

Michael Palin has over-arching plan for Euston



An artist's impression of the rebuilt Euston Arch Joe Robson for the Euston Arch Trust

Jack Malvern and Charles Norton

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One of London's most imposing former landmarks may be rebuilt using the original stone with the help of a former member of Monty Python's Flying Circus.

Michael Palin, a railway enthusiast, believes that a campaign to restore Euston Arch has a good chance of being realised because of progress with HS2.

The arch was destroyed in the 1960s and dumped in the River Lea, in East London, but the high-speed rail line between London and the North of England means that Euston Station will have to be redeveloped, giving hope that the arch will be rebuilt.

Arup, the construction company in charge of the new station, said that it was open to the idea. "It was such an iconic piece of architecture in its time," a spokeswoman said. "It's not in our plans at the moment, but we certainly welcome a discussion."

Palin, who is patron of the [Euston Arch Trust](#), said that it was "an act of near-vandalism" to destroy the arch, which stood at 21 metres (70ft) tall at the entrance to the station. Each of its columns was 2.6 metres in diameter.

It was erected in 1837 but torn down in 1961 to make way for a new station. The remains were used to fill in a section of the Prescott Channel in Bow.

The columns, which are thought to be largely intact, were rediscovered by the historian Dan Cruickshank and some sections were recovered in 2009 during the building of the Olympic Park. “[After] nothing more than a long bath, the stone is as good as the day it was cut,” Mr Cruickshank said.

Alan Baxter, a structural engineer who is keeping the recovered portions of the arch at his farm in Lincolnshire, said that the stone could easily be combined with new material to re-create the monument.

“All of the research we’ve done shows that something like 60 per cent of the arch is in this great swallow-hole in the canal. We’ve only got something like a half of a per cent out so far.”

The £10 million estimate for the work is a tiny proportion of the £32 billion budget for HS2, Mr Baxter said.

The trust believes that it would be best placed next to Euston Road, between a pair of lodges that survive from the Victorian station.

Palin said: “It’s a wonderful romantic gesture to restore something that was once a symbol of railway expansion at a time when the Government are talking about a new age of rail-building.”

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Richard Jeffs

2 days ago

What a great idea! In Birmingham (the original other end of the line) there is a station (disused) called Curzon Street. It was the main station in the 1830s and had similar great pillars - It still stands! My Grandfather worker there as a manager until he retired in the 1950. He used to tell me that the same designer created Euston. I do hope the stations are linked again.

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Tom Bloomfield

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The two buildings on either side in the photo have new lives selling world class real ale and real cider, left and right respectively. Customers often overflow so the arch might help keep the rain off.

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Julian Bassett

2 days ago

Great idea. Do it.

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