



Historic England

Heritage

The Foundation for Success –
Modern Infrastructure and the Historic Environment



Infrastructure has been a key priority for recent governments, and a large number of new infrastructure projects are planned or are under construction in England. These include roads, railways, power stations, water infrastructure, wind farms, solar farms, flood defences and airport expansion. Yet this infrastructure is to be built within a country rich in archaeological remains, historic landscapes and built heritage, both on- and off-shore, and as the first country in the world to industrialize, some of our historic places are themselves older infrastructure sites such as canals and railway stations. Poorly-designed new infrastructure can damage historic places, but conversely, well-designed new infrastructure can dramatically improve them and add to a sense of place.

Place-shaping is the process which Historic England uses to help shape our environment, and it's often best achieved through a clear understanding of the historic significance of an existing place. New infrastructure which takes account of the historic significance of an area is usually the most successful. Our research demonstrates that historic places are more attractive to businesses and visitors, that investment in historic areas delivers substantial economic and environmental benefits, and that investment in the historic environment significantly improves the way people feel about places.

This introduction to Modern Infrastructure and the Historic Environment demonstrates through a small selection of case studies how well-designed modern infrastructure can add to the success of a locality, allowing people to enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment.

The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- New infrastructure: nearly 9km of underground electricity cables
- 22 pylons and overhead lines will be removed between Winterbourne Abbas and Friar Waddon
- Project underway, to be completed in the spring of 2022

Some of the finest and most popular landscapes in England can be found here; the inspiration for many famous poets, artists, authors and scientists. It is also one of the richest archaeological landscapes in the country, but parts of it are blighted by visually intrusive large pylons. National Grid's £116 million project will remove a number of these pylons, and replace the overhead lines with new underground ones. It is funded by their new Visual Impact Provision, which makes use of a £500 million fund from regulator Ofgem. The new route was carefully selected to avoid damaging archaeological remains, and the end result will transform views from the Hardy Monument, the South Dorset Ridgeway and the Jubilee Trail footpath for the many local people and visitors who enjoy this wonderful historic landscape.



Derby Flood Prevention Scheme (Our City Our River project)

- New infrastructure: 13km of flood defences
- Numerous heritage assets at risk from flooding
- Combines rejuvenation and flood management
- Three-phase project; overall completion date 2023

This innovative scheme combines flood management with urban regeneration. More than 2000 properties are currently at risk, but the £95 million project will additionally help rejuvenate areas next to the River Derwent in Derby. Simply raising the existing defences would sever the relationship between the historic city and the river, and would increase the flood risk upstream to parts of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, so a new solution was found by realigning the flood defences.

The oldest part of Derby is Little Chester, the former Roman town and fort of Derventio. Here, flood defences were needed to protect nearby homes and listed buildings, and a line of defence had to be built within the scheduled fort. Archaeological excavations were carried out to inform the exact location of the new flood defences, and they were then designed to reflect the Roman military character of the site. Roman-style bricks and lime mortar were used, and gate piers were built to mark the fort entrance, improving the legibility of the archaeological remains for the public and improving the overall environment.



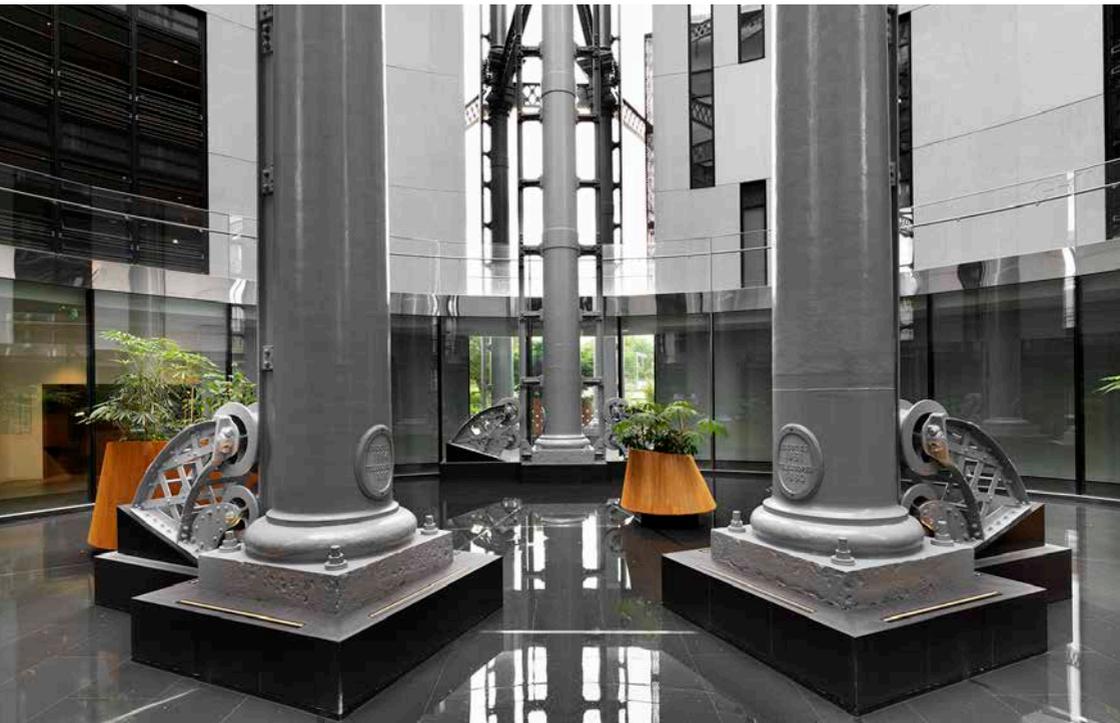
King's Cross and St Pancras, London

- New infrastructure: refurbished St Pancras International and Kings Cross stations
- 20 historic buildings restored and refurbished
- New homes for 42,000 people

The King's Cross and St Pancras area developed as a transport and industrial hub in the 19th century, and contains many industrial heritage and infrastructure assets. By the latter part of the 20th century it had fallen into decline, with many buildings underused and at risk. During the 1960s, St Pancras station and hotel were even considered for demolition.

In recent years, the area has enjoyed a number of regeneration projects, many of which have put heritage at the heart of them to great effect. The British Library – now itself a Grade I listed building – relocated to the area in 1998, and St Pancras station underwent a £800 million refurbishment as the new terminal for Eurostar, opening as St Pancras International in November 2007.

The latest regeneration project, providing new offices, retail opportunities and homes for 42,000 people, includes the refurbishment of many historic railway buildings. Three listed former gasholders were also repaired and relocated to provide new homes, and the University of the Arts relocated to the historic Granary Building.



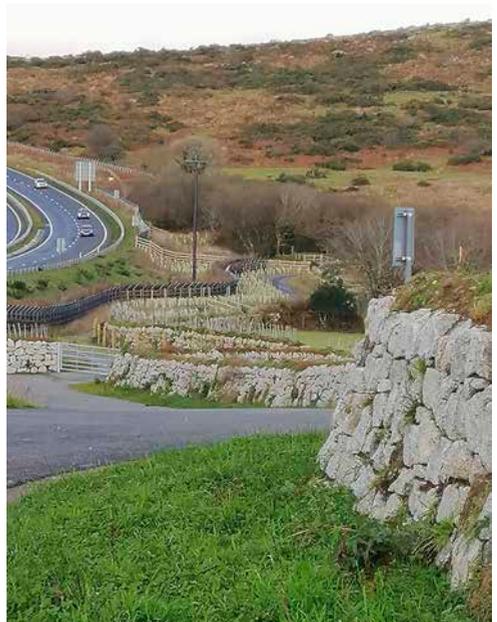
A30 Temple to Higher Carblake section, Cornwall

- New infrastructure: dual carriageway
- Built within a very sensitive AONB landscape
- Opened July 2017

Four lanes of dual carriageway were recently opened between Temple and Higher Carblake on one of Cornwall's most important strategic routes. Previously, motorists faced long queues of up to nine miles during the peak season. The improved road is expected to bring big tourism benefits to Cornwall, and to provide new investment and business opportunities.

However, this part of the A30 lies within the Bodmin Moor AONB, a remote, heather-covered, upland granite landscape still grazed by moorland ponies, and another very sensitive archaeological area. The road therefore had to be designed with great care.

One of the notable features of the new £60 million road scheme is the 5.5km of Cornish stone hedging, all hand built by a local company. A stone hedge is a traditional land boundary found in the far south-west of England, made by placing two leaning 'walls' of stone together and packing the gaps with soil. Bushes and vegetation then colonise the structure, making it a 'hedge'. Taking over two years to construct, these new stone hedges have improved the landscape adjacent to the road, and will be part of it for generations to come.





The Blackpool and Cleveleys coastal defence scheme

- New infrastructure: coastal defences
- Protection of 8,700 properties and 219 industrial units in Cleveleys
- £76 million project at Blackpool replaced 3.2km of the old coastal defences
- Both combined a defensive function with urban regeneration

New coastal defences were installed along Blackpool's historic promenade in 2009, including the replacement of the old defences between the North and South Piers, protecting a popular section of the Golden Mile. It created five headland features that generated new spaces along the seafront and improved the public realm. The scheme was part of Blackpool Council's regeneration masterplan to improve the appeal of the resort and revitalise the local economy.

At Cleveleys, the whole seafront has been redesigned with a split-level promenade and a wave-shaped revetment. It was completed in 2010 and replaced 1km of dilapidated coastal defences, similarly instilling a sense of place and civic pride.



Historic England

We are the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment.

[HistoricEngland.org.uk](https://www.historicengland.org.uk)

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Written and compiled by Amanda Chadburn. All images © Historic England unless otherwise stated. Front cover: Battersea Power Station, detail from the St Clement's mural, London School of Economics. Artist: Harry Warren Wilson, 1961. Introduction: Solar panels at Wroughton historic airfield, Swindon, Wiltshire. Dorset: Bronze Age round barrows and pylons; photography by Benjamin Graham/National Grid. Derby: archaeological excavation and completed flood defences at Little Chester Roman fort; photographs by T Allen. King's Cross: detail of central axis garden, Gasholder Park. Designed and redeveloped by WilkinsonEyre into residential housing. A30: detail of new Cornish 'hedges'; photographs by J Chadburn. Blackpool: view from the tower down onto the new curving sea defence and promenade.