

## Hartley's Village, Aintree – The impact of heritage on local communities

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Hartley's Village in Aintree, was built in 1886 by William Hartley when he moved his jam making business to what was then the outskirts of the city of Liverpool. The large factory site contained warehousing, offices, an engine house, railway sidings and access roads, as well as the main production factory itself. The village for his key workers initially had 40 houses, although this was later increased. It was designed to be self-contained; in the square behind the houses were gardens, tennis courts and bowling greens for the resident workers to enjoy. Most of the roads in the village were tree-lined avenues with names of the ingredients used in jam making such as Sugar Street, Spice Lane and Cherry Avenue.

After jam production moved to London, the factory and land (including the garden square) was sold off, with the houses sold to existing residents or private purchasers. Since then, despite the tidy houses, there are major environmental problems such as derelict or under-used buildings, incompatible uses and vacant lots. Sadly, the trees lining the avenues, the gardens, tennis courts and bowling greens have also long since gone and the village is a shadow of its former glory. However, the community spirit is still very much alive and the houses retain much of their charm and character. In addition, parts of the factory site are listed at grade II.

In response to this decline, local resident Tony Vacarrazzi organised a street party and a 'big ideas forum' with other residents - which led to the formation, in 2009, of the Hartley Village Heritage Council (HVHC). This group comprises like-minded residents who are passionate about the area where they live and preserving its history and character for future generations.

One of the early achievements was reached in December 2011, when Hartley's Village was designated a Conservation Area following a campaign by the HVHC with support from local residents, Liverpool City Council Conservation Team, local councillors and the city's Heritage Champion. Conservation Area status was seen as an important step in enabling residents to protect the character and significance of the whole area and promote this important part of Liverpool's history for future generations. HVHC also believe that this status will help to generate opportunities to improve the area.

Although Hartley's Village is currently included in the English Heritage 'Heritage At Risk' register, HVHC is taking a proactive, community led approach to visioning and planning for the future development in and around the Hartley's Village area. In the last few months the HVHC, the owners of the industrial site, local managers from a newly built school and local businesses interested in the development of their area, with support from English Heritage have submitted a Hartley Village Business and Neighbourhood Plan to the city planning department. The main aim of this plan is to establish a more prosperous and sustainable future for the village as a place to live, work, study and visit, whilst retaining the history and character of the village - which

local residents feel is crucially important both to them as a community and to the city as a whole.

The work of the HVHC has been enormous over the last 5 years – but not without recognition. They have won awards such as best community group in 2012, and in 2011 received a commendation from the prestigious Andrew Lloyd Webber/ English Heritage Angels Award for recognition for their community efforts to rescue an industrial site.



Hartley's Village Heritage Council standing outside Hartley's factory at Long Lane, Aintree © Hartley's Village Heritage Council

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