

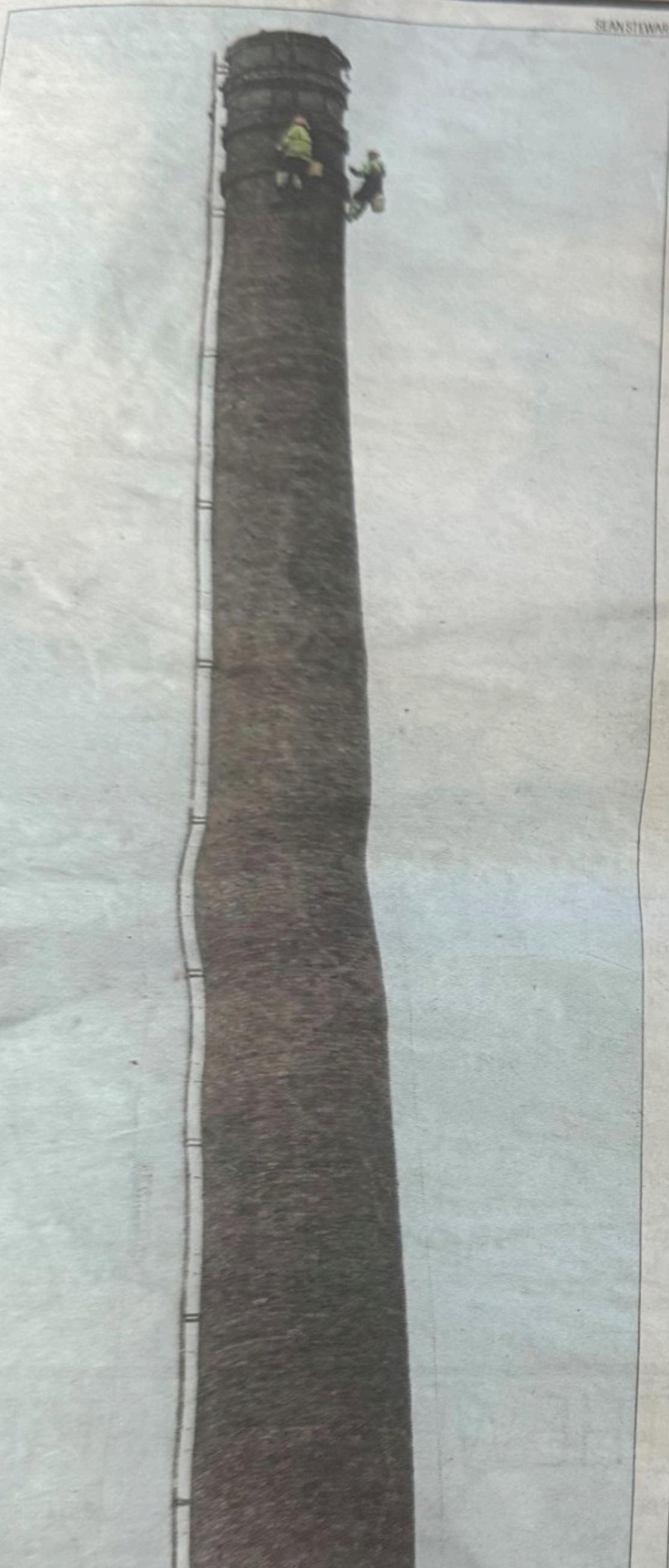


# The Star

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P31

**EXCLUSIVE: HAMMERSON COULD STILL DEVELOP PART OF RETAIL SCHEME**

# SHOPS PLAN GIANT STAYS ON BOARD

By **RICHARD MARSDEN**  
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**Property firm Hammerson could still create part of Sheffield's planned new city centre retail quarter - despite being axed from the overall scheme.**

The Star can reveal the company still owns part of the former Sevenstone develop-

ment site - mainly buildings which open on to Pinstone Street.

And agreements between Hammerson and Sheffield Council mean the land can be sold back to the council only, not to a third party.

But Hammerson may be allowed to retain the properties and develop them.

The company has already paid millions of pounds towards compulsory pur-

chase orders for the rest of the former Sevenstone site.

A source close to the council said: "The council owns all of the land bought under compulsory purchase orders, but Hammerson bought some of the buildings itself and could retain ownership of them."

"It is a delicate situation and negotiations are ongoing."

"The council needs to find a way around the situa-

tion, but it will be at no cost to the council tax payer - and we will not be held to ransom by Hammerson."

At the end of July, Sheffield Council said it would be parting company with Hammerson after the company would not commit to a date for starting work.

The old Sevenstone plan, which would have created around 100 shops and a new

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 5**

**It's not for the faint-hearted** P3

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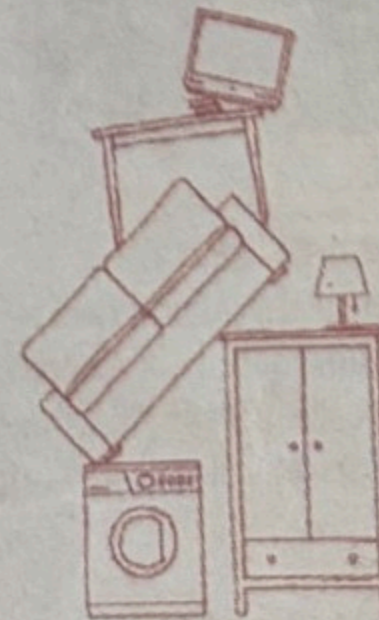
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**CHIMNEYS:** ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE TAKES PLACE 60 METRES UP AT STEELWORKS

# It's a long way down if they forget their trowel

By SARAH CRABTREE  
Deputy News Editor  
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Steeplejacks in South Yorkshire are having a high old time as they re-point brickwork on giant 60-metre chimneys in the Don Valley.

The daring duo are working a dizzying 197ft up, at the top of one of four huge brick chimneys at the Tata Steel plant at Aldwarke near Rotherham.

For anyone without a head for heights it would be a knee-trembling task.

Luckily these chaps are at the top of their game.

The men - employed by specialist steeplejack firm Churchill - are spending three weeks repairing brickwork while the steel plant goes through a maintenance period.

The chimneys serve the soaking furnaces below, where metal is 'annealed' or heated and then cooled.

The towers date back 52 years, to when the Aldwarke mill was first built in 1961.

"Brick chimneys are pretty stable structures," said Churchill director Steve Peet.

"But as part of regular maintenance we identified what work was needed, and now the guys are on site grinding out some of the old joints and repointing, so any problems



A view of the chimneys from below

that might arise can be nipped in the bud."

The men climb to the top of the hollow chimneys using a high-tech system of rope access techniques.

They drill steeplejack ladders to the outside face of the brickwork, starting at ground level, then climb the ladders to the top - attached securely all the way using countless contact points.

"It's like a version of abseiling," said Steve, "but of course abseiling is just for coming down. With rope access techniques we can traverse all over the brickwork safely and securely.

"The men work in pairs with a buddy system. They are in radio contact with the ground at all times, and the base is cordoned off with an exclusion zone.

"And we're at the mercy of mother nature - if it's too windy, or a storm is forecast, we cannot go up."

It's all extremely specialist, highly trained work...

"But once they're up there it's just normal buckets, regular mortar and pointing trowels!" said Steve.



Pictures by Sean Stewart

How the chimneys, left, look to passing motorists.

