

**Gentet, Matthias**

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**From:** ANN MATTHEWS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 August 2017 15:40  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** The Rochester Square Spiritualist Church

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to put my objection to demolition of this property forward. As an historian I have spent much of my life investigating local history and as such I came across the history of this church. As I am sure you are aware The Rochester Square Spiritualist Church was built upon donations from local people mostly and being a spiritualist church it has become an important and integral part of this countries heritage. The church is important on a local, national and international level as the Spiritualist religion has spread throughout the World. The interest in the religion is in no small part due to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's part in bringing the religion into the consciousness and he would not have been able to do this without his standing in the world of literature. There can be no mistake of how important Sir Arthur was and still is, however it appears that this importance is being stomped on by the developers who wish to reduce this part of our heritage to rubble! I understand that developers can be very persuasive because it means so much to them to be allowed to build what they like, where they like. However this building is too important to rip down and tell it that it is not as important as a developer who simply wished to make profit. Sir Arthur laid a foundation stone for this building and he believed in it and its usage. I realise that this building has been left to deteriorate over the years but there are exciting plans to turn it into a museum, a museum would be very good for the area. As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is extremely popular, and has been since he first wrote his famous stories, the museum would be an attraction to all of the fans worldwide. This would bring in much needed revenue locally and it would boost trade as well as pride in the area, this is much, much more than a block of flats can do.

I realise that there are a great deal of factors to consider before making a decision on what is an application to demolish a building, but I ask you to also consider what we become if we allow this building to be ripped down after it has stood the test of time. This is an important part of our history and our heritage and I for one would like the developers to move on to something else and leave such an important property alone, and this includes 'accidental' fires. Please see how much this building means to people and consider what is the best not just for the building, but also for the area and indeed the country as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Miss Ann Matthews MA