

National Heritage Protection plan consultation on under-represented heritages.

A response to the BOP Consulting report from English Heritage
October 2012

As part of our commitment to increasing understanding of the historic environment, and effective protection for it, through the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP), English Heritage commissioned BOP Consulting to facilitate a national consultation with experts in under-represented areas of heritage between May-June 2012. We received their [report of the responses](#) to that consultation at the NHPP Implementation Board on 12th September 2012.

English Heritage is delighted by the enthusiastic and positive response to this consultation. In all, over 80 experts took part. A full list of the participants and the methodology are contained in the BOP report itself. We are extremely grateful to everyone who gave us their time and contributed their knowledge to this work. The contact list of participants is now, as agreed, being shared by EH managers in several departments to aid future communication.

We promised participants that English Heritage would provide copies of the BOP report and also keep all our expert contacts updated on relevant activities to address the issues it raised and we are now able to start doing this.

The report captures recommendations from participants which, quite naturally, range well beyond the remit of the National Heritage Protection Plan; looking at important related issues such as heritage education. Where English Heritage has a role to play, we will seek to address those issues through other areas of our work.

In some cases, recommendations for action fall outside the role given to English Heritage by legislation. In those cases, we will be sharing the report with colleagues across the historic environment sector and looking at the opportunities for our partners in the NHPP to take these forward. The BOP report will be published on our website and we will encourage our contacts in the broad field of cultural heritage to refer to it for guidance. We hope that participants will take responsibility for disseminating it to academic and subject networks as well.

The NHPP itself is being revised to better reflect the participative character of the Plan and it will shortly be re-published. We will send round notice when the new web link is in place and do recommend that anyone interested stays up to date with the evolving Plan. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqlA) for the NHPP will be updated and re-published on our website in April 2013, with further detail of our immediate priority activities and we will send notice of this too.

Working through the implications of this consultation and delivering practical action to address them will take some time. The NHPP has an annual budget cycle which runs from April to March. We will be developing further detailed action plans as we identify our budgets for 2013-14. EH is also emerging from two years of re-organisation following reductions in government funding. This represents an opportunity to look at our working practices again but also means that it may take a little time for actions to be implemented. Meanwhile, the following notes provide an initial high level response to the recommendations in the BOP report.

Feedback on the report and this initial response are very welcome. Please contact Rachel Hasted, Head of Social Inclusion and Diversity, rachel.hasted@english-heritage.org.uk

We asked how heritage protection could be improved?

1) **Build community partnerships – in order to identify new research evidence from communities directly.**

EH will encourage local authorities to use Historic Environment Records (HERs) to identify local heritage knowledge from diverse communities (NHPP Activity 5C1)

EH will actively promote Local Listing to local authorities as an opportunity to capture local significance understood by local communities.

EH will seek to build in consultation with appropriate bodies and experts in designation casework.

EH will promote inclusive local partnership working through the newly-created Local Engagement Advisors in its National Planning and Conservation Department.

2) **Create an advisory network – as a dedicated body with community representatives in order to provide feedback on new relevant sites.**

It is not a sustainable option for EH to bring together a network of this kind for regular face to face meetings at national level, but we feel it can be realised best by working with local authorities in the ways outlined above. We will also use the contacts database from this consultation to help improve digital communication and encourage more feedback.

2a) **Set up an expert diversity panel to advise EH nationally.**

Rather than set up a stand alone committee that might not be sustainable in the long term, and which could become divorced from the rest of our work, EH will seek to engage a broader range of expertise in the existing advisory structures (see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/who-we-are/how-we-are-run/Committees-and-panels/> for details) and promote the expert contacts gained through the research to other sector bodies.

A first example of this has been the invitation to apply for places on the English Heritage Advisory Committee which was recently e-mailed to all consultation participants.

3) Initiate a public call-out for information – in order to collect a large body of information in a one-off initiative.

NHPP has a key role to play here. We will promote updates to the NHPP, and projects within it that need input, to the consultation mailing list and look for appropriate specialist or regional contact lists for particular projects.

Again, we feel that encouraging our local authority partners to use Historic Environment Records (HERs) to identify local heritage knowledge from as broad a range of local people as possible will be important. We will encourage councils to use Local Listing as an opportunity to capture a wide range of local significance for buildings and places in their area.

4) Develop a process for revising or enhancing list descriptions at national designation level by drawing on user-generated knowledge.

EH has begun a process of this kind through the projects it has carried out to enhance records relating to the slave trade, plantation wealth and the Abolition movement and women's history. We are now working on the "Disability in Time and Place" project, which will bring up further possible changes to list descriptions. The scope of EH records means this is going to be a long process unless we identify the relevance of records as they are made and when they are later re-examined through a greater range of research projects within NHPP - looking at particular cities, at school buildings, or World War I material remains for example .

From our experience, and from several consultations with potential record users, we have identified the need to create a set of thematic search terms, so that researchers can get access to records relevant to different under-represented aspects of heritage. By March 2013 we will have completed the design of a general framework for adding such terms to our records and will have a set of standard search terms covering disability. This will make it easier, over time, for external researchers to find relevant records and suggest amendments or additions.

Subject to resources, we aim to develop the thematic search terms approach further, adding standard terms to cover gender, a full range of ethnicities, faiths and sexual orientations.

We welcome suggestions for amendments to list descriptions, or for new listings, and the process for doing this is outlined at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>

Although minor amendments can be made at any time, it is the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who makes the final decision on all new national designation recommendations or major changes to the list

description. This is often a longer process and the outcome does not rest with English Heritage.

The consultation suggested that a parallel Wiki working alongside the National Heritage List for England could provide an effective way for researchers to add their wider knowledge of particular sites and their historic significance, without needing to go through the formal list amendment process. We think this is a great idea, but at present EH is not able to take a lead on developing it. Proposals for taking this forward from other research bodies would be of interest to EH.

5) Draw on existing databases and catalogues in developing search terms for the National Heritage List for England.

We will take careful account of the consultation feedback about using existing work on building thesauri in these areas, such as the CASBAH project and Genesis, and will seek further expert help as this develops.

6) Link in with special initiatives or anniversaries to raise the profile of under-represented heritages.

This proved a very useful approach in developing the EH “Sites of Memory” work on sites associated with the slave trade, plantation wealth and Abolition in 2007-9. Please see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/who-we-are/how-we-are-run/heritage-for-all/case-studies/bicentenary-of-the-abolition-of-the-transatlantic-slave-trade/>

EH is now developing its response to the centenary of World War I from 2014-2018 now and there is a related Activity within NHPP (4E2). EH has already provided advice and grant aid for the conservation of the Muslim Burial Ground at Woking, dating from 1915, and is seeking to represent the experience of women on the home front and of participants from Africa and the Indian subcontinent within its work to document the material remains of the war in England. We also lead on maritime archaeology, which means that shipwrecks from the war are an area of study for EH. The *Rohilla* wreck is featured on our women’s history web pages and EH has grant aided work to document the wreck of *SS Mendi* (see <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/eh/ssmendi/index.php>)

War disability is likely to be theme within the centenary and will feature in the “Disability in Time and Place” web resource launching on 5th December 2013. (See www.english-heritage.org.uk/disabilityhistory)

Comments and suggestions for work around anniversaries, including World War I, will continue to be welcome.

7) Improve interpretation of multi-site heritage assets by developing trails.

In the past, EH has grant aided websites that offer trails for Sikh and Jewish built heritage. We publish a national gazeteer of Jewish built heritage and have commissioned books on London’s Limehouse Chinatown, The History of the British Mosque and Buildings of the Labour

Movement amongst others . We promote links to locally produced trails on our Sites of Memory and Women's History web pages. We are working with the Heritage Open Days initiative (<http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>) to promote sites connected to disability history as a theme in 2013 and have previously done this to promote women's history.

There may be further scope for EH to promote local trails from our website and we will look into opportunities to promote the development of local trails over the coming year.

As the Heritage Lottery Fund strategic framework 2013-2018 (see <http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/Pages/StrategicFramework2013to2018.aspx>) identifies new support for digital heritage projects, EH will share the BOP report with HLF and flag up this area.

8) Improve interpretation of heritage sites by increased use of EH website and digital technology.

Although this is an area outside of the NHPP remit, the consultation recommendations have been shared with the Head of Education and Interpretation at EH. We will report back on individual projects and opportunities at sites in our care as they come up.

We will share this recommendation with other partners in the heritage sector who may also be able to contribute.

EH is constantly seeking to improve its web presence and the forthcoming "Disability in Time and Place" resource will be another initiative to add a layer of interpretation to heritage sites. This may be a fruitful area for partnership working in future.

9) Develop collaborative research projects to make better use of limited financial resources.

This is a central concern for the NHPP. Some funding bids and proposals for joint PhD funding are already in the pipeline on areas relevant to under-represented heritage. We will seek to identify further projects and partners in future and proposals are welcome. Please do look carefully at the Action Plan for the NHPP, especially Measure 4, (see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/national-heritage-protection-plan/plan/>) which identifies the priority areas that EH is working in currently. Proposals linked to these areas where EH has already identified heritage under threat will be a priority.

Current invitations to tender and the application process for National Heritage Protection Commission Programme funding are available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/funding/grants/grants-available/nhpcp/proposals/> . If you would like to talk about any proposal that you have in mind, or the process itself, please contact us for an initial discussion.

10) **Raise greater awareness of heritage issues among younger generations by engaging pro-actively with the National Curriculum.**

This is outside the remit of NHPP but EH is required by legislation to take an active role in heritage education. Our new education strategy will be published shortly and focuses on enabling all children and young people to feel proud of their local area by understanding more about its history and to play an active role in looking after it. The flagship Heritage Schools programme funded by the Department for Education underpins this and will focus on children from a range of cultural backgrounds. If we can enable today's children to grow up understanding, valuing and caring for the places they live we will have a new diverse workforce of heritage professionals and a new generation of people passionate about our shared heritage to help us achieve our ambition.

If you would like to receive further information about EH education activities, please sign up to receive our digital magazine *Heritage Learning* at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/education/heritage-learning/sign-up>

11) **Provide guidance and support for local community organisations. Develop skills and capacity around heritage protection issues within communities.**

We will seek to identify the most useful form of guidance we can offer to local groups and ensure that all our national guidance is produced with an awareness of the diversity of heritage and of potential users.

Suggestions for particular resources are welcome.

12) **Increase awareness and improve perceptions of EH by reviewing promotional materials and improving lines of communication.**

The consultation has provided EH with a wider range of contacts. We will seek to build on this through the NHPP Communications Plan, build it into our work at local level and make use of the contacts for other areas of our work.

We asked “What is being overlooked?”

The discussions on this issue in all the consultation seminars raised some extremely useful issues which are being taken forward through the Activities within NHPP. We will be able to report back in more detail on actions in 2013.

The need to consider smaller sites, common places and whole areas or linked sites was a strong theme. We are looking at this through research work on Places of Worship (NHPP 4D1) and will raise it in the context of EH Area Assessment work, local listing and archive documentation. Again HERs have a key role in mapping out such links at local level and we will promote the report to the HERs Forum nationally.

Representing the history of ordinary people.

EH has more to offer here and we need to communicate better about what is already available, especially in terms of publications and web resources. Designation at national and local level covers a huge range of sites used by “ordinary people” and we will look to make this information more available.

Colleagues may be interested in the web record of the “Missing Out?” conference that EH ran in 2009 on related issues <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/who-we-are/how-we-are-run/heritage-for-all/missing-out-conference/>

This may be a fruitful area for future partnership working.

Documenting the heritage of transient communities.

The NHPP is centrally concerned with the understanding and preservation of the historic environment. There will be other partners in the sector, such as HLF, museums and archives, with a stronger role to play in documenting the intangible heritage in and for itself. EH will always focus on the material evidence for heritage in the historic environment, but it is the agency of people impacting on the landscape over time that creates this legacy. We have a role to play and EH already has experience of documenting transient communities through its research programme “Religion and Place” which showed how different groups had built and adapted faith buildings in a number of places. The publications from this can be found at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/who-we-are/how-we-are-run/heritage-for-all/case-studies/religion-and-place-multifaith-projects-in-leeds-liverpool-and-hackney/>

We can build on this experience, potentially through our Characterisation work, and a good example of this is the EH publication on Manningham, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/manningham/>

The Thematic Terms project should provide, in time, a set of search terms on ethnicity and faith that will help to track the historic presence of different groups, even in locations where they are no longer a significant presence. If these terms are promoted to local authorities managing HERs and Local Listing, the basis for a national record of the traces of transient communities in the historic environment could be laid.

Avoiding over-emphasis on the “enjoyment” of heritage.

EH seeks to celebrate the significance of sites in the historic environment and their survival to enrich our lives, while acknowledging that the histories behind them are often challenging and contested. Examples include the interpretation of Clifford’s Tower, York, the work EH undertook on our properties to identify connections to the slave trade and plantation wealth, the changing perception of Alan Turing’s work at Bletchley Park and his

subsequent prosecution, or preserving Cold War sites. Commemoration, as well as celebration, is part of our role.

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