

Changing London

AN HISTORIC CITY FOR A MODERN WORLD

'Successive generations of Londoners will judge us not only on how well we conserve the past, but on how well we build for the future.'

Phillip Davies

London Region Director, English Heritage

R IS FOR RESTORATION – AND MUCH MORE

Restoration is so much more than simply looking to the past, as it can also bring fresh new life and exciting transformation.

Restoration of the historic environment is just as diverse. In this edition of *Changing London*, snapshots of projects involving English Heritage and its partners from across the capital demonstrate that 'R' is not just for 'restoration' but for 'reinvention' and 'renewal'.

Old buildings and places can be given back their dignity. Others are finding a new lease of life with completely different uses. Still more are being renewed by a combination of both reinvention and restoration.

These projects are just a tiny proportion of the work that English Heritage is supporting and assisting across London to create a genuinely sustainable future for both buildings and places.

'R' truly stands for much more than just restoration.

CONTENTS

2/3

**R is for Reinvention:
Unexpected new life for
historic buildings.**

4/5

**R is for Restoration: Specialist
skills nurture special places.**

6/7

**R is for Renewal: Regenerating
London's historic places.**



R IS FOR REINVENTION

Finding new uses for historic buildings can be fraught with difficulties. Balancing the need to preserve the character and details of a building with the demands of a completely different use is not easy – but as these examples show, if done with style and imagination, the results can be spectacular. Our front cover shows the former Midland Bank in the City, now Threadneedles Hotel. Like many such buildings, its impressive Victorian interior is now complemented by stylish new design.

Below, **Roger Mascall** charts the transformation of a redundant cinema into a vibrant new gym. **Paul Velluet**, far right, reports on how a building in Richmond swapped its past life as part of a gunpowder factory for a new existence as the centrepiece of a nature reserve. Finally, **Paddy Pugh** applauds the rebirth of a former Victorian psychiatric hospital as a new residential community in a model of partnership working.



WORKING OUT WITH WURLITZER

The Granada Cinema, Harrow opened in 1937 and is best known for its richly decorated interior by Theodore Komisarjevsky and the surviving Wurlitzer organ. The Grade II building was forced to close in the late 1990s in the face of competition from a large new multiplex.

After a series of failed attempts to reopen the building as a specialist

cinema, and with increasing pressure for redevelopment of a valuable town centre site, Golds Gym came forward with proposals for conversion to a health and fitness club. Plans for a swimming pool and extensive floor areas for exercise equipment were challenging, but were refined over a period of months in discussions with English Heritage and the local Council's conservation officer.

The foyer became the main reception with a café and shop. Inside, the cinema had been converted in the 1970s to accommodate two smaller screens below the original circle, so there was potential for the swimming pool there. The auditorium was otherwise retained as a full height space. The restored Wurlitzer organ now overlooks exercise equipment located on a series of decks in the former circle. Completed in 2001,

the full extent of the opulent interior, extensively repaired and cleaned, can now be appreciated.

Thanks to the positive partnership of Golds Gym, their agents, Draper Neal Associates, and Harrow Council's planners, the building's future has been assured whilst retaining and restoring its special interest.



FROM HOSPITAL TO HOMES: CLAYBURY'S HEALTHY FUTURE

This vast complex of buildings was constructed in 1890 for the London County Council as one of a number of mental asylums which ringed the capital.

Claybury (Grade II) closed in 1996, but for the preceding twelve months the Area Health Authority, its professional advisers, Redbridge Council and English Heritage met regularly to develop a strategy which would secure the future of this important site. The result is a stunning residential development in a mixture of refurbished historic buildings and carefully designed new blocks. The historic landscape, originally laid out by Sir Humphry Repton, has been sensitively managed and new community facilities provided.

Increasingly, many fine civic and public buildings are being made redundant. Claybury provides useful lessons about how such change must be anticipated and managed to avoid problems of blight, neglect and uncertainty.

GUNPOWDER GIVES WAY TO WILDLIFE

Crane Park Island was at the heart of the former Hounslow Gunpowder Mills from 1766 until 1926. The most significant surviving feature is the structure known locally as 'the shot tower'; in fact, it was a watch tower.

In 1983 work began to turn Crane Park Island into a nature reserve and in 1986 its management was taken over by the London Wildlife Trust (LWT). A new role was sought for the Grade II tower. Completed in 1828, its tapering brick form rises to approximately 20 metres. For many years it stood derelict and suffered from vandalism and fire damage. It was not until 1996 that the Heritage Lottery Fund, with the advice of English Heritage, offered a grant of £264,000 towards its repair and conversion as a visitor and education centre for the LWT. Further grants made possible the repointing of the brickwork and other works, including the replacement of the former belfry which crowns the Tower. Architects Peter Bowyer and James Lunn-Rockliffe oversaw this partnership project which now provides classroom and exhibition space for the LWT Nature Reserve.

To find out more about the Reserve, contact www.wildlondon.org.uk



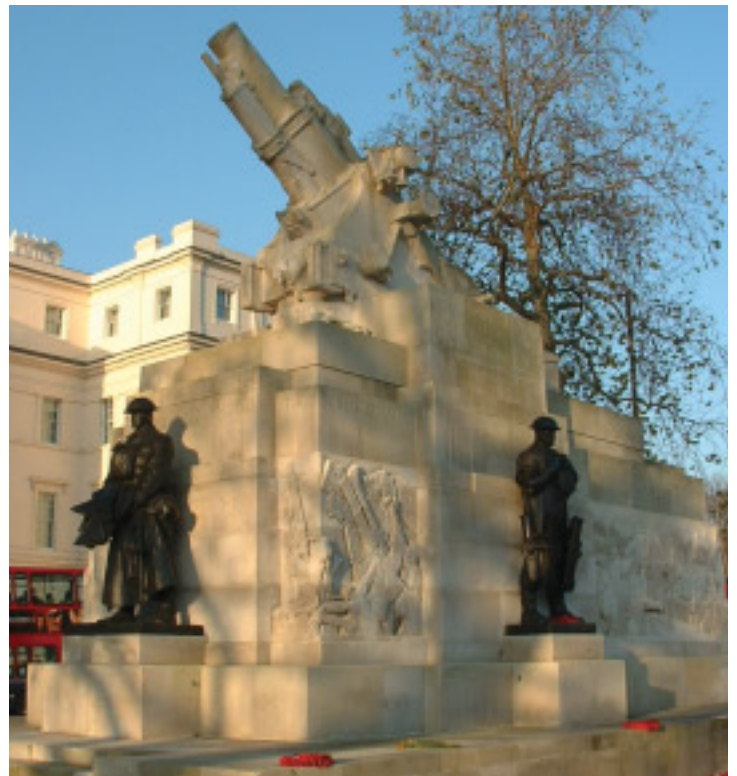
R IS FOR RESTORATION



OLDEST TERRACE COMES BACK FROM THE BRINK

52-55 Newington Green, Islington is a group of four Grade I listed buildings. Built in 1658, they are thought to be the earliest surviving terraced houses in England.

English Heritage purchased Nos. 53-55 in 1984 and undertook major structural repairs prior to their sale and refurbishment by private owners. No. 52 (on the right in the photograph above) has been on the *Buildings at Risk Register* for 13 years, but is now being restored for residential use. We have undertaken a detailed historical survey of all four houses. Tree-ring analysis of No. 52 revealed reused sixteenth-century timbers. Two of the houses have trompe-l'oeil wall paintings to imitate panelling, and seventeenth-century timber panelling has recently been uncovered in the ground-floor of No 52 – rare survivals in London houses. The Victorian shop front is being repaired with a grant from the Newington Green Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme.



'OUR GLORIOUS DEAD'

The Royal Regiment of Artillery lost over 49,000 men in the First World War. Their Memorial by Charles Sargeant Jagger at Hyde Park Corner is one of the finest in England. Managed by English Heritage, long awaited conservation and repair work has now been completed. The stonework of the Grade II* listed Memorial was thoroughly cleaned and repaired in time for the Ceremony of Remembrance in 2001, including work on the four massive bronze figures. Once cleaned, much lost detail was revealed which has been preserved by applying a thinner wax finish than before.

New bronze post and chain railings bearing a close affinity to the style and spirit of the Memorial were designed and installed by English Heritage. These consist of nineteen stylised reversed rifle posts with the chains hung below. A striking and moving memorial has been sensitively lit and restored as part of our wider masterplan for Hyde Park Corner.

Restoration requires knowledge, skill and a painstaking attention to detail. It can be a lengthy process, whether you are restoring London's oldest terrace of houses, as **Delcia Keate** reports from Newington Green, or decorative plaques from the Wernher Collection at Ranger's House, as described by **Tori Reeve**.

Christopher Cooke explains English Heritage's involvement in the restoration of the superb Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner – while **Jenny Freeman** of the Historic Chapels Trust recounts progress at St George's German Lutheran Church in the East End, just one of countless projects in which English Heritage acts as a specialist adviser.



LONDON'S OLDEST GERMAN CHURCH RESTORED

St George's dates from 1762-3 and is the oldest German church in Britain. The congregation was founded by Dederich Beckmann, a wealthy sugar boiler and cousin of the first pastor:

Inside, the Grade II* church retains a remarkable and mostly original series of furnishings. These include a complete set of ground floor and gallery pews and a magnificent, high, central double-decker pulpit and sounding board. On the wall above hangs the coat-of-arms of King George III and two carved timber Commandment Boards in German. The Royal Arms recall a connection with the Duchess of Kent, mother of Queen Victoria, who was Patron of the adjacent German and English schools from 1819. During the Nazi period in Germany, the pastor, Julius Rieger, set up a relief centre for Jewish refugees from Germany who were provided with references to travel to England.

A scheme of restoration costing almost £900,000 is now close to completion, ensuring St George's will once more take its place at the heart of the local community.

LUSTRE RESTORED TO RENAISSANCE PLAQUES

Final year conservation degree students at the City & Guilds of London Art School in Kennington, are conserving a pair of early Renaissance terracotta plaques depicting the Virgin and Child. These are from the famous Wernher Collection and were in very poor condition as a result of lengthy storage in a draughty warehouse.

The photograph shows Joscelyn Schmitt at work on one of them. On completion of restoration, both plaques will be returning this year to their rightful place as part of the main collection, which is on display at English Heritage's Ranger's House at Blackheath.

INFORMATION POINT

The Historic Chapels Trust can be contacted at www.hct.org.uk or on 020 7584 6072. More details about Ranger's House can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage works closely with many bodies to manage change throughout London. As the recently published *Heritage Counts* (November 2003) makes clear, the need to protect the historic environment from loss or damage is being increasingly recognised. Yet as the projects on these pages demonstrate, with English Heritage's advice, skills and assistance with grant-aid, renewal of the historic environment across the capital is possible in a whole variety of exciting ways that respect and enhance its integrity.

Paul Calvocoressi explains how new life is being injected into the former Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, while **Paddy Pugh** reports on the transformation of Keeling House in London's East End. To the west of London, **Chris Sumner** updates on a fascinating disused theatre in Teddington and on new developments at the former Harrods' Depository in Barnes.

R IS FOR RENEWAL

'Renewal of the historic environment across the capital is possible in ways that respect and enhance its integrity'



HISTORY COMES ALIVE AT WOOLWICH

The Royal Arsenal, Woolwich (*left*) is a site of great historic importance. From the 18th-century to the First World War it housed the country's principal military-industrial complex. As a major state-capitalised undertaking, employing a large skilled workforce, it played an important role in Britain's development as a leading industrial power.

The ordnance factories closed in 1967. The site was severely under-used until the 1990s, when it was taken over by English Partnerships (now the London Development Agency). Large parts of the site have been decontaminated, a masterplan has been agreed and regeneration of the site has begun.

Most of the site is a conservation area and 26 of the surviving buildings are listed (one at Grade I and three at Grade II*).

New users for the historic buildings include the Royal Artillery Museum ('Firepower') and the Greenwich Heritage Centre, which occupy the Crimean period Paper Cartridge Factory and Laboratory Offices, the Napoleonic period New Laboratory Square and the early 18th-century Academy Building.

Architects for these conversions were Austin-Smith Lord, A-S L Dangerfield and Julian Harrap Architects.

Other buildings are currently being converted by Berkeley Homes for residential use. These include the Napoleonic period Grand Store ranges and the later Chemical Laboratory. The elegant Gateway to the 1856 Rifle Shell Factory has been adapted as a show flat and sales offices by the architects A & Q Partnership.

There is a great deal still to do but the site is already showing clear signs of regeneration and is well worth a visit.

FORMER HARRODS FURNITURE DEPOSITORY: NEW HOMES IN STORE NOW

This prominent riverside building (*right*), downstream of Hammersmith Bridge, was built between 1911 and 1914 by W H Hunt, who with C W Stevens also designed the famous Knightsbridge store. The elaborate red-brick and buff-terracotta elevation to the Thames with its two distinctive cupolas belies the structural use of the Kahn reinforced concrete system, which finds expression on the rear of the building as tiers of continuous

INFORMATION POINT

The Royal Artillery Museum can be contacted on www.firepower.org.uk or 020 855 7755. Further information about the Normansfield Theatre is available from the Down's Syndrome Association on 08452 300 372.

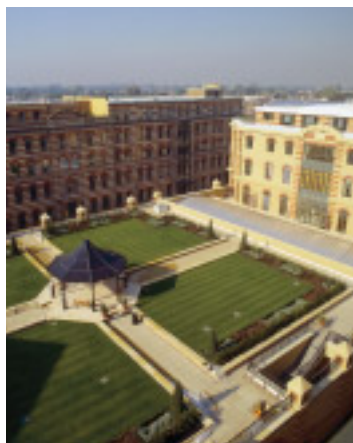


NEW ACT TAKES TO THE STAGE IN TEDDINGTON

In 1868 Dr John L H Langdon-Down, who studied the condition now known as Down's Syndrome, founded a residential home (in what was to become Normansfield Hospital) for the treatment of children with learning difficulties from wealthy families. It included an entertainment hall (*left*) built between 1877 and 1879 to the designs of Rowland Plumbe. This private theatre with a proscenium arch and raking stage is remarkable for the high standard and quality of its design and for the completeness of the stage machinery and surviving painted sets.

The hospital site was eventually sold for development in the 1990s. New houses have been built over part of the grounds. The theatre (now called the Langdon-Down Theatre) and adjacent building have been repaired in an exemplary manner to provide a new centre and offices for the Langdon-Down Association, Richmond Music Trust and the Strathcona Theatre Company. This includes the provision of museum space and racking in the basement for the conservation and display of the painted sets and backdrops.

Sadly, other former hospital buildings on the site in separate ownership are still in a poor state, though now secured. They will remain on the *Buildings At Risk* Register pending discussions on their future use.



PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT INSPIRES PUBLIC INVEST- MENT

Keeling House (*right*) was built in 1959 to the designs of Sir Denys Lasdun for the former Bethnal Green Borough Council. It is an important example of post-war housing embodying innovative ideas of urban renewal and is listed Grade II*. By 1993 the block, now owned by Tower Hamlets Council, had fallen into disrepair and was threatened with demolition. English Heritage persuaded the Council that it should sell Keeling House to a new owner who would be willing to repair rather than demolish. Several Housing Associations expressed some interest, but it was a private developer which eventually bought the building from the Council in 1999. Architects Munkenbeck and Marshall refurbished the flats, with the blessing of Sir Denys Lasdun. All have now been sold.

With the success of Keeling House, the Council has decided to repair two similar, slightly earlier, blocks which it also owns – Sulkin House and Trevelyan House, also designed by Sir Denys Lasdun and listed Grade II. These will now be refurbished as social housing rather than being sold on the open market.

balconies and access galleries. Having stood empty for many years, this Grade II listed building has been converted to flats as part of a larger development of new and refurbished buildings by MLRS architects. The brickwork and terracotta were cleaned and repaired, which included making good an unsightly flank elevation left when the projected upstream range was abandoned at the outbreak of World War I. In order to get light and air to the centre of the building, two large atria were formed. The flat roof has been used to provide roof terraces for the penthouse apartments.





R IS FOR RECOLLECTION

The historic environment is the repository of our past hopes and aspirations, our triumphs, our failures, our sacrifices. English Heritage played a crucial role in assisting the government of Australia to build its new war memorial at Hyde Park Corner – a poignant reminder of all those countries whose troops fought and died alongside us – a reminder that London is truly a world city.

We all help to shape the historic environment of the future. Successive generations will judge us not only on how well we conserve the past, but also on how well we build for the future. Integrating the old and the new is a demanding and complex responsibility.

Nevertheless, the projects highlighted in this edition of *Changing London* show just what can be achieved with vision, skill and above all, an openness to work in partnership.

Philip Davies London Region Director, English Heritage

HERITAGE COUNTS 2003: The State of England's Historic Environment

This second annual audit of the state of the historic environment was published by English Heritage on behalf of the heritage sector in November. It takes the form of one summary, one main data document and nine regional booklets. These are available on: www.english-heritage.org.uk or free from English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181.



CONTACT DETAILS

We would welcome comments and suggestions on this edition. These should be sent to

Richard Dumville (Regional Policy Officer)
 London Region, English Heritage
 23 Savile Row, London, W1S 2ET
 T: 020 7973 3783

Alternatively you can e-mail us at
london@english-heritage.org.uk

If you have not received this edition direct and wish to be added to the circulation list, then please send in your address details.

Additional copies can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services – call 0870 333 1181.

Published by English Heritage
 Edited by Gordon Dulieu
 Designed by Real 45 I
 Printed by Push

All images © English Heritage except:
 front cover & p.2 © Capita/Threadneedles Hotel
 p.4 © The Royal Artillery Museum
 p.5 © Duncan McNeill Imaging
 back cover © Calfordseaden
 Product Code 50769

