

## Gentet, Matthias

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**From:** Matthew Saunders <matthew.saunders@ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 August 2017 15:54  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Rochester Square Spiritualist Temple Camden reference - 2016/7088/P

The AMS is a National Amenity Society, concerned with all listed buildings. We have to be told by Government Direction of all applications for listed building consent where there is any element of demolition.

Our attention has been drawn to the application to demolish the above building, which is unlisted but falls within a Conservation Area.

The Heritage Statement supplied with the application is commendably thorough and very well researched.

And in its assessment of the thin reputation of the architect, Thomas Yorke, we raise no quarrels.

However, we do think that it seriously underestimates the greatest interest that attaches to the building from the strong connection of the world-famous author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He not only laid the foundation stone but gave the venture £500.

We also note that the interior retains much of the original character, including the roof timbers and the rather charming "pulpit" and the two matching doors with their "wonky" glazing bars.

In the context of Spiritualist Temples, as a building type, and in a Borough which already has one of the few "places of worship" inspired by Steiner, that at Rochester Square is an important survival.

It deserves better than to be flattened.

It is almost literally impossible to believe that the present Temple cannot easily be converted, with the retention of the pulpit and doors. A house cum studio inside would surely attract prestige value ( and therefore a healthy return on investment ) given the Conan Doyle connections.

You may be interested to know that the Surrey home, Undershaw, where Conan Doyle lived for ten years was listed as early as 1977.

We urge that this evocative building be converted and not destroyed

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