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Wolverhampton Council dumps 'priceless' organ at landfill site

By [Jack Averty](#) | [Wolverhampton](#) | [News](#) | Published: Feb 8, 2019

Wolverhampton's historic and 'priceless' organ has been scrapped and taken to a landfill site.

The organ, the largest of its kind built by British firm John Compton and Company, had been in-situ at the Civic Hall since 1938 but is no more after the 6,241 pipes, paid for by taxpayers eight decades ago, were taken to a landfill site over asbestos fears.



Wolverhampton Council insist the organ has not technically been scrapped as the console has been preserved, but experts say it is the pipes that are at the heart of an organ and make it what it is – adding that a console makes up less than five per cent of an organ.

One expert said: "It is like a priceless, rare car has been sent to the scrapyard, and they've offered the steering wheel in return."



Enthusiasts are up-in-arms about the move, which has been called "cultural vandalism".

Tettenhall Councillor Jane Stevenson said groups around the UK were willing to take the organ's pipes to try and restore them free of charge, even offering to sign a disclaimer in the process in case of any asbestos.

'Disgraceful'

Councillor Stevenson said: "It is disgraceful and a total lack of care for one of the city's most important heritage assets.

"It is really disappointing that the council did not do more and work with the enthusiasts to save it."



Wolverhampton Council spokesman Oliver Bhurrut said: "The Civic Hall organ console has NOT been disposed of.

"We have started dialogue with an organ society and they have been offered the opportunity to take ownership of the organ console, which will be preserved.

"All of the organ pipes have now been removed and taken to a contamination landfill facility that has a specific permit to accept asbestos waste."



As part of the botched multi-million pound Civic Hall work, the organ was due to be restored and moved to a new home – which had yet to be found.

Renowned organ specialist Steve Tovey had been appointed to supervise the removal of the organ and find it a new location.

But Mr Tovey died shortly after the announcement was made and Wolverhampton Council later baulked at the £2 million revamp cost, instead opting to scrap the pipes, which were said to have asbestos in them.