its property portfolio all over the city. Are they interested in education any more? Are they concerned at all about the wealth of local heritage and it's importance?"

"Because the National Glass Centre is a huge asset to the city of Sunderland."

"It's part of our heritage and needs to remain open for future generations"

"The Glass Centre is a really important cultural resource and also records an exceptional centre of industry at Sunderland"

"Glass has been blown in Sunderland since the middle ages. It is the heritage of our past that's threatened."

"I care"

"It's part our history"

"IT's Sunderland heritage"

"It is a centre of National and International renown and of great cultural Significance. It should not be moed or closed at the whim of tje University accountants."

"I've met many talented glass artists who have trained at Sunderland. Its an important part of the heritage of glass industry (past and i really hope in the future too!)"

"It's one of my favourite places to visit. Art culture as well as meeting up for lunches. Plus it's in a beautiful position on the river wear."

"The Glass Centre is an example of a skill in danger of becoming extinct. We need to protect our skills. Too many will be gone soon."

"The glass centre belongs on the Riverside. It's our heritage. No other city would allow such a significant part of its history to be treated in this way."

"This is a specific occupation in our history and it still has a significant part to play in Britain today and also a job opportunity for anyone interested in a specialist art form."

"Sunderland has excellent municipal museums, but the Glass Centre is the city's *national* institution, international in renown. As a city, we've lost too much of our heritage, the Glass Centre is an exception. Something for the future, built on the strengths of our past. It must be saved."

"Glass making its historic to Sunderland. It's one of the few attractions in Sunderland worth visiting."

"I went to university here and it was the best time of my life. Such an important place."

"We must protect our heritage"

"The National Glass Centre reflects and keeps alive an important part of Sunderland's heritage, which also ties in with its location at St. Peter's. The centre attracts many visitors and students from our local area and across the world. It is our council's duty to safeguard it's future."

"An old school classmate of mine is very interested in saving the glassblowing history of the area."

"I grew up visiting the glass centre very regularly and would hate to see it go!"

"It is clearly a valuable contributor to the Arts."

"Please. The art, the location. the people."

"I have great memories here with friends while I studied at UoS"

"Glass making is a big part of the history of Sunderland that goes back centuries."

"Says it all in the last sentence."

"The NGC is a remarkable cultural facility which attracts people from far and wide while demonstrating the versatility of glass as a structural and artistic material."

"I have been and I think it is worth saving."

"Wonderful and unique UK resource"

"Because I'm a glass artist myself and understand the value of keeping this craft current"

"My stepfather was a master glass blower for Whitefriars glass from before the war until the 60s. As an art form it is unsung and largely unseen and needs to be safeguarded as part of our national heritage."

"I have a beautiful bowl that was done in front of me when I visited with my family."

"I believe the glass centre is a great addition to sunderland..."

"So fond of the Glass Centre, many happy memories there."

"The glass centre is a tourism attraction generating revenue for the area"

"I believe it is important to save the last glass blowing to exist in Monkwearmouth the place it started in England"

"It's a major part of Sunderland's history and heritage along with the pits (gone) and the shipyards(gone) and should be protected and celebrated"

"The money grubbing lowlife army of self serving creatures in Whitehall should stop subsidising the greedy mob with over endowed bank accounts and look after our heritage"

"Some things are what makes up our history and needs to be retained. Not everything can be about profit!"

"Culturally very important"

"The country needs to retain this skill OR IT WILL BE LOST FOR ALL TIME"

"We need to hold onto our heritage and every national hub cant and should not be in tge south"

"The NGC is an important link between our history and our community. It has become an iconic part of the city landscape."

"Glass is an important part of Sunderland's Heritage and this Museum needs to be retained. Universities are for learning and should reflect the local area. A way to keep this should be found. If you are gifted an asset, you do not sell it. This is one of Sunderland's Crown Jewels."

"I would like to see this remain. It's part of our heritage and is a unique and interesting place to visit, for all ages."

"We need to keep this special building going otherwise it will end up as housing or offices"

"The arts are having funding cut massively and the arts are so important in this country, we lead the way and glass art is part of that scene that needs all the support it can get. So many people appreciate the aesthetic of glass, you will find most people have an ornament, a vase and sculpture and very popular at present is glass art in the garden."

"The Glass Centre is a major jewel in the Sunderland crown. Yes, it is very popular for those who visit regularly or occasionally. However, it stands as a major reminder of the place 'glass making' has played in the founding of our community from the time of Benedict Biscop through to our present generation. I hope the people who are responsible for the future of the Centre look very carefully at the situation and allow a positive vision to prevail in their decision making."

"This is History and needs to be saved!"

"Arts matter"

"We need more diversity and richness, not less because our public servants don't have the imagination, ingenuity and determination to adapt."

"It is vitally important to keep ancient crafts and celebrate them, but also to keep their presence in the places where they have been and are still culturally and historically important."

"To help the glass industry"

"worth saving !"

"It's an important cultural asset If it needs to be demolished a replacement on the river side needs to be built as the location is the usp and it should cost a lot less than the proposed repair costs"

"I do not know the museum (I live in Mexico) but my American friend, to whom I am sending this petition amongst others) is a glass blower which, I hope, is part of the museum's features."

"I visit the the Glass Centre and bring visiting family there. It is a wonderful site, and great for UK and foreign tourists."

"I live in Sunderland, this is part of our proud past. Glass blowing is an art and the glass centre keeps this skill and our history alive"

"The glass centre is a great place to visit it's on the river bank and a great place to visit when your walking along. Great staff great customer service and if it closes I think it will be truly missed!!"

"Public money has developed this project and those who run it should be more imaginative about how to keep it going. Involve the community."

"It is the most important place in England's history of glass"

"Glass manufacturing was part of the heritage of Sunderland, along with Ship building. Sunderland needs the museum to let people know of its history."

"This tradition of art and skill is worth preserving"

"The Glass Centre is recognised nationally as well as locally. It plays a vital role in carrying forward the history of Sunderland. It needs to be included in the city regeneration plan. Don't make the same mistake as the old town hall!"

"Glass has always been a very important part of Sunderland's history and it should continue to be so."

"We now seem not even to cherish our industrial history . In light of the fact that years of laissez faire capitalism under successive governments has reduced our manufacturing to nil we need to maintain and spend enough to ensure at least some kind of legacy for it for the benefit of all . It is about money always , but with a government spending huge sums on white elephants HS2 (Hinkley point incomplete already obsolete power station built by Franco Chinese company) and dare I say it the biggest tits on a bull project of all the Trident "deterrent" (sic) With this kind of reactionary fiscal policy founded in the 19th century this surely deserves some more cash ."

"It is part of the heritage of the city."

"Of superb degree courses and important heritage"

"The glass centre is a major local and national resource. Very important to keep it open."

"it's a great facility in a great location!"

"The National Glass Centre is something to be proud of!"

"as a girl from seaburn originally, I still love the area, these traditions must not be lost & support the petition wholeheartedly."

"We need to keep great things local!"

"The glass centre is a vital part of Sunderland heritage, it shows the birthplace of glass making in England and needs to be protected"

"I am appalled that such a major iconic visitor's centre is being dismissed. Fabulous place visited by many and a massive part of history and heritage."

"I am passionate about glass and the National Glass Centre is a beacon of excellence."

"Save glass centre"

"The centre celebrates and remembers an important part of Sunderland's Heritage, something sadly lacking in our town. We need to hold onto it."

"Trying to save a beautiful place"

"It is part of Sunderland's heritage"

"Its imperative this stays open"

"The Glass Centre is part of Sunderland's cultural heritage and identity."

"If we allow important historic industries to close, then we will eventually lose the skills and pay the additional price of importing from abroad!?"

"It's a fabulous place and with rather limited investment into refurbishment of its fabric could be made to work well for another 30 years."

"This is our heritage and shouldn't be cast away for the sake of money save our glass centre."

"People need to know WHY this is happening and how after a relatively short time frame the building is in such a poor condition that it needs 47 million pounds to repair. We need to know who is responsible for this shambles. Some people who should be named should face consequences."

"We are responsible to cherish our heritage It's the future for the children we need to celebrate & cherish history Not be responsible for its destruction Not destroy it"

"it's a wonderful tourist attraction and has the most stunning views."

"Glass is an integral part of Sunderland."

"It's a lovely place and deserves to be on this site next to the river. It's another of Sunderland's buildings to bite the dust for no reason but money!!"

"Save the glass centre"

"We can't lose such an ancient craft, we need to save it for future generations"

"The Glass Centre in Sunderland is of national importance and represents a significant aspect of Sunderland's cultural heritage. It must not be razed to the ground."

"Sunderland has lost so much and this is an asset that should be saved."

"It seems that more and more of our local assets are disappearing. We must protect those that remain."

"Sunderland is a great city with fantastic heritage and the Glass centre is part of our heritage."

"We need to preserve Sunderland's history which is world renowned for glassmaking and shipbuilding. We do not need more offices and car parks!"

"Glass-work is an integral part of our heritage and it would be an absolute travesty to lose the National Glass Centre so early into its potential life-span."

"This is a historic part of our culture and needs to be supported, encouraged and advertised"

"I believe in the cause"

"I work with a stained glass artist and their work is important"

"I love visiting the glass centre when I return to my home town"

"I love visiting this"

"I think it's essential to save the National glass centre, not only to save a place for the skills to be passed on and used but also to inspire new generations!!!"

"Iconic and unique buildings like this celebrating our industrial heritage should not be destroyed."

"It's important to keep the heritage"

"If this centre is closed it would be a national disaster and a huge cultural loss to the north east of England"

"It's important to keep so many ancient crafts alive."

"Sunderland is a historic centre for the making of glass - it deserves to be celebrated. The National Glass Centre is a recognition of the skill and dedication of glass makers."

"I've been visiting for years, first as an art student and then afterwards as a mother with kids. There are so few art galleries in the NE, the children always enjoyed visiting the glass centre."

"I have enjoyed many visits to the NGC."

"I believe the Glass Centre is a local and national treasure in the best of locations. Very much worth supporting and challenging the £45 million quote from the University. Such a great location and at best it would be mothballed. Not good."

"This should be recognized for it's importance in the area and for the country"

"I wish you all the best and hope something or someone will come forward to help. How about Cherie Blair? Didn't she hold a load of Pilkingtons shares at one time and the B.Liars are f'minted! Anyway if I drank booze I'd raise a glass to you, so as I don't it'll have to be my chipped and stained mug of herbal tea."

"This is a wonderful building"

"The national glass centre is an asset to sunderland and the location is perfect to view the river and the building is unique and deserves to continue. Why is the builder not paying for the failings?"

"Because I believe in the glass making heritage of Sunderland"

"As a local Conservative Councillor it is clear that there is a political angle to this decision, which is unpopular and simply wrong. Disgraceful that MP Julie Elliott has failed to lend her support to her constituents. Typical of Elliott and typical of Sunderland Labour."

"By far the best thing in Sunderland."

"I care about this iconic and amazing National facility."

"I have been to the National Glass Centre several times on visits to Sunderland and believe it is a wonderful place with its many different aspects of glass."

"It is vital that we keep this art alive and Sunderland has the facilities already - why close them??"

"This centre is an important part of the glass heritage both locally and in the country."

"My kids absolutely loved it here last week this place should never be closed"

"We need the National Glass Centre!"

"I believe in keeping alive as much as possible of Sunderland's historic past."

"As a parent and was a child minder, I have spent a lot of time with the children at the glass centre. It never got boring and the kids loved it as well as the adults. Watching the glass blowing was always a treat and would be a shame to see this disappear. There are not many 'cheap' days out for families anymore, and this one was special."

"Such a beautiful place in a perfect setting by the river. It would be a travesty to close/move it. It's a national treasure."

"This is a fabulous place, a major attraction in the area"

"I love glass and this building is a unique celebration of glass"

"It is an important part of our art heritage"

"Important landmark , Sunderland"

"It is important to keep this iconic place"

"We Cannot Lose This...Ever!"

"I love The National Glass Centre and think it would be awful for it to close"

"We need to keep the NGC and keep it in the north of England. I visited many years ago when I was learning the craft of stained glass work and thought it was excellent. It doesn't make any sense to let such an impressive place go. Instead it should be built up and valued where it is. I've been a practicing stained glass artist for over 20 years now and I would love to do a glass blowing workshop there if that is available."

"This centre is a National Treasure, it MUST be saved."

"Glassblowing is an important historical tradition that needs preservation and protection in an ever increasing tech based world"

"The Glass Centre is an iconic, hugely important place. It should not be allowed to disintegrate."

"We need to protect our cultural assets!"

"Glassmaking is one of the foundation industries we cannot do without. It is critical we keep glass educating assets like this alive."

"We need to keep places like this, it can help the next generation to learn about glass blowing also if interested could learn a new skill"

"It is an important part of Sunderland's history."

"This is our history don't let this council take it away"

"The city is rapidly running out of attractions - we need this, badly!"

"It's a disgrace that this iconic Sunderland asset had been allowed to deteriorate. Shame on Sunderland University but especially on Sunderland Council. Get it repaired!"

"This is a part of our city our heritage please don't close us down"

"It's beneficial to Sunderland"

"It's a fantastic place/ building - part of our heritage - in the exact location glass making came into being in the north-east/ country ... shall I go on?...educational, perfect position to attract those walking/ cycling/ fishing..... tall ships... wonderful cafe/ restaurant/ shop/ can even see glass blowing - never mind the art! Culture! And that wonderful floor for all us vertigo sufferers...."

"This is an integral part of our history and the future of our glass community across the UK and beyond. Some of the best glass artists have come from this place and needs to be preserved."

"This is an integral part of our history and the future of our glass community across the UK and beyond. Some of the best glass artists have come from this place and needs to be preserved."

"The glass centre is fundamental to the protection of a heritage craft and offers multiple opportunities for people of all ages who are interested in learning more and developing their skills and passion."

"It's a great educational experience that should be further promoted to attract more visitors"

"The centre is unique and would be a great loss if it were closed."

"Once you loose centre's of excellence and the heritage they preserve, we loose our history and the story of what made us."

"We need to save our history"

"It is vital that Centres such as the National Glass Centre continue to be funded and supported so these skills are recognised and not lost to future generations."

"It is a national facility, part of the history of Sunderland and necessary for the training of students both now and in the future."

"It's a wonderful facility for Sunderland and a huge loss to the city if it goes"

"This center of creativity, is a unique and important source of pride and inspiration for the young and old in our city. It sets us apart from other cities and brings world renowned artists to its doors. It showcases items of beauty and wonder, and in a world of so much stress, worry and conflict, is a haven of positivity and light."

"Its part of cultural power"

"Glass blowing is wonderful"

"My grandfather , father and most of his siblings all worked at corning's /Pyrex. It's a dying art and we must preserve some of the heritage of Sunderland"

"TO LOSE THIS TRADITION WOULD BE YET ANOTHER ACT OF ICONOCLASM IN THESE DISTRACTED AND IGNORANT TIMES."

"I've loved the Glass Centre since it opened. My daughter and I visit often. I think it will be an absolute travesty if this place is demolished. Another waste of money and resources from Sunderland councils."

"This is a continuation of the glass history of Sunderland"

"Sunderland is a glass heartland. We mustn't let these wonderful institutions disappear. I was a stained glass artist and Sunderland and Stoke - glass havens."

"I got married here. I grew up in Sunderland and the Glass Centre well it's a critical part of our heritage"

"Glass blowing is an ancient art/skill. It's important to keep this alive. I have taken my service users to see this and they have been fascinated. Also any type of glass art is beautiful and they run some fabulous classes there."

"This is a fab building and it does great things its a big tourist location and icon/landmark of our city it deserves to stay and be looked after."

"It is important to secure and maintain the creative identity we have in Sunderland. The glass centre is a landmark identified the world over. It is also a vital community hub where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identity can meet and share the creative brilliance of resident creatives and local artists. The Glass Centre makes art accessible to all."

"I believe The Glass Centre is an important part of learning in the area. It is also somewhere where visitors and locals alike can meet for exhibitions."

"My daughter studied a degree in hot glass at this University and the Glass Centre was amazing, it should remain so."

"The site of the National Glass Centre is part of Sunderland's heritage."

"While at school I learned about the history of glass making in Sunderland and in adulthood was impressed and delighted by the National Glass Centre. It is an important asset to the city and a significant part of Sunderland heritage."

"Glass making in Sunderland is as old as Sunderland itself. I grew up on what had been Hartleys Glassworks Estate, off Trimdon Street. I have regularly met friends for coffee at NGC and take visitors and grandchildren. It is an essential part of our City"

"Glass making is an important part of the history of the North East and Sunderland in particular. Having the National Glass Centre also inspires young potential glass artists and artisans in the region and beyond"

"This is a nationally important building and shows our history of glass making. It also helps to teach the skills which would otherwise be lost."

"I love going to the glass factory and seeing the glass blowers - it would be a huge loss"

"The heritage of Sunderland with its glass blowing must and should be protected I thought the people of the university should never consider it"

"This is an important part of our history and I spent a lovely day there learning the art of glass blowing. We really need this to continue."

"This is a special and fantastic place and it needs to be kept as part of our heritage and a beacon for the North"

"We desperately need to retain access to education in traditional techniques and skills."

"i like creative arts and the ability to see how it is done"

"I have not visited the Centre but as someone who has visited France, Germany and the Czech Republic to find out more about their glass history and skills, I feel sure that if we were living in Europe we would not close our national glass centre, we would be proud of it. I hope very much that funding will be attracted and the Centre will continue. Crowdfunder?"

"Destruction of such an asset to students, the university, the surrounding area and the wider glass community in an attempt to save money is very false economy."

"I've studied glass both fusing and leaded at college in Glasgow, that course has gone and Edinburgh have downgraded their glass educational opportunities as well I believe. Access to learning a valuable skill and a heritage trade is being cast aside in the name of profit by further education establishments. This needs to change. I appreciate not every university/college can support a department so all the more reason to fly the flag high for this one."

"This is worth saving"

"I am a glass artist who has exhibited at the NGC with the Guild of Glass Engravers. This centre is vital for the future of the glass arts."

"this centre is of national importance"

"It's in the National Interest - the clue is in the name!"

"I teach stained glass at Kent adult education and I am very aware of the decline in glass making/blowing/fusing and I feel very strongly that this dying craft should remain, the NGC is integral to this."

"The skill is so important to carry on"

"It's an important centre and needs to be saved"

"The glass centre is a heritage site and important to Sunderland and nationally"

"Letting the hand-made glass die would be to let a part of the local, regional, and national heritage die. Any purely financial decision to let the industry die, ignores the larger economic context. Without glass, Sunderland would be a lesser place - no reason to visit, no reason to invest in the place."

"...because Sunderland Uni behaving badly!"

"Its an important part of Sunderland's history"

"It's iconic!"

"SCC are letting this town turn to shit"

"I agree that this an important part of the city's historical recognition of our early identity."

"I owe loyalty to Sunderland"

"I am a glass student and these places are invaluable."

"It is an amazing resource"

"This wonderful asset is situated in an ideal location and deserves to remain so. It is a marvellous educational resource for many schools and on the main Coast to Coast Cycle Path so visitors learn about it from all over the country. The glass blowing demos are brilliant as are the exhibitions, which are regularly changed. The cafe provides a great stop off point on walks along the river in both directions. Our daughter had her wedding reception there and her guests were mesmerised by the location and

surrounding activities. It's an outrage that such an amazing high profile and positive addition to Sunderland's cultural life should be threatened in this way. It seems to be yet another attack on arts and culture in favour of seemingly more lucrative pursuits of technology and medicine. But we lose our cultural life at our peril."

"It would be such a loss to the cultural heritage of the North East if the glass centre were to close"

"It's a lovely museum, very informative staff, fantastic location. Until our last visit we didn't realise how important it is in the glass world. It needs to survive as an important resource."