

# Profile for Heritage Counts 2015

*Ian Smith – Historic England staff*

**1. What is your role title?**

“Historic Environment Planning Adviser for Yorkshire.”

**2. What does your role involve? (specifically relating to providing advice to listed building owners, amenity societies or local authorities)**

“Working with the local planning authorities of Yorkshire to ensure that their Local Plans set out a robust strategy for the management of the historic environment of their area and to help the Authorities identify how they might meet their communities needs for housing, jobs, and so on in a manner which will also conserve and provide a sustainable future for the historic environment of their area.”

**3. What is most pleasing about your role (relating to providing advice, and who you provide it to)?**

“Knowing that, as a result of your advice, the adopted plan which sets out how a place is going to change over the next 15 years will also ensure that the elements which make that place distinctive will still be there and that its heritage assets will have been effectively managed.”

**4. Please explain any interesting examples where there were challenges/barriers that were overcome relating to managing heritage in the local context (individual listed buildings – grade II preferably)?**

“In 2012, Rotherham’s Local Plan had a problem. The Authority had intended to put some 20% of the housing its communities would need over the next 15 years in a large Urban Extension on the western part of Rotherham. This area was easily accessible to the facilities in the town and would, it was hoped, help to reinvigorate its town centre which had been struggling since the downturn in the retail sector.”

“Unfortunately, the Urban Extension also had the potential to harm elements which contribute to the significance of a number of designated heritage assets in its vicinity. This included the most important heritage asset in the Plan area - the Wentworth Woodhouse Estate. Its principal building, Wentworth Woodhouse, is a Grade I Listed Building (and has the longest façade of any Country House in England) and looks over a Humphrey Repton-designed landscape towards the area where the Urban extension was proposed.”

“In order to help resolve this dilemma, Historic England (or English Heritage as it was then) worked with the Council Officers and the landowner to develop a Heritage Impact Assessment in order to help identify those areas which are likely to be most sensitive to development.”

“As a result of this work, the Masterplan for the Urban Extension was amended to remove those areas which would have resulted in most harm to the surrounding heritage assets, limitations on the heights and form of development were proposed for other areas, and locations for additional landscaping were identified. Although, the extent of the original development area was reduced, as a result of this work, the Council were able to identify additional areas of land outside the boundary of the original Urban Extension which could be developed without harming the historic environment. In the end, the actual amount of housing which the Urban Extension was capable of delivering was greater than had originally been proposed.”

“Despite, strong local objections to the development, the Heritage Impact Assessment (and Historic England’s involvement in developing it) assisted the Authority to successfully take this proposal through a testing examination in public. A detailed Masterplan for the area is now being drawn up based upon the recommendations of the Heritage Impact Assessment and, having seen the success of this work, the Council are now undertaking evaluations of all their proposed local plan allocations upon the historic environment.”

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