Issue 59: Autumn 2008

A BULLETIN OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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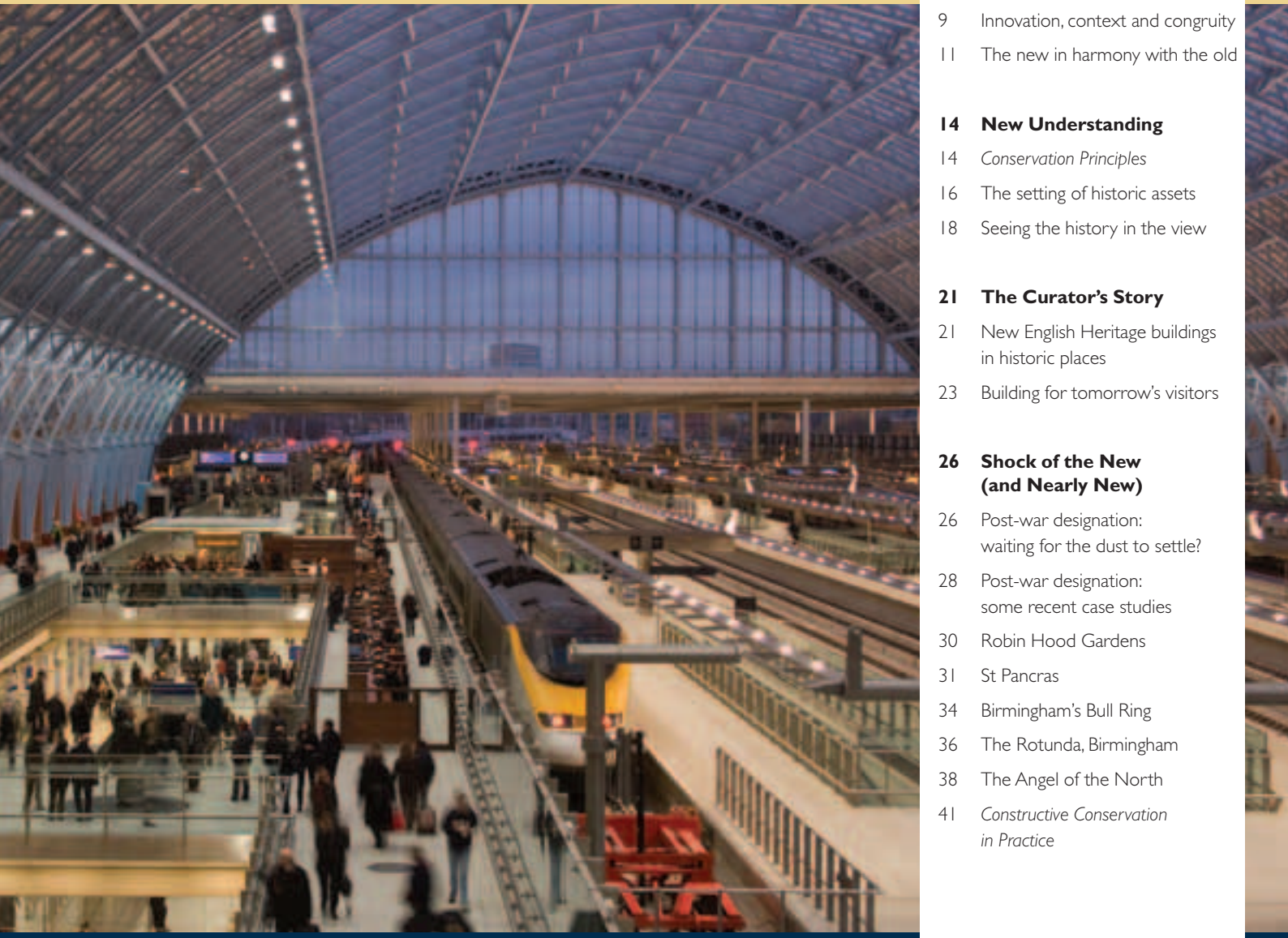
Conservation bulletin

The Old and the New



Protecting the past and championing innovative change have for too long seemed at implacable odds. At last we are realising that the old and the new can co-exist in creative harmony.

Originally designed as a celebration of Victorian achievement, William Barlow's magnificent St Pancras station has been brilliantly re-invented to meet the needs of the 21st century. Working in close partnership, English Heritage and London and Continental Railways have delivered a world-class station that brings together the very best of the old and the new. Paul Childs/Spheroview © Union Railways (North)

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Editorial: Urban Old and New

Change is the only constant. We experience it most insistently in our urban lives (which is why we cling to the myth of the unchanging countryside). This issue of *Conservation Bulletin* considers how society deals with urban change and how the historic-environment sector in turn responds to that change.

Urban renewal need not mean marked change. It can, for political and emotional reasons, mean like-for-like replacement – as the reconstruction of much of central Europe after the Second World War shows. Philip Davies' article in *Conservation Bulletin* 56 describes a very similar set of decisions taken in the Inner Temple in London.

Marked change, however, is often a requirement. When responding to regal demand or the aspiration of the cottage owner, when meeting the fashionable requirements of Beau Brummel or Urban Splash, or when efficiently delivering a social necessity, such as better housing – a statement is often what is wanted.

The statement is made in the context of an existing urban environment that is, *per se*, part of the historic environment. In today's terms, significant parts will be designated with the result that English Heritage often becomes statutorily involved.

Response to context has over the centuries covered the whole imaginable spectrum. Some contexts are treated as sacrosanct (see Simon Thurley, p 11) others as slums (Chris Smith on the pace of change, p 3). Some contexts are imaginatively understood to provide the essence of the new design while others – often of equal quality – are frankly ignored.

To deepen our understanding of these processes and the basis on which the historic environment sector engages with the planning system, this issue of *Conservation Bulletin* first addresses the overarching question of continuity versus innovation. We then turn to the analytical processes that inform decision-making about the impact of new proposals.

The quality of these processes may be illuminated by looking at actual buildings and developments and what they tell us about how society procures, views and finally judges them. Some are procured by organisations that are, by definition, committed to the best management of the historic environment. So we look at how English Heritage itself, the National Trust and others fulfil this role with regard to their own developments.

However, most buildings are procured by ordinary organisations driven by the usual mix of economic, commercial, practical and image-building concerns and their cases and experience are varied and illuminating – as is the fate of what they build. The quantum of change has persisted and relatively new buildings have come up for renewal. This, in turn has resulted in calls for their designation. So before turning to look at particular cases, we need to consider how the issue of designation is approached. The final section, therefore, begins with two articles considering, first, the nature and politics of post-Second World War designation and then how that relates to public esteem of the nearly new.

The issue concludes with a number of examples from around the country that contribute particular elements to our understanding of this hugely important national discussion. ■

Chris Smith
Planning and Development Director (West), English Heritage

Conservation Bulletin is published three times a year by English Heritage and circulated free of charge to more than 15,000 conservation specialists, opinion-formers and decision-makers. Its purpose is to communicate new ideas and advice to everyone concerned with the understanding, management and public enjoyment of England's rich and diverse historic environment.

When you have finished with this copy of *Conservation Bulletin*, do please pass it on. And if you would like to be added to our mailing list, or to change your current subscription details, just contact us on 020 7973 3253 or at mailinglist@english-heritage.org.uk.

Continuity and Innovation

Change is a natural ingredient of every human settlement. The challenge is to ensure that its scale and form are appropriate to the people it serves.

The debate in England about the management of change has often been ill-tempered. Some commentators have used words close to libel and description close to caricature, and have done so in the consciously heightened manner of campaigners. Others have meant every word. In this first section contributors look to step aside from all that and to consider the underlying urban dynamic, the range of potential philosphical responses to that dynamic, and the case for managerial intervention. Chris Smith and Hank Dittmar both note that the pace of change fundamentally affects how we respond to it but also how we must accommodate its necessary and vital variety. Dittmar's and Richard McCormac's elegant theses remind us that, at the civilised heart of the debate, there is room for agreement on the importance of continuity, context and a thoughtful dialogue with the past, while there is ample scope for disagreement about how the equally necessary innovation may best be expressed. Simon Thurley puts all this in a historic and then a current context, and in the latter proposes a disinterested way of identifying those developments which, in striking a balance between continuity and innovation, will afford a successful future to our towns and cities. ■

The faithful reconstruction of the Frauenkirche in Dresden shows how strongly individual buildings are valued and how long the emotional attachment can adhere.
Source: Wikimedia/Hans Peter Schaefer

The pace of change in post-Second World War England

Chris Smith
Planning and Development Director (West), English Heritage

The large majority of changes to places are incremental. For every intervention of the radical nature and huge scale that Baron Hausmann imposed on Paris there are hundreds of lesser changes. The slighting of castles and the towns around them in the Civil War, the demolition or radical alteration of the abbeys and monasteries and their estates at the Dissolution – these are atypical.

More typical is the process revealed by map regression in most towns in most centuries. The space around the cross is cleared to allow more space for a market or traffic. The market is slowly encroached upon; some encroachments are later removed. The merchants first build and then move out from their grand houses and, over the course of centuries, some are re-used, coming to house businesses or hotels, others are replaced. A road is widened and the corner plots combined to accommodate a show palazzo for the newly successful bank. A new quarter is begun, but is left incomplete during a recession; only ever part completed it descends into unfashionable dowdiness.

Many of these changes are locally very significant, but the impact can be borne and, *over time* absorbed. Time is the critical agent in the process of change management.

Wider or faster change is far more of a challenge to communities – to their ability to tolerate disruption while retaining a coherent sense of self and place as well as to their ability to adopt the new place. This is one clear motive behind the frequent phenomenon of restoration following war. The recent completion of the repair of the Frauenkirche in Dresden shows how strongly individual buildings are valued and how long the emotional attachment can adhere.

The huge restorations of Krakow and Prague exemplify not only a will to show the destroyer that their evil work can and will be undone but that it is possible to rediscover a lost place and thus heal deeper social and psychological hurt with the balm of the familiar and cherished scene.

After the Second World War, it was not the original response of the English authorities and property professionals to lay great weight on such considerations (although the alert reader will know that the phrase in question – 'the familiar and cherished scene' – was to be adopted by the end of the second post-war decade).

During those two decades, England was to undergo change at a pace that was remarkable in any one place but quite unprecedented in its impact across the country. With huge, now almost incredible, optimism town planners and architects were commissioned by town clerks and planning committees to create a vision for new cities wherever war damage was extensive at the very moment when success was least certain. Most famously Sir Patrick Abercrombie, creator of the post-war Greater London Plan, as well as Donald Gibson at Coventry, Thomas Sharp at Durham and Exeter and many others, conceived schemes that were radical. Abercrombie at Plymouth showed the ambition of the most enthusiastic Beaux Arts architects in the scale and grandeur of what he proposed. Thomas Sharp in Exeter felt no compunction in replacing the hugely admired Bedford Circus with something altogether different at the same time as radically altering the traffic infrastructure of the city – at proposed great cost to the existing fabric.

This common theme pre-dated the war significantly. Gibson's plan for Coventry was already the subject of controversy before a single bomb had fallen on the city. Similar ambition burned in the breast of many city engineers. The war was to provide them with a great opportunity.

Similarly, programmes of slum clearance had a long pedigree and were about to be given three boosts. The need to reward returning homecoming soldiers and their long-suffering families with decent accommodation was once more a strong political driver – at a time when Council provision of housing was such a political mainstream concept that it was the subject of competition between the main parties. Some of the housing lost to bombing was already genuinely sub-standard and its replacement constituted an accelerated clearance programme. Some of the houses on land required for the new grand city plans were left to stand in the way of road-widening or similar proposals during decades of indecision and were thus blighted and doomed to lack of investment, decay and sometimes demolition.

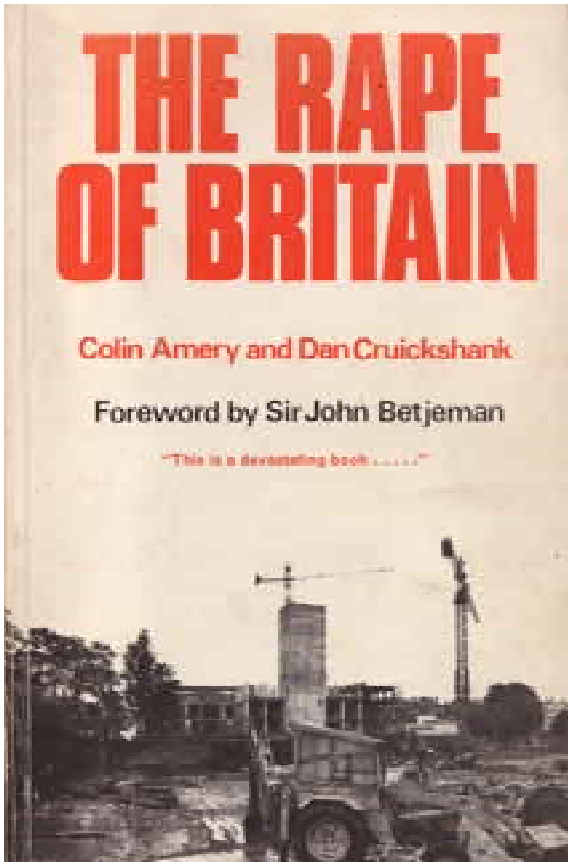
Post-war economic recovery allowed massive investment in Britain's war-damaged cities. Sheffield's Park Hill housing estate, built in 1957–61 and now listed at Grade II*, was one of the outstanding products of that visionary period.

The result of all this was that most of the cities and towns of England faced a massive investment programme as the economy picked up – a programme which was widely seen as the chance to create a new world which was cleaner, more efficient, healthier and in which individuals had more independence. The greatest bringer of independence was the private car and few could foresee a viable future for towns that failed to take that into account.

At the same time the agencies of change were agglomerating and changing. Where Victorian and Edwardian cities expressed entrepreneurial vigour through local banks and department stores, post-war towns were offered the uniform product of national chains supported by an emerging national development sector.

The resulting programme of change undergone by those towns and cities was to have a profound social and cultural impact, although not always that which was expected. Many social objectives were originally achieved and sub-standard housing was replaced by housing at standards (as codified by the Parker Morris Committee in 1961) that, outrageously, cannot often be emulated today. Schools and factories sprang up and city centres had new shopping precincts and infrastructure that gave primacy to the car.

Designers were keen to take up the opportunity to develop an appropriate new design



The Rape of Britain – Colin Amery's and Dan Cruickshank's seminal 1975 attack on the out-of-hand re-development of the nation's cities.

language for the post-war world. The tension between the design continuity that had informed neo-Georgian influences and the innovation behind the Modern Movement – primarily from Europe – was apparent. The latter entailed honest use of concrete, the material that was central to the affordable renewal of so large a part of the nation's buildings and infrastructure.

The critical elements of this programme – large-scale clearance, new design languages for the new world, the accommodation of the motor car and the adoption of alien new materials – were to become associated first of all with shiny new success and, latterly with run-down failure. However, they were also to be tainted for a quite different reason.

New technologies had not only enabled an architecture that could look utterly different (requiring no mass construction) but also one which could be of a scale almost entirely out of keeping with historic places. The spaces that such buildings contained were of much greater real-estate value than smaller, more complex and inconvenient older buildings. The result was that there was a new community of interest between developers who could realise far higher values on unencumbered land, local authorities who needed large open areas to accommodate the grander elements of their new plans and architects who had the technology which could deliver all this, as well as the Modern Movement images of a brave new world to inform them.

These factors, allied to the genuine need for rebuilding after the war, unleashed a juggernaut. The 1947 Planning Act's original ambition was unfeasibly huge (every action was to be the subject of control in some way – whence arose the early invention of Permitted Development) – and it included the first acknowledgement of the need to protect individual buildings by listing. But that was a tiny part of the legislation compared to the huge reach of the Comprehensive Development Area. The control element of planning was for long periods the poor relation of the enabling part and, with those powers, authorities and developers together could determine the fate of cities and towns in vigorously effective ways which left people feeling that they had lost any control.

In due course, this feeling was transmitted to politicians – not only by their constituents, but also by their own experience of rapidly changing place. By 1967 this was to have a practical parliamentary outcome in the form of the Civic Amenities Act and it was in this act that the term the 'familiar and cherished scene' was to reappear – as the most eloquent definition of that which the newfangled Conservation Area was intended to protect.

While the invention of Conservation Areas may prove to have been the, or at least a, turning point there was little indication of that at first. By 1975, when Colin Amery and Dan Cruickshank

Princesshay, Exeter. The interconnected streets and sympathetically designed buildings of this redeveloped post-war shopping complex complement the historic structures of the area and open up views of Exeter Cathedral. A large-scale development has not simply been accommodated within a historic city – it has enhanced it. © Princesshay

published their seminal *Rape of Britain* – an account of 'this vicious attack on the nation's cities' – they were able to enlist the Poet Laureate to be, John Betjeman, to endorse their statement that development was out of hand and massively damaging. 'This is a devastating book … If there is some street or old shop in the market square, dock, factory or warehouse, barn or garden wall which you have passed often and taken for granted, do not expect to see it still there next week.'

The passage of such a juggernaut leaves great damage in its wake, much of which is as emotional and deep-rooted as it is unintended. If the future was to be concrete, the stains soon appearing on that concrete were stains too on the communal idea of progress. If the vision promoted by post-war planners was to be bought at the cost of the loss of huge areas of towns and cities, then the price was felt to be too high.

A generation of activists could produce polemic like that of Amery and Cruickshank and could illustrate their point with images of (literally) hundreds of acres of northern cities where there only survived pubs (which were too expensive for compulsory purchase), churches (too embarrassing) and complete roads with setts, pavements and lights all *in situ* (because it was too time-consuming to get the road closure orders). Activists could, and did, demand that new development be in keeping – a vague, fuzzy definition that nevertheless chimed with the communal fear that the extensively and rapidly imposed new was alien and unwelcome.

The echoes of this debate carried on through the decades that followed; they are with us still and colour the arguments of the day, to the extent that discussion is often focused on only one, albeit important, issue. Design matters, but so does the extent and pace of change, the nature of community ownership – both of vision and process – and the acknowledgement and informed understanding of context.

In the best of the complex redevelopment schemes of the turn of the 21st century, there are signs that some of these lessons have been learned. It remains to be seen whether the public will agree that an acceptable pace of change has been rediscovered. ■

REFERENCE
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Continuity and context in urbanism and architecture: the honesty of a living tradition

Hank Dittmar
Chief Executive, the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment

As an American who moved to Britain to take up post at the Prince's Foundation, I anticipated a collegial partnership between conservation architects and those concerned with historic fabric and people like myself planning new development that was sensitive to the environment and human scaled. Certainly, as an urbanist concerned about the negative impacts of 20th-century sprawl and the other detritus of modern-movement theories of the city, I had always enjoyed a robust partnership with what is called the preservation community in the US.

I was therefore surprised when perfectly charming senior figures in the UK heritage sector assured me that there was little commonality between the discipline of the conservation profession and what they saw as the ersatz world of Poundbury, an attitude discordant with our President's view that a living tradition could unify the architecture of the past with that of the present.

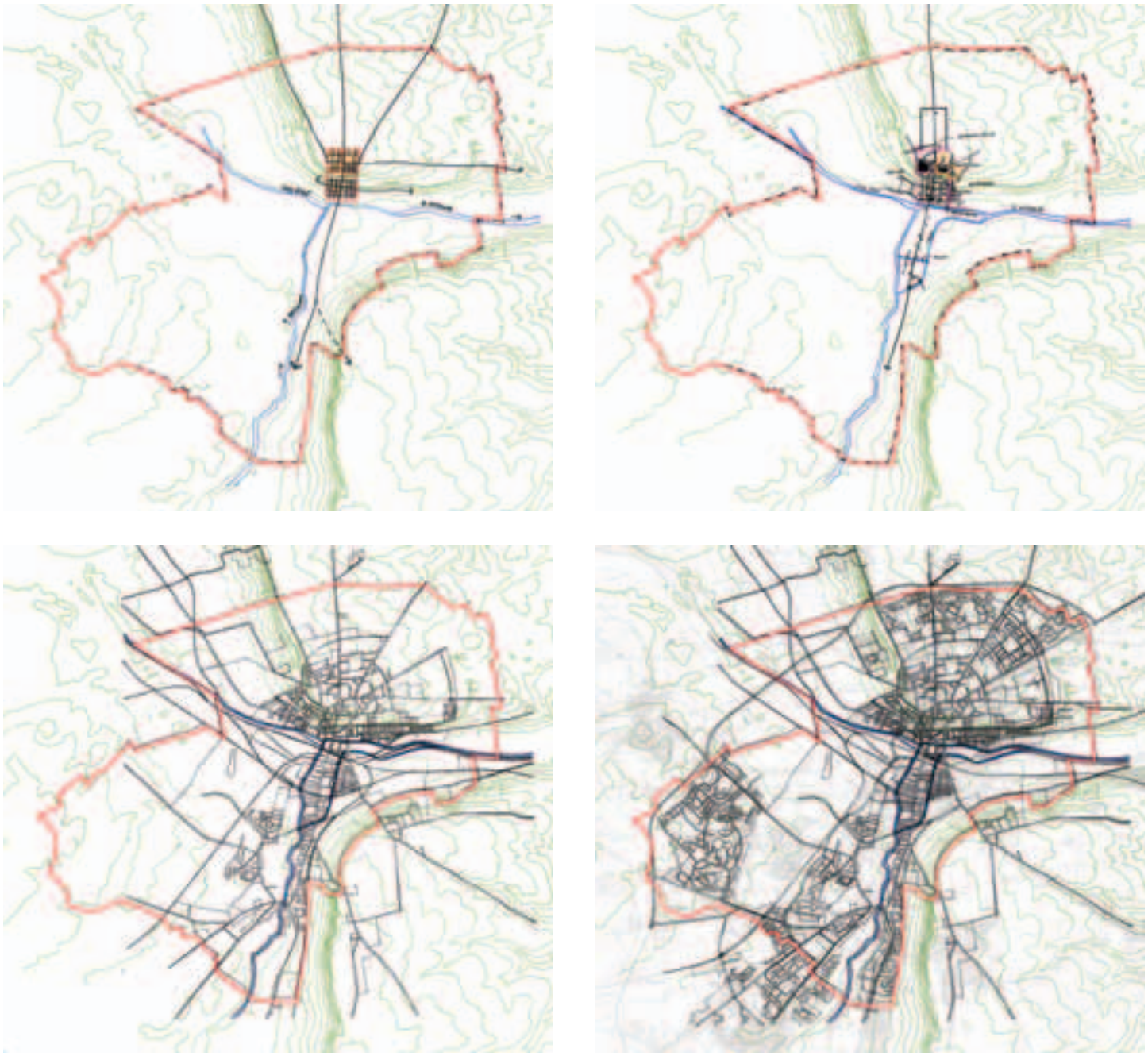
Over the past two years, in our own projects and in a series of discussions with the National Trust Architectural Panel (see Sarah Staniforth's article, pp 23–5), The Prince's Foundation has evolved a series of principles for building in an historic context. These principles were launched by HRH The Prince of Wales at a conference on New Buildings in Old Places. There are five core ideas.

- Recognition that sustainability means building for the long term – one hundred years, rather than twenty years.
- Because of this, building in an adaptable and flexible manner, reassessing and reusing existing buildings wherever possible.
- Building in a manner that fits the place, in terms of materials used, proportion and layouts and climate, ecology and building practices.
- Building beautifully, in a manner that builds upon tradition, evolving it in response to present challenges and utilising present-day resources and techniques.
- And finally, understanding the purpose of a building or group of buildings within the hierarchy of the buildings around it and responding with an appropriate building type and design. Doing this often implies

composition of a harmonious whole, rather than the erection of singular objects of architectural or corporate will.

We think that these principles should apply whether building anew or adapting existing buildings, as sustainability is achieved by creating buildings that people will both *want* to use, and *be able* to use efficiently, a hundred years hence. I think that most Britons would agree that local distinctiveness should flourish and traditional craft skills be re-discovered and incorporated in new buildings as well as old; that true and timeless methods of building are exploited not only for the beauty they create, but also for the environmental benefits they offer.

Planners working in and near conservation and heritage areas can do far worse than ensure that new development works with rather than against the pattern of existing streets, blocks and plots, and architects should revisit traditional typologies and the vernacular, adapting and evolving them in response to present needs. I was intrigued to read how Newham Council recently declared a quite ordinary collection of old industrial buildings in Sugar House Lane, Stratford, as a



This sequence of maps shows how the character of the Roman, medieval, Victorian and 21st-century Lincoln has been consistently shaped by the river crossing that first brought people to the place more than 2000 years ago.

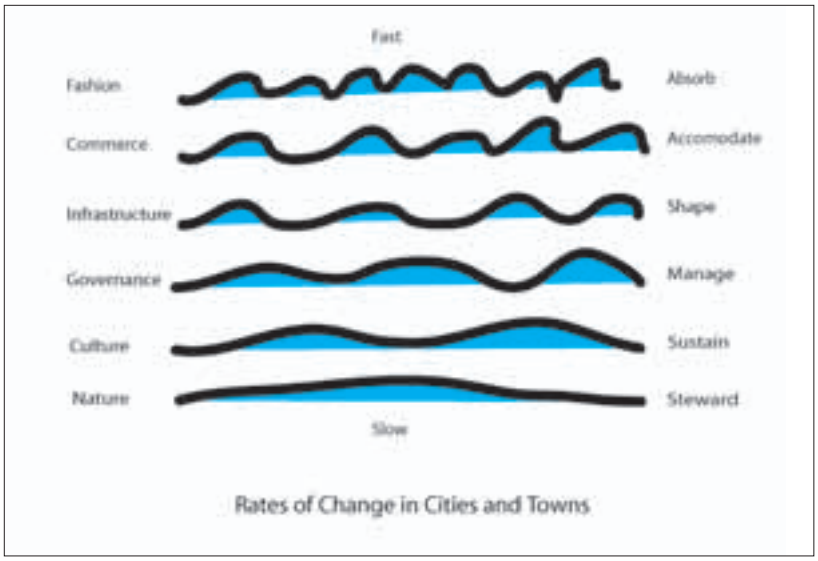
Conservation Area with the express purpose of managing change – in the very shadow of the Olympic site – for better place-making.

The Prince's Foundation believes in learning through practice, and so we undertake live urban design and master-planning projects to develop new tools and deliver exemplar solutions to Britain's core development problems. By way of example, in 2005, we were asked to undertake an Enquiry by Design leading to a new Area Action Plan for the 2000-year-old city centre of Lincoln. Following the successful completion of that effort, we have remained involved to help guide urban regeneration in Lincoln, and have held two summer schools in architecture and building crafts in the grounds of Lincoln Cathedral.

Lincoln's core reason for being was its location at the crossing of the river at Brayford Pool, and its place athwart the great Roman route north – the Fosse Way – and Ermine Street. It draws its character from the relationship between the river and the hill. The Roman fort on the hill translated into the castle, marketplace and cathedral with high street below, giving shape to a remarkably stable street network based on the relationship between culture, government and commerce, which can be traced through almost two thousand years of Lincoln's history. The river and the Brayford Pool, which brought people to the place originally, continued to define the shape of the city's street pattern for almost as long.

In his book *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They Are Built*, American author Stewart Brand introduced the concept of pace layering, meaning that different parts of a building – or a city – change at different rates. When applied to civilisation, pace layering implies that certain deep structures, like the relationship between a city and nature, or the culture of a city, ought to change slowly, while other activities, like entertainment or retail, shift more quickly, and need to be accommodated in a flexible manner within these more permanent layers of the city. I have used Brand's basic notion as a template for a legacy-based plan for Lincoln, and evolved it to the diagram shown at the top of the next column.

When we looked at Lincoln during our workshops, we found that this was certainly the case, as the city centre had been altered dramatically in the past century and half for the sake of more transitory functions, such as retail trends or commercial speculation. Transport interventions, including an at-grade railway and elevated



Rates of Change in Cities and Towns

In 2005 The Prince's Foundation was asked to undertake an Enquiry by Design leading to a new Area Action Plan for the 2000-year-old city centre of Lincoln.

The development of a new masterplan for the historic city of Lincoln has involved recognising that different aspects of a city need to be allowed to change at different rates – some relatively quickly but others only slowly.

roadways, have cut off circulation between the city centre and supporting neighbourhoods. Recent building developments have further altered the basic structure of streets and pedestrian movement, walling off the river, hampering movement across the city and destroying continuity with a rich building tradition. As all of these interventions approach the end of their useful life, we have through our Enquiry by Design methodology identified opportunities to create an enduring framework for the town centre that enables it to adapt flexibly to change while respecting the legacy of this ancient city, and to restore its basic circulatory system.

At the scale of the individual building, the Foundation shares cause with conservation professionals in looking to both maintain and enhance traditional building skills not just for heritage settings, but also in order to apply them as a core part of our 'eco-vernacular' approach to architecture. Clearly, natural materials do not require the high levels of industrial processing that have given us today's palette of UPVC windows, plastic membranes, and their like. We have moved from the regular use of 500 building materials in 1919 to 500,000 today! Most of these have high-energy loads in their production, and their long-term implications are unknown. In a project partnering with the Building Research Establishment, we are demonstrating that a traditionally built home with solid-wall construction can meet modern energy-performance standards, and will make an attractive proposition for the average homebuyer.

At the same time we are promoting the retention of heritage stock that can be upgraded to higher energy efficiency standards. The value of continuing and developing skills in lime-based mortars and cements, clay, cob and thatch, traditional working of wood and stone, is recognised in this context as being as important as the application of photovoltaics, wind turbines and the like. Craft skills are thus part of the Green debate.

The Venice Charter, adopted early in the Cold War period, has been interpreted to mean that we ought to express difference rather than continuity when building in the historic environment. After two or three cycles of experimentation with unproven theories of urban planning and design, perhaps it is time that we reconsider the outmoded ideas of the early 1960s, and look for an approach that stresses continuity and evolution, accepting the best of the past and evolving tradition to take on contemporary challenges. ■

Innovation, context and congruity

Sir Richard MacCormac
MJP Architects

We fear innovation in our built environment, and we see it as opposed to what we value in our urban tradition. We need to understand why this is and how this opposition might be overcome.

The foundation of our fear is real. We saw in the 1960s and 1970s the destruction of town centres by banal towers, slabs and ring roads that usurped places for people. As the American critic Vincent Scully wrote:

> First of all is the question of place, still only partly our own and which, in some strange way, we tend to feel is threatened by us. . . . [W]e began to become aware that our modern architecture and urbanism were ruining it with enormous rapidity. Redevelopment followed with what came to be one social and urbanistic horror piled on another. The towers rise with no one in the streets. The cars circle endlessly on the free-ways around the blank and glittering slabs.

There are overwhelming global forces driving change in both town and country and it is important that we distinguish between those pressures and innovation in architecture. In our planning system they are the subjects of political and economic negotiation in which the architect may have a role as interpreter but not as the initiator. The problem is not a stylistic one – out-of-town supermarkets have the same environmental impact whether their architecture is steel and glass or dressed up as a barn. The difficulty for new architecture is that it has come to symbolise a kind of modernity by which we feel threatened, one not of innovation but of corporate power.

Innovative architecture should be an expression of change and for that to be accepted it has to be part of a cultural consensus, a vision of the future of the built environment in which authentic new architecture is perceived as compatible with the values of the historic past.

There is a convergence in our thinking that may be the way to reconcile innovation and conservation, and this lies in the recognition that the legacy we have inherited in our towns and cities is one of place-making, to which new architecture has an obligation. It is surely possible to imagine extending the repertoire of place-making in the 21st century as in the 18th and 19th centuries the repertoire of streets and squares was

extended to include gallerias, covered markets and exchanges.

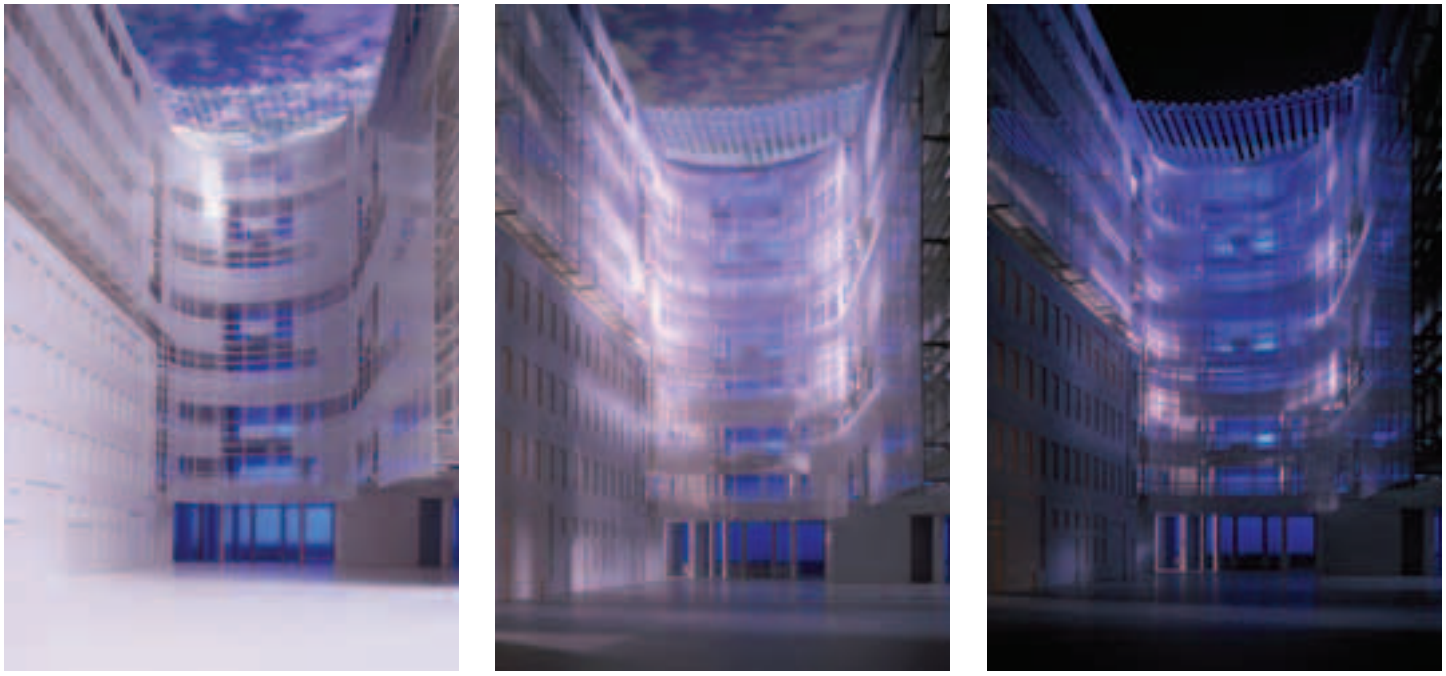
For this to be possible, however, we need a form of development control that is visionary, rather than reactionary and this is something of which we seem incapable because planning remains two-dimensional. The dissonance and incongruity that appears to characterise new architecture – in London's Docklands, for example – is symptomatic of the lack of any co-ordinated idea of what the future should look like.

Sir John Soane in his Royal Academy lectures referred to architecture as 'the art of invention' and in his use of light and spatial innovation anticipated qualities of modern architecture. What architecture inherited from modernism was an optimistic sense of the potential of invention. In the modern movement the fine arts also invited us to see things in new ways in unprecedented aesthetic experiences, and this gave confidence that change in constructional technologies, like steel and glass and concrete, could find new and exhilarating visual expression. Perhaps in a more fundamental and even spiritual sense it gave us a belief that through design we could not only accommodate new circumstances but also celebrate them. This is the essence of creativity and creativity in post-industrial society is our most valuable resource, something which architecture should vitally convey.

There is a spectacular and ostentatious kind of innovation that is currently fashionable and has its theatrical purposes. But there is another kind of innovation, characteristic of the best British architectural practice, which is rooted in the refinement of the aesthetics of constructional technique and materials and in recognisable building types that can offer a dialogue with the past. Perhaps the most interesting potential for architecture to overcome the polarity of this discussion is the idea of new architecture as a form of historical interpretation that can create a kind of reciprocity between old and new which intensifies the significance of both. This is what Carlo Scarpa achieved in the Castelvecchio Museum, creating a circulation system through the medieval complex that achieved a continuous aesthetic counterpoint, a conversation between new and old. Giancarlo de Carlo achieved something similar in Urbino, setting new buildings such as the underground amphitheatre into the historic fabric, recalling the subterranean archaeology of a Roman citadel but appearing as a bright crescent of glass glinting in the hillside, a gesture of innovation which resonates with its setting. In Britain such dialogues between new architecture and historic contexts have been successfully achieved, perhaps not surprisingly, in university cities such as Oxford and Cambridge, where the commitment to history and to new ideas is a continuously shared aspiration.

St John's College, Oxford. This sensitive glass-box extension of the existing Grade I senior common room building shows how dialogues between new architecture and historic contexts can be successfully achieved.

Finally a project designed by my own practice, the redevelopment of Broadcasting House, exemplifies the idea of historical interpretation through innovative means. We saw the idea of complementing the convexity of Broadcasting House with an equivalent concavity that terminates the axis of Regent Street. This also lies directly behind the spire of Nash's All Souls in Langham Place and was conceived as a kind of urban cyclorama made of glass specially designed, etched and printed so that at night low internal lighting levels darken the building and thus allow



A model of the proposed redevelopment of Broadcasting House illustrating the translucency of the façade during the day and its transparency at night.

the floodlit spire to stand out. The glass cyclorama was an innovation dedicated to an historical idea.

The new in harmony with the old

Dr Simon Thurley
Chief Executive, English Heritage

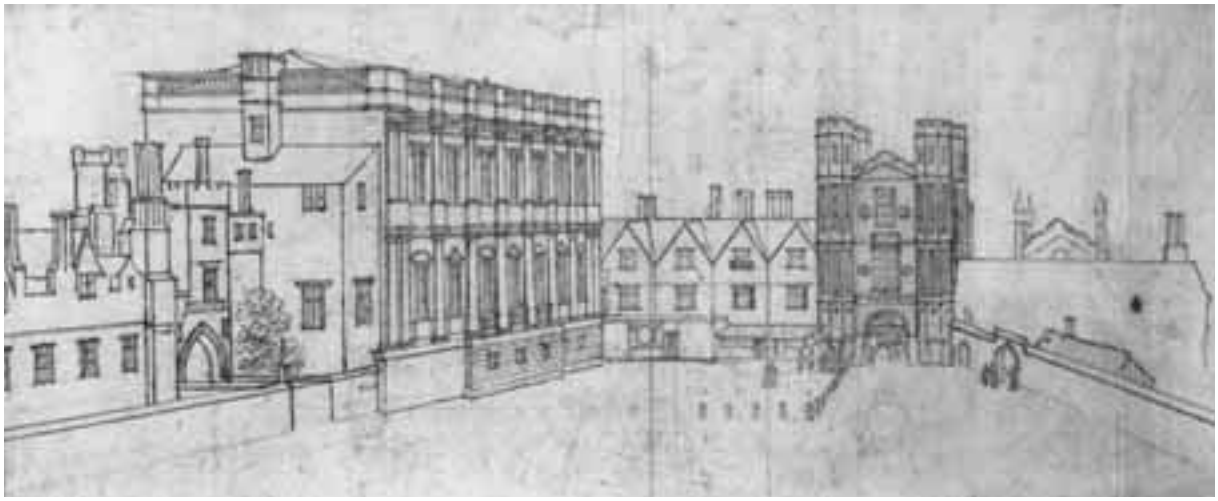
The issue of new buildings in old places lies at the heart of what English Heritage does. Over the last ten years much less of our work has been about the threat of demolition of important buildings, although of course, as at Smithfield, it is still sometimes threatened; instead, it is directed to assessing whether new work in or next to an old place is acceptable or not. This is of course about context. Is a new building contextual enough to be acceptable in the proximity of a protected building or area?

When English Heritage is statutorily required to comment on this matter, two different issues come into play. One draws together land value, the cost of development and the impact of short-term decision-making. The other is design. I will deal with cost and value first.

Many local authorities are in awe of, if not thrall to, developers because it is developers who deliver regeneration and everyone, even Bath, wants some of that. Developers are, quite rightly, profit orientated. As a result, however, they often have no local commitment at all and are only interested in the short term. Local authorities, particularly those in areas of deprivation or economic torpor, find it difficult to establish the political will to hold out for development that offers locally attuned, high-quality design.

So the job of the local authority and, where appropriate, of English Heritage is to ensure that the long-term consequences have been thought through properly and that short-term economic anxiety does not leave a long-term architectural headache. At the heart of the issue is, of course, value – starting with the value of the land. This is often at the root of the problem of quality. If a developer spends over the odds on acquiring the land he will either have to cram more on to the site to make his money or reduce the specification to keep his margins up. So local authorities have a massive responsibility here. They own some of the most important development sites. If these are sold for too much money it will inevitably mean that the buildings proposed will be over-scaled and of poor materials and design.

There is a trade-off: the value of the site must be very carefully calculated with an eye to the desired quality and scale of the buildings. A very important thing to remember is that government advice on the disposal of assets in historic town centres gives the council discretion not to go for the highest price. So these sites need not be sold at the market price; they can be sold with a brief and



On its completion in 1622 Inigo Jones's banqueting house at Whitehall would have stuck out like a sore thumb. It was also one of the most important buildings ever constructed on English soil.

at a price that absolutely guarantees a quality outcome. In our experience at English Heritage it is impossible for councils to make large amounts of money in these developments while guaranteeing quality.

Councils can also determine the value of sites in private ownership and guard against sales that are inflated. They can do this by setting clear, well-thought-out development briefs that make it plain what will and will not be acceptable. A good brief will limit the price paid for a site and ensure that it is not over-developed. Of course, such briefs demand a high level of political will and officer skill and that is not always there.

English Heritage sees it as a priority to develop a system that enables us to objectively evaluate whether a new building fits in with the old.

So one issue is economics, another issue is style. English Heritage sees it as a priority to develop a system that enables us to objectively evaluate whether a new building fits in with the old. This needs to assess building materials, scale, roof profiles, window shapes, plot rhythms and much more. It will never provide a definitive answer as to whether a building fits comfortably in an historic place but it should be able to trigger an alarm bell if the new building does not score well enough next to its neighbours.

Any such tool, however, must also allow for the shock of the new, for the bold gesture. Inigo Jones's banqueting house at Whitehall would have failed miserably any such test. It was much bigger than the rest of Whitehall palace, by at least two storeys, it was stone when the rest was brick; it was in a completely different style. In short it was a new building in an old place that stuck out like a sore thumb. It was also one of the most important buildings ever constructed on English soil.

What about Tower Bridge? A building that completely dominates the Tower of London in almost every view. You might say that they tried to make it blend in stylistically, but did they? Where on the Tower of London are those steeply pitched roofs, where are the lancet windows and where is all that cast iron?

I could go on citing examples, from the Scott memorial in Edinburgh to Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol. These were new buildings in old places that were no respecters of scale, of materials, of style. They brutally imposed themselves on the existing historic streetscapes and bullied their way into our affections. So how does a system for measuring the impact of a new building in an old place take account of this issue? Here we come to the crux of the problem. It is notoriously difficult to judge an aggressively different new building: one that sets out to tear up the rules and start a new trend. English Heritage thought Norman Foster's Swiss Re building would be a noble addition to the London skyline. We thought Raphael Vinoly's Fenchurch Street tower was a ghastly addition; the planning inspector disagreed with us.

These were new buildings in old places that were no respecters of scale, of materials, of style. They brutally imposed themselves on the existing historic streetscapes and bullied their way into our affections.

I would suggest that there is a way through this. Our big cities are in fact different to our towns and villages. Cities have always been the places where architectural innovation has thrived. Manchester saw the invention of the Victorian warehouse, Birmingham modernist brutalism. Our cities must be allowed to be engines of architectural creativity. A different tool needs to be developed for dealing with these places. In London we have developed a methodology called qualitative views analysis (see Sarah Green's article on pp 18–20) which aims to characterise a view in order to be able to make judgements about whether a new building inserted into it is a suitable or worthy addition or not.

We need a parallel tool for the market towns and villages of England that will help councils keep the small-scale street pattern, materials and distinctive features of the place. That allows new building but only in as far as it subjugates itself to the wider artistic and historic whole that is the town itself. This is where the big battles lie. Of course our great cities are important and in no sense will English Heritage abandon them, but the delicate balance that makes Newark, Pontefract and Taunton beautiful is far more vulnerable than the robustness of Sheffield or Newcastle, let alone London. Moreover, the skills that are likely to be found in the smaller towns are less well-developed. The cities often have big planning departments filled with well-qualified people. And profit margins are higher and allow for more skilled (and costly) design teams.

Newark, Nottinghamshire. By contrast to our big cities, the market towns and villages of England need a more subtle set of planning tools that will help councils keep the small-scale street pattern and distinctive features that make them such attractive places.

Our cities must be allowed to be engines of architectural creativity. English Heritage thought Norman Foster's Swiss Re building would be a noble addition to the London skyline.

So my contribution to the debate is to draw out a distinction between the way London and the half-dozen great cities have developed and the sweep of market and cathedral towns. As well as developing the techniques that enable us to argue for the future of our cities – tools that are now rapidly maturing – we must urgently develop a different and more subtle set of tools that can help local councillors and officers judge more effectively and objectively the impact of new buildings in smaller historic places, and thereby preserve the unique qualities that make their towns and villages so attractive.

New Understanding

If the new and the old are to co-exist harmoniously, we need first to understand the heritage values of that which is already there.

It is clear that every effort needs to be made to establish a common language for the discussion and analysis of change. English Heritage has a number of relevant initiatives in hand. Steven Bee summarises progress to date on *Conservation Principles*, a comprehensive and widely consulted statement of the principles we will apply (and be held to) in formulating expert advice. Humphrey Welfare reports on continuing efforts to formulate satisfactory definitions of setting – a word with a long pedigree, wide usage and no agreed meaning. Readers will be afforded the opportunity to join that debate before it is concluded. Finally, Sarah Green describes how the rough and tumble of development management in London has led to the production of a mechanism for a defensible assessment of the impact of major new schemes on London and eventually, other cities.

English Heritage's *Conservation Principles*

Steven Bee
Director of Planning and Development, English Heritage

> New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution that may be valued both now and in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but new work should reflect an understanding of and respect for the significance of a place in its setting. (*Conservation Principles* para 4.6.)

English Heritage has over recent years identified and codified what it believes is the best – that is, the most appropriate – approach to the conservation of the historic environment in all its aspects. The synthesis of this work was published as *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* in May 2008. I am not going to explain this in detail, because this will be the theme for the next issue of *Conservation Bulletin*, to be published in March 2009. The essence of our principles, however, is an acceptance that change is an essential component of our historic environment, and we should not, indeed cannot, prevent change. Our responsibility is therefore to manage change in a way that sees the heritage values of places strengthened, rather than diminished.

The distinction between old and new is, of course, entirely artificial. Something is only new momentarily, and it immediately becomes old, and increasingly older. Our history and the buildings that have accommodated it are divided into diverse, convenient time periods in various ways. While some periods might appear starkly different, there is usually a connection, somewhere. It is that sense of connection, and of continuity, that strikes a chord with people who experience historic places. Its elusiveness is one of the reasons we find exploring and understanding old places so fascinating, and it is why historic places are so highly valued by communities as part of their public good, whether or not they are publicly owned. They are, at least in part, our common inheritance.

> The distinction between old and new is, of course, entirely artificial. Something is only new momentarily, and it immediately becomes old, and increasingly older.

Now, this might explain why we value historic places, and why we should be careful about what we do with them, but it does not really help us decide *how* we ought to manage change – what should be encouraged, what should be allowed, and what should be prevented. This must be done carefully and consistently if the credibility of England's systems for managing the historic environment are to be maintained and reinforced.

Conservation Principles proposes an approach based on the understanding of heritage values as the basis for evaluating the historic significance of a place. This is not new; it is what our experts do all the time. It is the way English Heritage advises the government on what should be statutorily protected, and the way we advise others about how such places can be allowed to change without compromising their historic significance. The difference now is that we have a reliable, comprehensive and consistent basis for making such judgements. English Heritage is committed to the mechanics of the approach set out in *Conservation Principles* as a means of demonstrating better the objectivity and consistency of our

The recent public inquiry into the proposed demolition of London's historic Smithfield Market is a good example of how English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* can help make the case for protecting heritage assets and allowing them a new lease of life. Artist's impression © English Heritage

advice and the decisions we make. It is now our policy to work in this way, and everyone can expect us to justify our advice and our decisions in the context of C*onservation Principles* and the heritage-values-based approach it espouses. They may also challenge us if we cannot.

Not only is this approach not new, it is not actually revolutionary either. Over the years that we have been refining its presentation, we have consulted widely and repeatedly on the way we were thinking, and have received widespread support for the approach. We cannot and would

Built in 1839 by Robert Stephenson, the Grade II*-listed Derby Roundhouse is a triumph of Victorian ingenuity. This important building could easily have been lost, but with English Heritage's encouragement Derby College has decided to turn the former railway works into a new campus – an inspiring example of what we are now calling 'constructive conservation'.
Artist's impression © maber

not wish to impose our policy on others, but we do commend it as not only sound, but also, if widely adopted, a reliable means of establishing an agreed baseline understanding of the historic significance of places. Such agreement will help to reduce the potential for differing judgements about whether or not proposed changes are appropriate.

After extensive research, we identified four primary heritage values – historic, aesthetic, communal and evidential – each with subdivisions to allow more specific application. There is not space to go into these here, but we are confident that they allow comprehensive capture of all the heritage values we might apply to a place. Having thus ensured a full understanding of a place, we can establish not only its overall historic significance, but also the relative significance of its components. The latter can be particularly helpful in identifying opportunities for adapting or modifying places to accommodate new uses.

This use of the heritage values that people ascribe to places is distinct from any 'instrumental' values they may have in relation to socio-economic, cultural or environmental interests, and also avoids the confusion that can sometimes be caused by reference to 'intrinsic' value.

The benefits of the heritage-values-based approach are already apparent. It is helping us to present our advice more clearly and cogently. This helps others to understand our position and advice more easily, and strengthens our position when we are challenged. Our performance at public inquiries, for example, depends on the objectivity of our evaluation of the degree of harm to heritage assets. Our success at recent high-profile public inquiries like Smithfield Market (demolition of buildings in a conservation area) and Doon Street (tall residential tower intruding into historic views), in London, are good examples of how we can use *Conservation Principles* to make the case for protecting heritage assets. Just as importantly, they can also help us to decide whether our formal objection is justified, and whether our objection is likely to be sustained on appeal or call-in.

The heritage values set out in *Conservation Principles* provide an objective basis for evaluating the historic significance of a place, and identifying precisely where it lies on the spectrum of sensitivity to change.

The protection of cherished places from irreversible harm is often an emotive issue. The heritage values set out in *Conservation Principles* provide an objective basis for evaluating the historic significance of a place, and identifying precisely where it lies on the spectrum of sensitivity to change. If they are used early in the development process, they can help identify how places can be adapted to meet new needs, standards or aspirations without undermining that significance. If that does not happen, for whatever reason, they can be used to explain the severity of the harm that would be caused by inappropriate change, and prevent bad decisions being implemented. ■

The setting of historic assets

Humphrey Welfare
Planning and Development Director (North), English Heritage

The importance of providing some protection for the 'setting' of historic buildings and of archaeological sites ('historic assets') has been recognised for quite some time but the meaning of the term has not been closely defined.

The concept of setting was specifically incorporated into the *Planning* (*Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*) *Act* 1990 and received detailed attention in Policy Planning Guidance Notes 15 (*Planning and the Historic Environment*) and 16 (*Archaeology and Planning*). These two Notes are due to be replaced by a new Planning Policy

York: an example of acceptable modern development in the setting of the medieval church of St Helen, Davygate.

Goudhurst in the high Weald of Kent, with its listed medieval tithe barn, illustrates a strong link between a surviving historic farmstead and its setting. The ancient wood-pasture landscape surrounding the farm today retains much of the character of the landscape in which the historic farm buildings were originally constructed.

Statement that will continue to utilise the idea of setting. The concept is also contained within PPGs 2 (*Green Belts*) and 19 (*Outdoor Advertisement Control*), and is included within the Draft Heritage Protection Bill.

On the international stage, the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (revised 2008: **http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines**) recommend that a protective buffer zone should be identified and established around each site, wherever this is necessary for the proper conservation of the property. Such a buffer should take in the immediate setting of the site, as well as important views and other areas and attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.

PPG 15 – the most useful source for the understanding of 'setting' – made it clear that the concept should not be interpreted too narrowly and indicated that it had to be assessed and understood on a case-by-case basis. As an inevitable consequence, the day-to-day provision of casework advice by English Heritage has often included a consideration of the importance of the setting of an historic building or of an archaeological site when this may be affected by development. Recourse has been routinely made to the guidance available within PPGs 15 and 16 but this has not always been enough to answer every question and 'setting' has been a significant element of a number of public inquiries. Despite this extensive but fragmented experience, an early task in our new approach to the subject was to commission resesarch in order to understand more broadly how planning inspectors and secretaries of state had interpreted the concept in reaching their decisions.

In parallel, in developing its *Conservation Principles* (published in 2008, after extensive consultation) English Heritage had to begin to tackle exactly what it meant by 'setting' and a number of associated terms – in particular, the closely related concept of 'context'. We were not the only ones to be puzzling over these definitions: a whole session was devoted to it at the annual conference of the Institute of Field Archaeologists in April 2007.

In *Conservation Principles*, 'setting' was seen as the relationship between an historic asset and its surroundings in the present and the past, including the way that the place is perceived, experienced and valued by people today. In parallel, the 'context' of an asset encompasses any relationship between a place and other places; this potentially has many aspects and could be cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, and may be drawn widely – for example, the links between all of the buildings designed by one architect. These wide associations, however, are not seen to fall within the meaning of 'setting' as established in statute and guidance. Nevertheless, we believe that a concept of 'local context' is relevant, encompassing the physical, archaeological, historical, functional and design relationships that an asset has with its *immediate* surroundings – whether or not these relationships are readily perceptible – and that this local context must be considered in any assessment of setting.

In seeking to understand setting, English Heritage has drafted some general principles:

- All historic assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive.
- Setting makes an important contribution to, or can detract from, the significance of historic assets and people's ability to appreciate that significance.
- The extent of an asset's setting will be defined by reference to the asset, its surroundings and its context. It is not fixed and may change as an asset and its surroundings evolve.
- The extent of an asset's setting depends on a range of relationships and perceptions: its greatest extent is often defined by reference to visual influences but it may be further extended by consideration of the asset's local context.

- Protecting the setting of historic assets need not inhibit change: change can enhance as well as reduce significance and appreciation, or leave it unaffected.
- The extent to which change affects the significance and appreciation of an historic asset needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis, with the response being proportionate to both the significance of the asset and the extent to which changes are detrimental.
- As most places can be within the setting of an historic asset and are normally subject to change, objections should normally be limited to those changes, or processes of cumulative change, that will materially detract from the significance and appreciation of important historic assets, whether designated or undesignated.
- Where the significance and appreciation of an asset have been compromised by inappropriate change within its setting, they may be restored by reversing those changes.

It follows that any setting must be fully assessed and understood before its contribution and sensitivity can be appreciated, and that new understanding may alter its definition: setting does not have a fixed boundary. The various components that make up an adequate understanding are complex and must be approached with care. Thus, although a particular setting may have been designed to complement an asset (for example, a garden or park around a country house), elsewhere the evolution of a setting into its current form may have been entirely fortuitous. Some settings are relatively unchanged through time, whereas others (especially townscapes) are characterised by their dynamism. In some instances, the inter-visibility of assets is important for aesthetic, functional, or religious reasons. (Directly associated with this is the whole question of the significant views of, from, and within historic places – a constituent aspect of setting – a topic upon which English Heritage consulted the opinions of others in 2008.)

All of these aspects need to be considered before an appropriate assessment can be made of the impact of change upon the setting of an asset. Other issues include the proximity, prominence and scale of a development; the architectural integrity of the place potentially affected; and the likelihood of additional noise and movement. The duration of a change, the implications of cumulative change, and even the effects of seasonality may also have to be taken into account. If these things are addressed early enough in the design process the impact of a new development upon the setting of a historic place can be significantly reduced or avoided altogether. The setting may even be enhanced by the change. ■

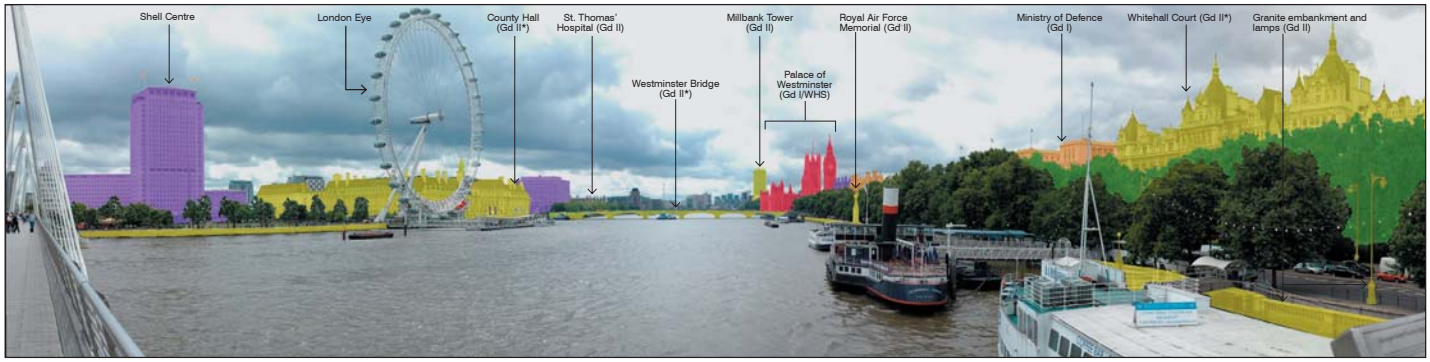
Seeing the history in the view

Sarah Green
Regional Landscape Architect (London), English Heritage

Certain views play an important part in shaping our appreciation and understanding of England's historic environment, in towns and cities and in the countryside. Some may have been designed to be seen as an impressive unity, like the view of Greenwich Palace from the River Thames in London, or as symbolising a political philosophy, such as the many facets of Stowe Park, Buckinghamshire. More commonly a significant view is a historical composite, the cumulative result of a long history, especially in towns and cities. In London the view upstream from the Golden Jubilee footbridges, looking towards the South Bank, the Houses of Parliament, Whitehall and the Victoria Embankment, may be reckoned as one such view (see illustration). The existence of views of both kinds, often containing well-known and cherished landmarks and landscapes, enriches our daily lives, attracts visitors and helps our communities prosper.

Views that are historical composites may be under continual pressure to change, as they probably include properties attached to different landowners and various developments; such pressure after all is what presumably has made these views. New buildings in the background, possibly at some distance, may detract from the appearance of things visible in front of them, and new buildings in the foreground or at the sides may intrude into and obstruct the view of things behind them. In the City of London care began to be taken to protect the visibility of St Paul's Cathedral as early as the 1930s, by limiting the height to which buildings could be erected around it, well before the arrival of a comprehensive system of town and country planning in 1947. Local building regulations, if not technology, have tended to limit the general height and size of buildings in cities like London, where amid some contention such regulations were relaxed in the late 1950s.

At the present time in London the policy framework for the protection of views is set out in the London Plan, the Mayor of London's Spatial



Location of World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings (grades I, II and II) Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, and non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas.*

World Heritage Site (WHS) | Grade I Listed Buildings and/or SM | Grade II and II* Listed Buildings | Non-listed buildings in a Conservation Area | Historic Parks and Gardens

History in the view: looking upstream from the Golden Jubilee footbridges to the Palace of Westminster by day (above) and night (below). Westminster.
© LUC and English Heritage

Development Strategy. The London View Management Framework (LVMF), supplementary planning guidance adopted in July 2007, employs the use of qualitative visual assessment and geometric definition as ways to assess and manage designated views in the capital. London is not alone in developing planning guidance on tall-building and view-management strategies: many other local authorities, for instance Bristol and Oxford, are now incorporating such guidance into their local development frameworks.

As a statutory consultee on the historic environment, English Heritage decided to formulate guidance on the heritage aspects both of the views already identified in London's strategic document and of other views in London and elsewhere. This guidance was designed to complement the LVMF by setting out a method for the clear analysis of what was of historic significance in a view, and how the impact of specific development proposals upon that significance should be judged. The aim was to bring clarity and consistency to this aspect of planning decisions and the development process. Experience had shown the need for this on the part of local authorities, planning applicants and consultants, and English Heritage itself.

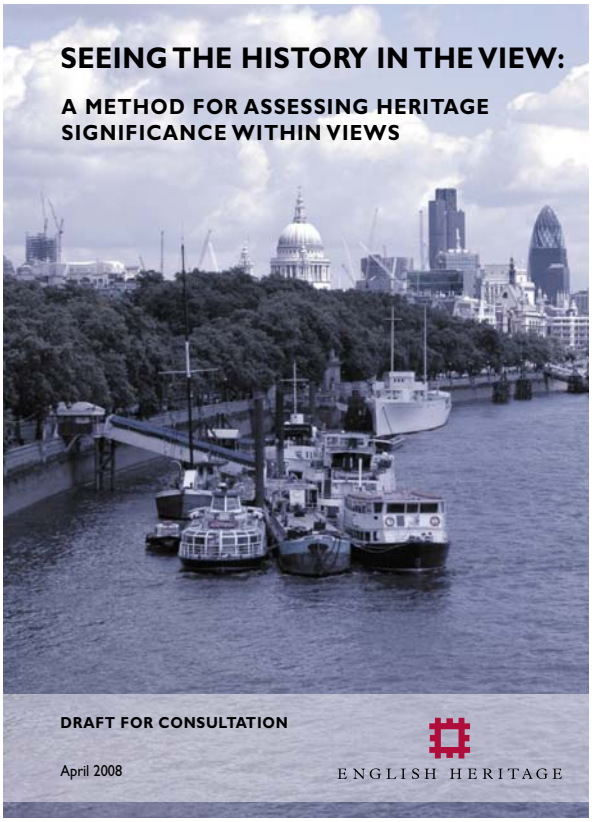
English Heritage commissioned Land Use Consultants in April 2007 to help develop this guidance on analysing the historical significance of views and assessing the impact on them of proposed developments, and in 2008 published it in draft form for consultation. This is still a work in progress and English Heritage will issue a revised version in due course. This guidance is not to be applied exclusively or in isolation – it is meant to complement other methods of assessing the merits and effects of planning applications, whatever the scale of a proposed development. A comprehensive approach to considering the impact of a proposal should consider the setting of any heritage assets that may be affected, as well as the part the development plays in the evolving urban fabric. For this reason recent guidance on tall buildings (English Heritage and CABE 2007) recommends area studies. The new views guidance is informed and underpinned by the philosophy of English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* (English Heritage 2008). Nor is the method the guidance follows entirely new; it is intended to be entirely compatible with recognised professional best practice in environmental impact assessment and in landscape and visual impact assessment, as expressed in, for instance, the Landscape Institute's guidelines for the latter (Landscape Institute 2002). The guidance aims to systematise and demystify the processes of appreciation and judgement we may all engage in whenever we look at a

view, and particularly at the heritage assets visible in a view, and subsequently to assess the effect of a possible development impinging on them.

The guidance aims to explain clearly the approach that English Heritage will normally take in assessing the visual impact of various kinds of development proposals, not only tall buildings. Devising this has helped English Heritage staff themselves to a better understanding of the heritage value of certain views and their consistent assessment. Experience has shown that while everyone may agree that a development will have some effect on the historic environment, it is difficult to evaluate the degree of benefit or harm this may entail. Achieving consistency in this and ensuring that fair, balanced and reasoned assessments are made will be crucial to sound planning decisions. Our approach is to help all parties to evaluate impact based on a common understanding of essentials, and reducing the scope for unnecessary differences of judgement. It is not about imposing or dictating a particular judgement, for planning decisions are the responsibility of the local planning authority and public authorities. This is helping us determine more objectively when we will intervene in the planning process, and enable us to be more selective.

The present draft recommends a two-part process. First, a baseline analysis identifies the historic assets in a view, especially designated assets such as statutorily listed buildings, ancient monuments, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, world heritage sites, locally listed buildings, and so on. This analysis aims to state, for each asset or combinations of asset, which aspects of historic significance can be appreciated in this view, the overall heritage value of the view and how the heritage significance of this view can be sustained. Secondly, the guidance assesses the likely impact of a specific development proposal on what has been identified as being of historic significance in the view. Views are to be considered dynamically, as the viewer crosses a bridge for example, and by day and night and at different seasons of the year, the last implying different vegetation cover.

London, ever in the economic forefront, with continual pressure to build and rebuild, yet with a high concentration of historic buildings and sites, was where the fate of some well-known views was being felt very acutely and urgently. New developments here include several very tall buildings that would be visible over a wide area, and could affect well-known landmarks. Although



our first worked examples have been in London and the method is illustrated in the draft guidance by the view of the Tower of London from the Queen's Walk in front of City Hall in London, we are now undertaking further test-cases around England, for the guidance is designed to be nationally applicable. ■

For more information, visit
www.english-heritage.org.uk/historyinviews.

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The Curator's Story

Visitors to historic properties demand modern facilities – but where should they be put and how should they look?

All developers are intimately concerned with the impact that their development will have on its context. Even when resulting structures are ones that the historic-environment sector regrets, the impact will have been chosen by someone. The two articles that follow show that deciding what impact is acceptable is not made immediately straightforward simply because those taking the decisions are responsible for the well-being of historically important places. Tim Reeve and Jeremy Ashbee describe how English Heritage's current position on new build on its sites has developed from the Ministry of Works days, when the primacy of the ruin on its sward was unquestioned, to a more subtle, nuanced and responsive approach today. Sarah Staniforth relates how a similar earlier phase in the National Trust's on-site provision has led to changing practice now informed by principles developed in association with the Prince's Foundation (see also Hank Dittmar pp 6–9).

New English Heritage buildings in historic places

Tim Reeve
Properties Director, English Heritage
Jeremy Ashbee
Head Property Curator, English Heritage

English Heritage manages more than 400 historic properties on behalf of the nation. These represent a unique collection of structures covering a span of English history running from the prehistoric to the Cold War. One of the key duties of English Heritage, as set out in the National Heritage Act of 1983, is 'to promote the public's enjoyment of … ancient monuments and historic buildings', a duty which is in large part fulfilled through providing public access to the properties in its care, which are in this context 'visitor attractions' as well as nationally significant monuments to be preserved for future generations.

The majority of properties that make up the historic estate have been in the care of a state body for 100 years or so, and it is clear that the desire to promote access, and indeed the expectations of visitors as 'customers', has increased sharply over that period. 'New-build' or modern additions have included operational elements needed to facilitate visitor access, such as paths, bridges, walk-ways, railings and ramps, as well as more substantial additions such as visitors' centres, which contain the tea rooms, shops, exhibitions spaces and lavatories, and which have become such an intrinsic part of the visitor experience over recent years. It is the visitors' centres that will be dealt with here, particularly in light of the significant investment that English Heritage has made in visitor infrastructure during the last five years.

Much has changed in terms of approach to new buildings since 1900. A presumption against any structural additions to properties during the Ministry of Works' stewardship led to a philosophy during much of the 20th century to identify clearly any modern additions, with the 1960s and 1970s showing the clearest delineation between modern intervention and historic fabric. Although the approach to new ticket offices, for example, may have provided absolute clarity between old and new, the materials and design approach employed were undeniably of their time and have dated quickly.

While the Ministry of Works' approach to overall presentation has unravelled from a single-phase and manicured philosophy to broader definitions of significance, so the approach to modern interventions has become more sensitive to visitor needs and general understanding of a property's development.

An approach to new buildings at English Heritage properties does not now fall easily into 'modernist' or 'historicist' categories, but rather seeks to achieve consistency in terms of presentation standards and quality of design and materials, while respecting the individual characteristics of each site. In this sense there are no rules or rigid policy to follow, but some underlying principles have guided us in recent years. New buildings should not compete with the monument itself (which is after all what visitors are coming to see), and architectural creativity and good design should be encouraged. There is a preference for designs that will not quickly become architecturally outmoded, and that make reference to predecessor buildings and materials related to the sites in

question. This approach has produced, at Kenilworth Castle and Carisbrooke Castle, new buildings that are modern (and clearly so). However, at Carisbrooke in particular, the new admissions building has clearly derived its design, in its form and materials, from buildings which preceded it; the building at Kenilworth was built on a virgin site, but its louvred roof is inspired by the medieval kitchens at Windsor Castle, an appropriate model. Both buildings look comfortable and appropriate to the setting, and neither could be said to compete for attention with the monument itself.

The building at Carisbrooke Castle was constructed to provide a much more welcoming environment for visitors at the entrance to the property, as well as freeing up a key roofed space within the site for a new introductory film and orientation displays. The images show the building (completed in April 2008) within the ramparts and in very close proximity to the gatehouse. The area is therefore extremely sensitive, and would possibly not have been considered at all had there not been a building standing in that precise location, known from early 20th-century plans and photographs. Dannatt Johnson Architects responded to the brief with two initial design concepts – one overtly modern and one leaning more heavily on the approach described above. English Heritage as client took the view that the latter concept would deliver a higher-quality building, one which would sit much more comfortably in its immediate surroundings, and crucially would look as comfortable in 50 years' time as it does today.

The building is clearly not a literal copy of the earlier structure, since such an approach is rarely convincing and in any case it would not fulfil modern operational requirements, designed as it was for a different purpose. The 19th-century cottage of a gamekeeper would never be ideal for the needs of 21st-century visitors. If the building at Carisbrooke had survived we may have tried to retain it (with some permitted adaptations), but it would have been foolhardy to reproduce its operational inconveniences in a new structure.

At many other sites over the last few years a similar approach has been adopted in replacing a number of 1970s' buildings that have looked increasingly incongruous with the passing of the decades as well as having reached the end of their useful life in most cases. The new buildings are to a uniform style (timber-framed with shingle or tiled roofs and able to be prefabricated). Their standardised design might risk accusation that each property in which they are placed is not being treated on its merits. Nonetheless, English Heritage has taken the view that the improvements in design quality, materials and to the overall setting of the monuments are sufficient

Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight. Although constructed in a modern idiom, the new admissions building clearly owes its form and materials from buildings which preceded it. © Dannatt Johnson Architects

Battle Abbey, East Sussex. The new exhibition centre and café completed at Battle Abbey in 2007 is an obviously modern steel-frame structure with glazed panels that makes few historical connections with the property it serves.
© Dannatt Johnson Architects

Philip Jebb's original (1972) modernist visitor centre at Chartwell was informed by the current Venice Charter principles that the new and the old should be clearly distinguished and that additions should not detract from existing buildings and their settings.

justification. The new model for the site admissions building has provided a fast, pragmatic and affordable solution to a longstanding and increasingly urgent problem.

The approach to designing new buildings is not a policy set in stone; for example, the new building completed at Battle Abbey in 2007 is an obviously modern steel-frame structure with glazed panels, a long way from the weather-boarded 'historicist' design at Kenilworth. But both are arguably responsive to the needs of their particular settings and their operational requirements, and both are designs of high quality. The direction of new build at English Heritage properties could be summed up as flexibility in treating each site on its merits, and recognition that new design in these important places inevitably becomes part of a long-running tradition. ■

Building for tomorrow's visitors

Sarah Staniforth
Historic Properties Director, The National Trust

There is a long tradition of country house visiting, recorded, for example, by Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), when Elizabeth Bennett visited Pemberley with Mr and Mrs Gardiner. They were taken round the house by the housekeeper, Mrs Reynolds. At the National Trust we have accounts from a number of visitors to Kedleston about Mrs Garnett, housekeeper from 1766 to 1809. The earliest of these is from Samuel Johnson and James Boswell who visited in 1794.

Neither Jane Austen nor Johnson and Boswell record what visitor facilities were in place around the turn of the 19th century. There is nothing to indicate that they were offered tea or cake, a souvenir to purchase, nor even the most basic of toilet facilities, although it is reasonable to assume that there was somewhere to park their carriages!

In the early days of visiting National Trust properties, there were few facilities for visitors. Perhaps a small car park, a lavatory, and a small room within the house where cups of tea were served and guidebooks sold. This was enough for the low number of visitors. The membership of the National Trust has grown exponentially: 100 members in 1895; 7,850 fifty years later; 2.5 million by the centenary year; 3.5 million in 2007. This increase in membership is reflected in visitor numbers to the pay-for-entry properties: 10.4 million in 1997, 14 million in 2007.

As visitor numbers grew, small tea rooms in houses ceased to be adequate, as they became over-crowded and increased the risk of fire and other environmental hazards in fragile historic buildings. Other buildings on estates such as stables and domestic blocks were therefore converted to house reception facilities, lavatories, the café and shop.

In some properties there were no suitable exterior buildings within walking distance of the house and garden, and it was necessary to create new buildings to house the facilities. The design and location of new visitor buildings in the early 1970s was informed by the conservation thinking of the time, including the Venice Charter. The two most influential principles were that it should be possible to distinguish between what is new and what is old and that additions should not detract from existing buildings and their settings. This is reflected in the modernism of some buildings, so that their design is distinct from the historic buildings at the properties, and the location of new buildings well away from the significant heart of properties. The tea room and lavatories at Anglesey Abbey, designed by Inskip and Jenkins in 1975, and the original low-cost flat-roofed timber building designed by Philip Jebb in 1972 at Chartwell, both at some distance from the houses and gardens, clearly demonstrate these principles.

The building of the visitor centre at Fountains Abbey was a watershed. This is located outside the World Heritage Site, and was designed in 1992 by Ted Cullinan. The building is a large complex housing all functions: reception, restaurant, exhibition, shop and meeting/conference room, all under one roof and designed as a single

Positioned outside the World Heritage Site and designed in 1992 by Ted Cullinan, the Fountains Abbey visitor centre is large and complex – reception, restaurant, exhibition, shop and meeting/conference room are all housed under one roof and designed with the same architectural character throughout. © NTPL/Matthew Antrobus

concept with the same architectural character throughout.

In the mid-1990s the National Trust Architectural and Gardens Panels and Executive Committee debated whether visitor centres were becoming too large, too expensive and even attractions in their own right. Among other things, these discussions led to some general principles being set down including the importance of ensuring that visitor facilities should recognise and respect the individual character of each property – its 'spirit of place' – as distilled in the statement of significance.

The purpose of visitor facilities was on the one hand to be practical and on the other to make a positive contribution to visitors' enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the property and of the National Trust, and so in turn to engage their support for the Trust's work. Environmental principles should be integrated into all proposals for replacement, new or expanded facilities.

Building principles were also developed at this time. The scale of visitor facilities should be appropriate for the sustainable capacity of the property; they should be able to cope with busy, but not the busiest days; they should not dominate or overwhelm the property. The siting of facilities should minimise any adverse visual impact from near and far. Where possible they should be outside the pay barrier to provide free access for visitors to at least parts of a property. The visitor route should not be through the shop or restaurant, which should be located where they are visible but not obtrusive. As visitor needs and numbers may change over time, it may not be appropriate to design a high degree of permanence into the facilities; the design should be flexible to enable adaptation. Design life needs to take into account the balance between initial capital cost and maintenance costs.

At Sizergh Castle, Cumbria, exhaustive attempts were made to find a suitable location for new facilities that would improve the quality of the visit for an increasing number of visitors but not compromise the significance of the medieval castle and buildings. These included using the south wing (which was too small); the 1770s stable block (which had been converted to staff accommodation in the 1920s); the Grade II*

The Footprint building at St Catherine's, Windermere, sits organically in the landscape and has been constructed from straw bales. The project was seen as an opportunity for public involvement from the outset, and numerous volunteers helped with the building. © Sarah Staniforth, National Trust

Great Barn (which was the earliest known bank barn, built in the 1560s); erecting a new building on the site of existing garages facing the stable block, or siting a new building outside the stable courtyard in the car park. The brief was for a building that would be: simple, lightweight, low-key, single-storey, self-effacing, of modular linear design, extendable at one end and with a life span of 30–40 years. It was to be constructed of modern materials, have regard for environmental sustainability and be related in character to contemporary agricultural buildings. The building materials should be recyclable and the whole design should minimise the environmental footprint of the building through the use of insulated walls, underfloor heating and a gas condensing boiler.

At Sizergh Castle in Cumbria the need to house new visitor facilities away from the medieval castle and buildings led to the commissioning of a low-key modular building. With a lifespan of 30–40 years, it was to be constructed of modern but environmentally sustainable materials and related in character to contemporary agricultural buildings. © Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.

The building by Feilden Clegg Bradley and with landscape design by Kim Wilkie was opened to the public in 2006. It is clad with larch from trees grown on the Trust's land at Tarn Hows. Planning permission was initially refused in 2003 on the grounds that any new building in the Lake District should be constructed of stone and slate, but granted on appeal on the grounds that the limited supplies of local stone should be used for conservation repairs and not new build.

Current visitor facilities are required to meet the more exacting targets of the new National Trust strategy for reducing our environmental footprint. There is also a preference for the use of existing buildings where this is appropriate: where they are in the right place, where the change of use would not adversely affect their character, or where they are not too small or expensive to convert or maintain. Current projects include the conversion of the stable blocks at Polesden Lacey and Nostell Priory and the Home Farm at Tyntesfield.

The Architectural Panel has been working with the Princes Foundation for the Built Environmental on architectural design principles, which address not only significance, spirit of place and environmental performance, but will also tackle the more difficult areas of aesthetics, hierarchy of buildings, and flexibility. Early thoughts include the following principles:

- build sustainably
- build flexibly and adaptably
- build in a way that respects spirit of place
- build beautifully
- respect hierarchy of buildings
- encourage traditional craft-building skills.

The National Trust believes that these principles will not only help to inform the philosophy and design of its new buildings, but also the choosing of architects who will embrace and work with us to realise the goals articulated in them. ■

This article is based on a presentation given at a seminar 'New Buildings in Old Places' organised by the Princes Foundation for the Built Environment and Princes Regeneration Trust in January 2008.

Shock of the New (and Nearly New)

Fitting the unfamiliar new into the setting of the familiar old can be hard work. But it can also yield spectacular and exhilarating results.

We relate to the new in very complex ways. Roger Bowdler here assesses the typical arc of esteem in which buildings are held and the harsh spotlight some choose to train on English Heritage's judgement about the relatively new. Emily Gee shows by example how complex the issues typically are and how thoughtful English Heritage must always, therefore, be seen to be. John Allan casts light on Robin Hood Gardens, a case that has caught the full attention of the press. Paddy Pugh's account of the (widely acknowledged) success at St Pancras is the more remarkable for the long period in which the building was held in such low esteem. Les Sparks on Birmingham Bull Ring and Davinder Bansal on the Rotunda emphasise that careful judgements as to designation and properly flexible management after designation can play a successful part in the revitalisation of a city. And Mick Henry reminds us that even the most spectacularly and rapidly admired new object can have had a very uncertain and contentious genesis. Like the Old Severn Bridge (1965) the Angel of the North may one day be a designated historic asset. The once-new, whether the Angel, the Rotunda or St Pancras, will have found their way into our hearts (and their statutory equivalent). Society will move on, once again, to turn its sceptical gaze on the newly new.

Post-war designation: waiting for the dust to settle?

Roger Bowdler
Head of Designation, English Heritage

Few parts of the environment are as vulnerable as the fairly recent. Too old for fashion, too young for heritage. Few people would now argue with the correctness of protecting the best and most representative buildings and places from the past. But just when does the past begin? Age and time bestow a comforting remoteness, an otherness that enriches the claims to retention, respect and affection. Modernity is not the same. How do we navigate our way through the disputed regions, when the chart of history has yet to be drawn?

Some of the challenges that attend designation of modern places are set out in Emily Gee's accompanying piece (p 28), and in some of the case studies that follow this article. Designation is never recommended to the DCMS lightly, or whimsically. Restricting private property rights in the interest of higher public interest is justifiable if the heritage values are considerable enough, but we need to establish such propositions, not merely advance them as a possibility. We have not merely to identify and describe, but to place in context and articulate the importance of often little-understood and initially little-liked buildings.

Our post-Second World War heritage is as irreplaceable as any other. Its seeming ubiquity is, however, deceptive: buildings, places and spaces of enduring and demonstrable note are few. In international terms, Britain (Historic Scotland has been very active in this area too) has been in the vanguard of designating modernity. More remains to be done – this is a clear designation priority.

The modern environment is frequently a disputed one. Post-war designation absorbs a singular amount of corporate energy. Few other areas of heritage endeavour reach the floor of the House of Commons, or the MP's in-tray, with such regularity. Westminster's Pimlico School, Plymouth Civic Centre, Huddersfield's Queensgate Market, Sheffield's Park Hill Estate,

The Tricorn Centre, Portsmouth, an example of a controversial post-war building that it was decided did not merit designation and that has since been demolished.
James Davies

Portsmouth's Tricorn Centre, East London's Robin Hood Gardens estate, the Birmingham Central Library: these are but the most recent controversies. Some have been listed; others were not recommended. And some, like Rodney Gordon's Tricorn Centre of 1962–6, have now been demolished. Designation plays a critical role in determining the very existence of such structures.

Decisions about significance will not wait until the owl of Minerva has flown, and the dust of time has settled. We need to reach defensible, just, and enduring recommendations in advance of this calmer time. In most other countries, the heritage cut-off point is firmly established. History begins at 50. Buildings started 50 years ago or more can be considered in the usual way in most countries; the Netherlands is the most recent country to embark on a post-war designation programme. Only exceptionally, as in the USA, will younger structures be considered for registering. In England, ever since 1987, we have operated under a 30-year rule. And for buildings of more than special interest (that is, listable in Grade II* or Grade I), which are also under a real and severe threat, with a start date of ten years ago or more, listing can be considered. Thus, were the Millennium Dome in Greenwich to be facing demolition, it could now be assessed for designation. Right now, the potential listing of Richard Rogers' Lloyds Building in the City of London has emerged as an issue. One can spot the 'stinkers' (as we sometimes call them) approaching us like meteorites. Some cases have an impact: others break up on approach.

Worthing's 'Desert Quartet' set of sculpted busts by Elisabeth Frink was listed Grade II* in 2007 on the grounds of its enrichment the streetscape of one of Southern England's leading seaside resorts.
© Roger Bowdler, English Heritage

How do we assess those buildings that have yet to enter the canon? Like many forms of creation, the fairly recent building often undergoes a dip in critical reception before its more lasting claims have emerged. Today's favourite becomes tomorrow's has-been, before it gains the initial status of 'period piece' on its progress to becoming a historic structure. It is the difference between journalism, and critical assessment. Contexts emerge; distance makes objectivity possible; fame, personality and circumstance recede as determinant factors.

English Heritage has itself challenged the notion that we can only deal with an objective, established heritage: that for issues of the recent past, a dynamic approach is required (Penrose 2007, 9). When it comes to designation, for the reasons set out already, this fluid plurality is less appropriate. It is a strength, not a weakness, that a body like ours can promote parallel agendas. Different roles require different inputs, however, and the demands of designation call for judgement, consistency and understanding.

Understanding informs every step of designation activity. What information can we bring to bear? Analyses of contemporary and critical literature; reviewing the relevant designations for benchmarks; applying the published criteria for designation selection; looking very hard, and carefully; preparing balanced reports, which now receive unprecedented levels of senior scrutiny. These are the processes we go through in preparing our recommendations, and we strive constantly to improve the application of research to ever more high-profile cases. How does Robin Hood Gardens (see pp 30–1) compare with other already-listed public housing developments? What does the critical literature say (if anything)?

Intellectual rigour is one pre-requisite for analysing the fairly recent. Another is an open mind. Post-war listing, from its outset, was determined not to follow a pre-determined modernist agenda. It sought to identify traditional, as well as innovative, buildings of special interest and to cover the conceptual and stylistic spectrum in its range of recommendations (Harwood 2003). And nor is it just a question of identifying the works of major practices, and the ones which won awards or prompted column inches. We are preparing new systems of endorsement in our process, which help us get ready for the anticipated transfer of designation decision-making from DCMS to English Heritage, one of the most significant outcomes of Heritage Protection Reform.

To end with a recent case. Worthing's 'Desert Quartet' set of sculpted busts by Elisabeth Frink was listed Grade II* in 2007. Commissioned in 1985 and installed in 1989 as part of an above-average retail development in the heart of the Georgian resort, this exceptionally good incident of public art faced removal and sale. When assessing the sculptures for listing we had to ask ourselves a question of predictive esteem. Will Elisabeth Frink's critical reputation remain high enough to justify designation? Our conclusion was affirmative: Frink is clearly an artist of enduring note, and this was a significant commission. Sensitive to its place and characteristic of Frink's humane monumentality, the 'Desert Quartet' continues to enrich the streetscape of one of Southern England's leading seaside resorts. Sometimes we act before the dust of time has settled: but we always act with care. ■

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Post-war designation: some recent cases studies

Emily Gee
Team Leader (South), Heritage Protection Department, English Heritage

A handful of recent and high-profile listing cases has caught the public imagination and attention of the press. It is not surprising that people are interested in the fate of prominent public buildings: when the architectural community, or a major council, takes a vested and vocal interest in a building, it is no wonder that many eyes turn to us and our advice to the DCMS.

We are well placed to respond: ten years of the post-war thematic listing programme (1992–2002), which pioneered public consultation as well as ways of communicating special interest, have set the context and identified the leading exemplars. Now, our attention is drawn to more recent buildings as well as those that are less renowned but still of interest. Armed with our Principles of Selection and meticulous in-house research, it is essential that we remain measured and informed as we take on each case, aware of external views but not swayed by emotion, fashion or campaign.

Our public profile (and our professional stoicism) has been tested by two recent cases in particular: Plymouth Civic Centre and Robin Hood Gardens (for more on this building see John Allen's article, pp 30–1). The Civic Centre, designed by Jellicoe, Ballantyne and Coleridge in 1958–62, is the embodiment of the aspirations of a newly confident post-war Plymouth. The building is remarkable for its careful massing and landmark position, as well as its striking art-work, including engraved glass by John Hutton depicting a heroic maritime Plymouth. It also stands within a registered landscape and beyond that, a very good post-war architectural context that warrants our attention: it is home to the only listed post-war bank, for example. We are now looking at other contemporary buildings as well.

The Civic Centre was listed in June 2007, an obvious recommendation to champions of 20th-century architecture, but its designation was much to the chagrin of Plymouth City Council, which considers its maintenance to be a major problem. The post-designation alarm of the council resulted in some eyebrow-raising press, even though we had undertaken a cool and informed assessment and had liaised with the council during our consideration of the case.

Building on the experience of Plymouth we now make regular use of the English Heritage website to explain and illustrate our position on complicated designation cases. In the case of the Robin Hood Gardens estate, for example, our communications colleagues have designed an informative web page, complete with innovative approaches such as a narrated video presentation (**www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.11365**).

Plymouth's Civic Centre, designed by Jellicoe, Ballantyne and Coleridge in 1958–62, embodies the aspirations of a newly confident post-war Plymouth. While welcomed by champions of 20th-century architecture, its listing in June 2007 was a concern to Plymouth City Council who consider its maintenance to be a major problem.

Although the post-war housing blocks on the Woodberry Down estate in Hackney were not deemed worthy of designation, English Heritage recommended the estate's pioneering 1952 modernist health centre for Grade II listing.
© English Heritage

This work also recalls our impressive track record of post-war listing: there are 24 listed public housing estates in this country (13 in the capital), which is more than in any other country. While sometimes criticised in very public ways, we take courage from the often-silent majority that respects our reasonableness of judgement.

Sometimes the pressure on us to be absolutely sure of our ground is made even more intense by the surrounding circumstances. For example, in 2006 we were asked to consider the key elements of one of the first post-war housing estates in the country – the Woodberry Down estate in the London Borough of Hackney – in the face of a £10-million regeneration scheme supported by the Mayor of London. At Woodberry Down, the birth of the National Health Service was illustrated in the essay in Swedish modernism that housed the country's first comprehensive health centre (opened 1952). The historic interest of this primacy enriched a well-surviving and architecturally interesting building and we recommended it for listing at Grade II. Similarly, the estate's primary school was the first of the type built in London after the war, complete with mural and modernist detail; again we recommended Grade II listing.

But faced with the assessment of the four housing blocks overlooking the reservoir in a continental 'zeinlenbau' arrangement – eight-storey narrow slab profiles with distinctive Viennese detailing – the recommendation was less straightforward. While striking and bold from some angles, the slabs were severe and fairly mean in the way they faced the communal space between. They lack the spirit of the pre-war and similarly continental housing on the listed Ossulston estate near St Pancras. Our obligation to be highly selective with buildings of this date meant that despite some claims to interest, we did not recommend listing. Whereas a number of significant and early London County Council housing estates, such as the point blocks (ie tower blocks) at Roehampton, had already been captured on the statutory list on the basis of a contextual understanding of the importance of their striking designs, the special interest of the Woodberry Down estate is reflected in the designation of its early school and pioneering health centre.

As the bar of the '30-year rule' for listing buildings rolls ever forward we are inevitably assessing new building types. Milton Keynes and its environs present a useful illustration. The centrepiece of the seminal new town planned between 1968 and 1972 is the shopping centre, a thoughtful reaction against the American-inspired Arndale Centre shopping malls then being erected around the country. Designed in 1972–3 by Stuart Mosscrop and Christopher Woodward, it is a sharply detailed and skilfully planned building also incorporating a number of art-works. Thereafter an omnipresent building type not known for its architectural quality, the shopping centre at Milton Keynes is an exception and its assessment, recently precipitated by a listing request, will help set a benchmark against which later examples can be judged. The case remains open at the time of publication, but it is no secret that we have in the

The centrepiece of the seminal new town of Milton Keynes was its shopping centre – a skilfully planned building incorporating a number of art-works in a thoughtful reaction against the dully uniform shopping centres that were being erected at the time.
© English Heritage

past recommended listing this building at a higher grade.

An even newer building type was the nearby Bletchley Leisure Centre opened in 1973 to the designs of Faulkner Brown architects. Marked by its funky brown-glass reinforced-plastic pyramid roof over the palm-treed leisure pool, this is very much a building of its time. Much altered, and unsuccessful in terms of its users (as illustrated by the new leisure centre now under construction next door), we have not recommended it for listing, while acknowledging that more work is needed on leisure buildings of the later 20th century. The strategic designation programme supported by the draft Heritage Protection Bill is the perfect opportunity to do just that. ■

Robin Hood Gardens, Poplar, London

John Allan
Chairman and Director of Avanti Architects

The author has a deep understanding of the development of modernist architecture in Britain and considerable direct experience of successful restoration and re-use of buildings of the period. He is a member of English Heritage's London Advisory Committee and offered that committee his personal thoughts on the contentious question of whether Robin Hood Gardens should be listed. There follows a précis of that thoughtful and insightful note.

Robin Hood Gardens comprises two large blocks of residential accommodation erected in the mid-1960s. Arranged on seven and ten storeys with deck access, the scheme is an embodiment of the controversial style known as Brutalism.

The listing of large post-Second World War housing projects is always difficult but never more so than when publicity has generated a furore. When the subject is a site with high-profile designers and redevelopment is an imminent possibility, it is bound to become a hot issue. But listing criteria are not dependent upon perceived threat, condition, degree of popularity or the renown of the designers, all issues which lobbyists have brought to the fore in this case. The question of listing turns on the concept of 'special interest'.

Before considering whether Robin Hood Gardens has special architectural or historic interest, it is useful to relate something of the designers' background and context.

Peter and Alison Smithson belonged to a generation which acknowledged the influence of the original modernist masters, but felt compelled to challenge them. On the one hand Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe *et al* were venerated as heroic intellectual and architectural pioneers, on the other they were to be subjected to intense critical evaluation in the search for new directions. Many observers regard the Smithsons' polemic as more important than their actual buildings. Specifically, their mission to supersede the precepts of *La Ville radieuse*, with its progeny of bleak estates and rectangular flatted blocks, led them to explore the (Corbusian) idea of 'streets in the air' as an alternative urban morphology.

They mounted a similarly strong challenge to their immediate English peers. The Festival of Britain, with its vision of a new social democratic, rather Swedish-looking Britain, may be seen in retrospect to have been the closest-ever *rapprochement* of modern architecture with the British public – the happy honeymoon before a loveless marriage. But this was rejected as cosy and compromised by the Smithsons, who promoted the rugged material and intellectual tenets of Brutalism.

The Smithsons' career was highly unusual. Early success in the competition for Hunstanton School, Norfolk, was followed by a string of competition failures – Coventry Cathedral (1950–1), Golden Lane Housing (1952), Sheffield University (1953) Sydney Opera House (1956) – for which they were, however, compensated by enduring critical acclaim. Virtually every published history of post-war British architecture features the Smithsons' competition schemes for Golden Lane and Sheffield University with pages

Park Hill Sheffield, one of the great achievements of post-war modernist housing that fully deserved its Grade II* listing.
© C E Brown (English Heritage.NMR)

Robin Hood Gardens, Poplar. While not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit listing, there is little doubt that this mid-1960s estate could be rehabilitated with handsome results.

of approbatory coverage while not even mentioning or illustrating the projects that actually won these competitions and were built. It is as though they achieved all the recognition that goes to winners without having the responsibility or experience of turning their concepts into real buildings and finding out if they work. Indeed, their own collected works are dominated by drawings of unrealised projects, assiduously embellished by *soi-disant* commentary and numerous photographic self-portraits – the effect of which both at the time and since has been to endow the Smithsons with a cult status that can only have reinforced their own sense of self-belief.

The result was that although nearly 15 years had elapsed since their 'moral victory' at Golden Lane, Robin Hood Gardens, their first real public housing commission, seems to have been approached not so much as a new challenge as an opportunity to vindicate their earlier lauded thesis. But while the principles of Golden Lane had by then been dramatically built out by others at Park Hill, Sheffield, the conditions there bore little similarity to the site in Poplar and what had once represented innovation no longer did.

The critical and professional climate had also radically shifted. The move towards more modest housing developments of cellular layout, with identifiable areas of landscaped space attached to existing streets, was given impetus by the Housing Association movement and 'streets in the air' were now a discredited concept. In terms of the theory and practice of progressive urban housing, Robin Hood Gardens was obsolete even before its first tenants moved in.

In this light, it is difficult to argue that Robin Hood Gardens is either seminal or of special architectural interest. The buildings follow Park Hill without equalling that achievement. The design's key idea offers no new insight into successful decks as, for example, the rightly listed contemporaneous Lillington Gardens does. Nor do the dwelling plans provide a model that was either innovative or influential. The case for *historic* interest is also lost precisely because the project came so late in this phase of modernist architecture in Britain, without however representing a glorious culmination.

It is for all these reasons that despite the powerful and poignant story that this estate undoubtedly has to tell us I am disinclined to regard it as of 'special interest' in the sense demanded by listing criteria.

None of this leads to the conclusion that the buildings should be demolished. I have little doubt that this estate could and should be rehabilitated with handsome results, but this is a different issue from the question of listing. Good precedents exist for the high-quality refurbishment of post-war housing schemes without the support (or constraints) of listing – and it is this emerging tradition of imaginative modern regeneration that, in my opinion, should now inform the future of Robin Hood Gardens. ■

Should readers wish to read the full text of John Allan's open letter or to look further into the other reasons that English Heritage's eventual advice to the Secretary of State was not to list, visit **http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.18980**.

St Pancras

Paddy Pugh
Director London Region, English Heritage

The transformation of one of London's great Victorian stations into the magnificent new Eurostar terminal is a superb example of how an historic building can be adapted sympathetically to meet modern demands.

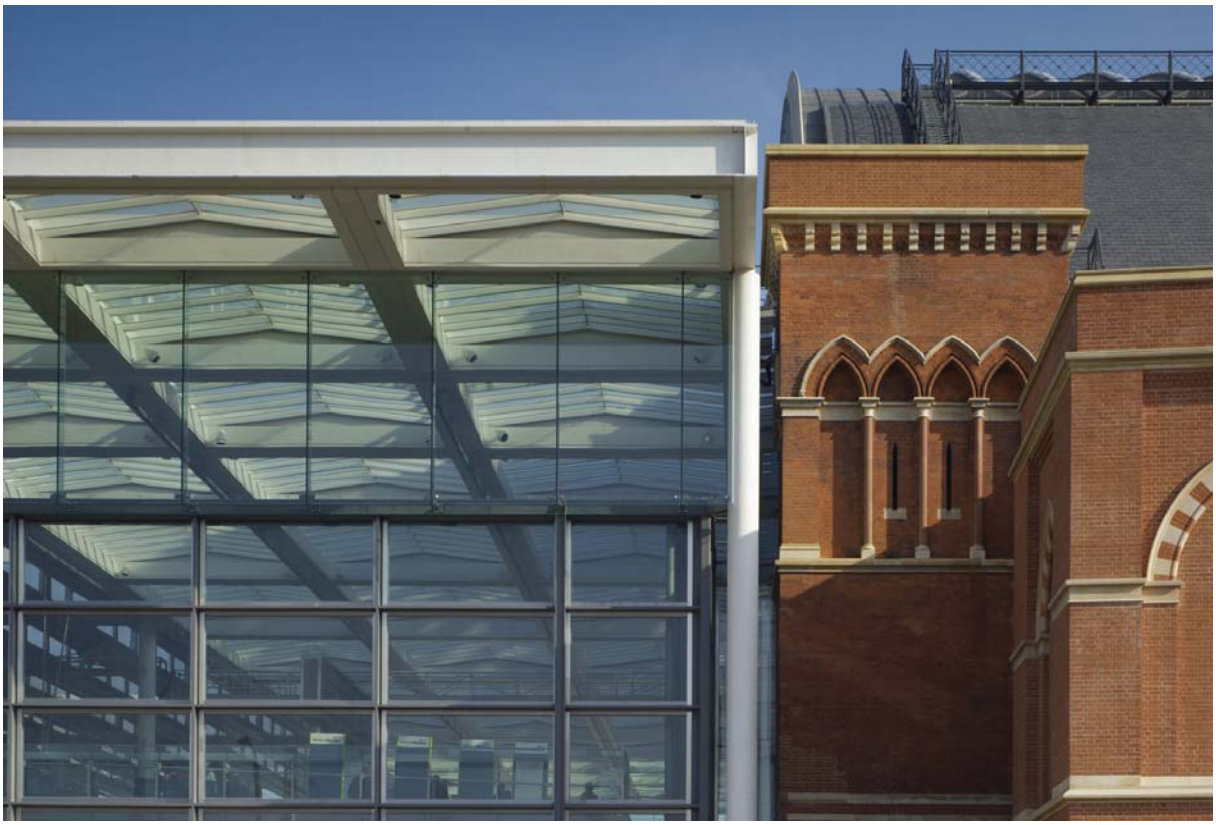
William Barlow's magnificent train shed, built as the London terminus for the Midland Railway, was completed in 1868. At 75 metres wide and 31 metres high, it was the largest single-span structure of its day. The company's gloriously gothic Midland Grand Hotel opened 10 years later in 1878. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, it faced on to the Euston Road and announced the

arrival of the Midland Railway into London. Taken together, these two dramatic structures form one of the greatest monuments of the Victorian age. Sadly that did not guarantee their future. The hotel closed in 1935 and slid into low-quality office use and then progressive decay. By 1966 the station was regarded as a white elephant threatened with closure and demolition.

However, following a protracted campaign led by Sir John Betjeman and a handful of enthusiasts, the building was upgraded from Grade III to Grade I in 1967. Openly derided by British Rail as a Victorian monstrosity and a 'poor copy of a Renaissance building', a hard battle was fought to encourage a more balanced understanding of its significance, and a more enlightened approach. In 1972 Philip Davies prepared a short conservation management plan to guide change to the building. Three years later the Greater London Council's Historic Buildings Division initiated a trial cleaning exercise with Community Industry to reveal the magnificent polychrome detail beneath a century of grime, which did much to change the perceptions of the building. More than 10 years later the Department of Transport provided special funding to clean the whole exterior of the former hotel, but it was not until 1996 that its future was fully ensured with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act.

The Act provided for the construction of a new London Eurostar Terminal, replacing the temporary station at Waterloo, and a high-speed rail link to the Kent coast. In total, £255 million would be invested in St Pancras including £50 million to refurbish Barlow's train shed. However, the Act also dissapplied the normal planning and listed-building-consent regimes.

Sir George Gilbert Scott's gloriously gothic Midland Grand Hotel – one of the greatest monuments of the Victorian age but by the mid-20th century regarded as a white elephant worthy of demolition – will soon be restored to its original use.
Paul Childs Spheroview
© Union Railways North



Foster and Partners' extension of St Pancras station did not seek to emulate Barlow's original train shed, but took a deliberately contrasting form in concrete, steel and glass.
Paul Childs/Spheroview
© Union Railways North

St Pancras reborn: the creative adaptation of one of Britain's most important Victorian landmarks into a state of the art, 21st-century railway terminus has been a revelation to many.
Paul Childs/ Spheroview
© Union Railways North

All proposals to alter or extend the Grade I train shed would have to be resolved through agreement between the railway promoter, Camden Council and English Heritage. Listed building consent would not be required. Failure to reach agreement within a set period would trigger resolution by the Secretary of State.

The new arrangements, based upon agreement rather than the need to obtain consent, required close partnerships between all those involved if the project was to be delivered on time. The start of the detailed design process began a close liaison between the railway promoter, Union Railways, its architect, Foster and Partners, the engineering consortium, Rail Link Engineering, Camden Council and English Heritage, which lasted throughout the 10-year construction period. Every detail of the restoration and alteration of William Barlow's train shed was considered carefully, and detailed advice given on many technical aspects of the scheme, from major engineering issues to the appropriate colour for the repainted ironwork.

In the station four giant openings were cut in the original train deck in order to bring the splendid, but hitherto unseen, undercroft (once used to store beer barrels) into play as the arrivals and departures area. This necessitated some complex and delicate engineering work as the original train deck acted as a structural tie between the great wrought- and cast-iron ribs forming Barlow's original superstructure. Although the original cast-iron columns of the undercroft proved (by testing) more than capable of sustaining the new train loadings, additional connections needed to be made within the wrought ironwork of the original deck beneath the platform wells. The original form of the 'ridge-and-furrow' glazing to the train shed roof has been restored, using 14,000 individual glass panels, with some minor adaptation to ensure it remains weathertight. The access walkways and balustrades above the roof have been remade to their original patterns and the entire roof has been re-slated, using some 300,000 Welsh slates. The overall benefits of these alterations to the station layout and function can readily be appreciated when the soaring roof structure is viewed from the International Concourse. The extensive clear glazing allows sunlight to penetrate to the areas of the undercroft.

The accommodation adjoining the train shed on its east and west sides has been refurbished to accommodate all the new ancillary station functions, including major plant-handling areas, the Eurostar lounges and retail areas. The rebuilt chimney stacks of the East Side Buildings now function as ventilation extracts, and 15 new openings have been made in the blind arches at the north end of the west train-shed wall to create new access points to the shops and restaurants.

The extension to the station – doubling its original length in order to accommodate the 400-metre-long Eurostar trains – did not seek to emulate Barlow's original clear-span 'pointed' arch, but took a deliberately contrasting form in concrete, steel and glass. The form of the new roof, with its Vierendeel trusses, does, however, have some affinity with the north-light roofs so often associated with 19th-century warehouses and station buildings, albeit in a form reworked to fit a 21st-century station. Where abandoned areas of the original railway sidings and accommodation had to be removed in order to build a new Thameslink station, new Eurostar accommodation was built alongside the original train shed in matching brick and stonework, testing the skills of today's craftsmen, who produced some of the finest work ever seen in any contemporary construction project. Forming a junction between the new station roof and the north end of the Barlow train shed was a particularly sensitive issue, but has been accomplished by the separation of the two main roofs by a transitional area of glazing, with its own articulation, partly supported by the wrought ironwork of the Barlow shed end screen. This has ensured that views out of the original train shed at platform level remain unencumbered by new structure.

The new Western Ticket Hall connecting the international station to the existing underground interchange has been inserted beneath the forecourt of Sir George Gilbert Scott's Midland Grand Hotel at the front of the station. New openings beneath the hotel lead directly into the undercroft, through a wall that has been re-clad in matching brick and stonework, and a new vaulted transitional space. The joinery of the ground-floor shop fronts around the periphery of the entire building has been repaired and reinstated where missing, completing the external appearance of the historic building.

Complementing the Eurostar Terminal, conversion of the Midland Grand into a 5-star hotel of 245 bedrooms with residential apartments on the upper floors is well under way, and it will include a new extension over the former carriage sidings on Midland Road. This has been designed by Richard Griffiths Architects not only to harmonise with Scott's original gothic detailing, but also to clearly express its identity as a modern addition to the building. The restoration of original decoration in many of the public spaces within the hotel will give guests and visitors the opportunity to enjoy a spectacular staircase and some of the best Victorian interiors in London.

This was a huge and complex project on an heroic scale. None of what has been achieved would have been possible without the consistently good working relationship between English Heritage and all the parties involved. The restoration, alteration and extension of the train shed has produced a spectacular new station where the 19th and 21st centuries sit comfortably together. The results speak for themselves. William Barlow would surely approve of this successful marriage of old and new.

The creative adaptation of one of Britain's most important Victorian landmarks into a state of the art, 21st-century railway terminus has been a revelation to many, and it demonstrates how with vision, understanding and skill, constructive conservation can offer a viable and exciting future for the past.

Birmingham's Bull Ring

Les Sparks
Visiting Professor, University of the West of England

In the years after the Second World War, Birmingham City Council set about reshaping the city for the age of motoring, with an Inner Ring Road based on the concept of North American freeways. There was a municipal zeal to sweep away Victorian Birmingham and replace it with modern offices, public buildings, housing and shopping.

The old Birmingham Bull Ring. Shoppers had to get to the centre through narrow subways under the ring road, which cut it off from the thriving traditional retail streets of central Birmingham.
© Les Sparks

St Martin's Circus, a gyratory system, was built where the Ring Road crossed the hillside between the city centre and Digbeth. This created a 9.3-hectare site that the Council advertised for redevelopment as a multi-storey shopping centre, with a retail market, car parking, bus station and offices. The new Bull Ring Centre, developed by John Laing & Son, was opened in 1964, along with the distinctive 25-storey Rotunda office building.

This was Britain's first completely covered shopping centre, artificially heated, lighted and ventilated. As a prototype it was deeply flawed. For example, a floor of parking separated the main retail levels and gave access to lifts, which took cars to three upper parking decks, where hand-pushed trolleys transported them on rails to vacant bays. This cumbersome process led to lengthy queues. After a few weeks, these parking decks were permanently abandoned.

The main reason for the Bull Ring Centre's commercial failure was the appalling pedestrian access. Shoppers had to get to the centre through narrow subways under the ring road, which cut it off from the thriving traditional retail streets of central Birmingham. After 20 years, the Bull Ring had acquired a terrible reputation. Retail units

The new Birmingham Bull Ring. A steep and open street leads from the High Street down to the parish church of St Martins-in-the-Bull Ring, with shops on both sides.
© Les Sparks

Restored to a position close to its original site, Birmingham's listed monument to Lord Nelson now commands a view over the new square and St Martin's Church.
© Les Sparks

could only be let to cut-price traders, the fish market was encountering environmental health problems, and the centre's notoriety was affecting the city's national image.

Attempts to redevelop the Centre began during the 1980s. In 1987 London & Edinburgh Trust plc submitted plans to demolish the Bull Ring Centre and the Rotunda and replace them with a much-enlarged internal shopping centre and a new office tower almost twice the height of the Rotunda. Planning permission and compulsory purchase order powers were granted, but market conditions were unfavourable, and the Centre was sold on twice. When Hammersons acquired it, they dropped the approved plans and worked with Birmingham City Council to formulate new proposals.

The commercial success of any scheme would depend on a stronger pedestrian connection to the core shopping area. In recent years, the council had been successfully downgrading and dismantling the Inner Ring Road. To the west of the Bull Ring, the section of road over a subway had been demolished and traffic and pedestrians now shared the same light-controlled crossing. It was suggested to Hammersons that a cost effective solution would be to introduce an extra-wide pedestrian crossing on the northern arm of St Martin's Circus, and restrict vehicle traffic to buses and taxis.

A non-negotiable objective of the Council was the creation of a steep and open street leading from the High Street down to the parish church of St Martins-in-the-Bull Ring, with shops on both sides. This would recreate the historic link between the early medieval settlement of Digbeth and the commercial core of Victorian Birmingham – a vital connection obliterated by the 1964 development. This was a principle that Hammersons enthusiastically embraced, along with the concept of the street terminating in a new public square centred on the church.

The developers proposed twin retail developments on either side of this open street, each anchored by a department store and centred on a mall. One mall would continue the alignment of New Street, the other would follow the line of the High Street. The extreme slope from the High Street to Digbeth enabled the two developments to be linked below the open street.

Signing up the two department stores was crucial to any progress. Hammersons' advisers were adamant that these powerful traders would not commit to the project without an

uninterrupted pedestrian connection to the High Street. Hammersons rejected a light-controlled crossing and insisted that buses and taxis should pass underneath a pedestrian bridge. It was agreed that the bridge should have shops on both sides so that retail frontages could continue seamlessly from New Street and High Street into the new development. This arrangement has unquestionably contributed to the enormous commercial success of the new development. The downside is the unpleasant undercroft for buses and taxis that also attracts some unintended pedestrian traffic between Moor Street and New Street stations on either side of the development.

The gestation period for projects like this is seldom less than a decade, plenty of time for unexpected events and market fluctuations to throw things off course. This project was no exception!

In 1998 the project was threatened by the spot-listing of Old Moor Street Station (closed since 1987) and its Hennebique ferro-concrete warehouses in vaults supporting the disused tracks to the west of the station. The vaults occupied part of the land required for the development (including the Selfridges store) without which the whole scheme would have to be redesigned. In the event, one of the warehouses was brought into public use for car parking, the other was demolished, allowing the development to proceed. Hammersons restored the Edwardian Moor Street Station to a very high standard.

The question of listing the Bull Ring never seriously arose. Reviewing the centre in August 1964, Owen Luder had written 'Despite a new concept in shopping design … the architecture is little more than a rehash of old answers joined together in a haphazard and unrelated way.' The only exception was the Rotunda, listed in 2000, which has been converted by Urban Splash into apartments by Glenn Howells Architects (see this page). The new fenestration is closer to the intentions of its original architect, James Roberts, who was consulted on the redesign.

Also restored, and to a position close to its original site, is the listed monument to Lord Nelson. It was erected in 1809 but later moved and parked in a desolate area of the 1964 development in a failed attempt to recreate the historic Speakers' Corner. It now commands a view over the new square and St Martin's Church.

This dynamic commercial project has successfully integrated five listed structures and reinstated an historic street connection. The uncompromising visual contrast between the Selfridges store and St Martin's Church has become one of the most celebrated architectural images of our time. It is a vivid demonstration that juxtaposing old and new can set up stimulating relationships that enrich our urban places.

The Rotunda, Birmingham

Davinder Bansal
Glenn Howells Architects

The Rotunda is a Grade II-listed structure dating from 1964 and is recognised as one of Birmingham's foremost landmarks. It has now just undergone a transformation to reinstate its iconic status on the city's skyline.

The proposed development involved the change of use from redundant office space to residential apartments. It also included proposals for a dramatic 9-metre-high entrance foyer leading seamlessly from a new public square and the re-cladding of the entire façade to enhance its appearance, meet modern performance standards and improve views out.

Urban Splash's brief was to provide a diverse and sustainable mix of apartments and a quality design-led solution not only to ensure the long-term future of the Rotunda but also to enhance its visual impact on the city context.

The urban design approach for the regeneration of the Rotunda has been to retain and enhance the key characteristics of the original design principles, which has made the Rotunda a visual focus and marker for Birmingham.

In 2000, the building was Grade II listed. The key credentials for the listing were the simple cylindrical 20-storey tower form with a distinct setback feature at the top, the horizontal podium at the base of the tower and the distinctive horizontal banding on the façade. The only internal listing was a mural by artist John Poole for the former banking hall in the podium. It was important for the design team to acknowledge the irrelevance of construction details and materials and to focus instead on the form and expression that makes the Rotunda unique and distinctive.

From the outset of the design process, it was agreed that the existing mid-height cill levels in the tower should be dropped to improve views out. However, this conflicted with the strong horizontal banding of glass panels and concrete spandrels, a key contributor to the listing.

This was raised as a concern early on by both

Developers Urban Splash and architects Glenn Howells have taken Birmingham's Grade II-listed Rotunda back to its original 1964 design while modernising it to meet the needs of 21st-century living.
© Nic Gaunt

English Heritage and the 20th Century Society, who opposed the proposal. It was not resolved until the original architect, James Roberts, was tracked down to discuss his vision for the building. From his original sketches in 1961, the floor-to-ceiling glazing with much lower spandrels was clearly evident, similar to our new proposals. Limited cladding technology and cost constraints enforced James to build higher cill levels with concrete and less glass.

It was apparent that we were taking the building back to its original design some 40 years later on and this was welcomed by English Heritage and the 20th Century Society as well as the planning and conservation officers at Birmingham City Council.

The cylindrical tower was arranged on a 5-degrees facet making up 72 modules per floor. The new cladding system retains the smooth curvature of the original façade to complement the inherent form and is therefore arranged on the existing 5-degrees facet with floor-to-ceiling glazing.

The original sash openings set flush into the silver aluminium glazing frames helped to maintain a consistent appearance for both fixed

The redevelopment of Birmingham's Rotunda has not only involved a change of use from redundant office space to residential apartments but also the chance to enhance its visual impact on the city.
© Nic Gaunt

and opening glass lights. The sash lights also maintained the smooth form of the tower by not projecting outwards when opened. These principles were retained as a key intent for the external design of the new façade and the full-height fixed and opening lights shared the same profile and consistency in appearance, finished in natural anodised aluminium. The opening lights were designed to tilt and slide internally to preserve the smoothness and simplicity of the elevation.

The original concrete panels were finished with small glass mosaic tiles to the external face; when sunlight hit the mosaic tiles a contrasting quality of reflection from the striking reflections expected on the clear glazing was given. With the new full-height glazing, it was more critical to achieve this on the reduced spandrel section in order to maintain the emphasis of the horizontal banding and to avoid the appearance of a sheer glass tower. This was a concern raised by the 20th Century Society as a potential consequence of dropping the cill height and increasing the glass area.

The option to propose similar mosaic tiles bonded on to the spandrel presented concerns over future maintenance and durability as the existing tiles were falling off as a result of the eventual failure of the adhesive bonding. As an alternative, we proposed a white opaque, textured-glass panel for the spandrel, giving a fractured reflection similar to the original mosaic tiles.

The dramatic new entrance to Urban Splash's renovated Rotunda building.
© Nic Gaunt

Testing the textured panel under different lighting conditions also convinced the 20th Century Society that this solution would retain the reflective quality while addressing the longevity issues.

The distinct top separated from the rest of the tower by a step-back feature in the façade has always been viewed as a 'candle' or 'lighting beacon' to the Rotunda. From an illuminated Coca-Cola sign to a digital clock wrapping around, the top band is key to the visual quality of this landmark from the short-, mid- and long-distance views around the city. To maintain this visual importance for the city, we have developed designs for a state-of-the-art LED screen that wraps the entire 360-degree, 4-metre-high lightbox. The LED screen would provide endless design options incorporating colour, signage and animation, which could reflect events, occasions and artwork on a city scale, like a virtual gallery space.

The design decisions made throughout the process have been focused on maintaining the simplicity of the original vision while addressing the technical issues such as acoustics, ventilation and thermal requirements for modern living. Above all, taking this 1960s' icon into the 21st century for many more graceful years has been the driving force, because without it, Birmingham would not be the same.

The Angel of the North

Councillor Mick Henry
Leader of Gateshead Council

It is very hard today to imagine Gateshead without the Angel of the North; in fact, it is almost impossible. The Angel is now woven into the cultural, social and physical landscape of our borough and is very much part of our identity.

Ten years after its arrival, we have been celebrating in style and the number of people involved in marking this anniversary has been a staggering demonstration of the sculpture's popularity as an icon of the North East. More than 2,000 local people attended a birthday party at the foot of the Angel while thousands more were involved in workshops, events and competitions as part of a community engagement programme.

The Angel has certainly raised the profile of Gateshead and the North East by playing a major part in the re-positioning and re-branding of the borough as a forward-thinking, progressive place to visit, to work in, to move to, and a place to

Since its unveiling in 1998, Antony Gormley's Angel of the North has become inextricably woven into the cultural, social and physical landscape of Gateshead.

invest in. I do not think anyone could, or would, deny that it has provided an iconic symbol for Gateshead's cultural renaissance but, ten years ago, when we were planning the Angel it was a very different picture.

When we were planning for this year's celebrations, we had to go over a host of old documents, cuttings and council papers, which made for some very interesting reading. The planning application dated 9 May 1994 sought approval to 'install a landmark sculpture commissioned from Antony Gormley, measuring approximately 20 metres high with a span of up to 52 metres, fabrication in steel'.

Looking through these documents reminded us of the coolness of the reception that the proposal received and, in some cases, of clear objections. This included opposition from the Highways Agency, who were concerned about road safety, while reservations were also voiced by the Radio Communications Agency about interference with TV signals. There was a petition signed by more than 4,000 local people and a campaign by a local newspaper that encouraged people to write to the government – prompting 2,000 letters of complaint, and just three in support.

At the time, Gateshead's contribution to public art had already been recognised with the award of the Royal Town Planning Institute's Silver Jubilee Cup 1990, after 70 works of public art were commissioned in the run-up to the National Garden Festival in 1990. But although Gateshead Council had been investing in public art for many years prior to the Angel, there is no doubt that this was the first installation to register on the national consciousness.

As far back as 1989, the site of the former pithead baths of Team Colliery was identified as a possible location for a large-scale public art installation. In July 1990, a report to Gateshead Council's Art in Public Places Panel decided, in principle, to earmark the site for a large landmark sculpture. That entire scheme was funded by the Derelict Land Grant, which was approved by the Department of Environment, in February 1991. Adjacent to the A1 and visible to rail passengers on the East Coast Mainline, the site offered the perfect spot to welcome visitors entering Gateshead, while also giving them a clear indication as to how the borough wanted to be seen.

The prime objective of the sculpture was to provide a strong landmark near the region's principal transport corridor but now, for many,

In 2008 more than 2,000 local people attended a birthday party at the foot of the Angel while thousands more were involved in workshops, events and competitions as part of a community engagement programme.
© Gateshead Council

the Angel is highly symbolic, representing the transformation of an industrial economy to one based on creativity. The choice of an angel was also significant – guarding the people of Gateshead at its back but welcoming newcomers, with open arms.

So, the overall rationale behind the Angel was to put Gateshead on the map, to change perceptions, and to celebrate the past while pointing the way to a new future. Despite the widespread early scepticism, the Angel has been a resounding success, receiving a multitude of accolades from the media and gaining a high level of recognition among the general public.

But this has been so much more than just a sculpture or piece of public art – it has actually helped the borough and the wider North-East region grow in many tangible ways. We think there are five main areas where the Angel has had a major impact for Gateshead and we are currently looking at ways of accurately measuring this.

First, it has helped to put Gateshead and North-East England on the map, both nationally and internationally, with the associated media coverage being real 'place-making' in action. Secondly, it has had a profound impact on the self-perceptions of Gateshead Council, which now sees itself as an organisation that has both ambition and an ability to deliver big projects. Thirdly, the Angel has led to a significant number of new jobs and additional investment, including more than £145 million-worth of lottery funding for the Sage Gateshead, The Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC. Fourthly, the Angel has served as a major stimulus to tourism in both Tyne and Wear and the wider North-East region. Finally, it has stimulated new confidence and the development of a growth agenda for Gateshead and the region.

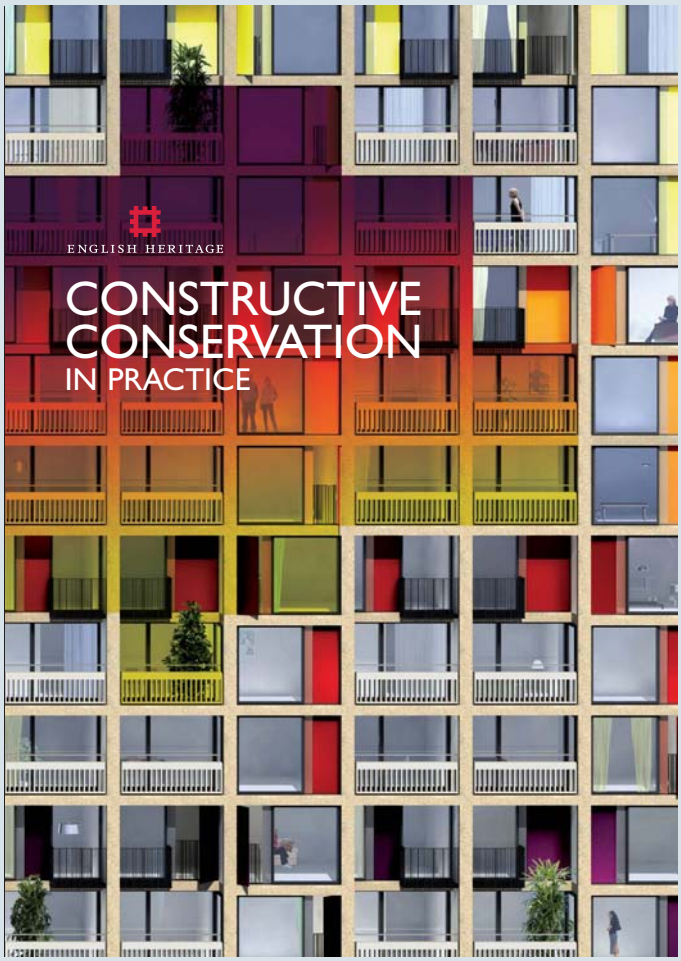
There are also wider benefits – the Angel has featured in national and international media so many times that any attempt to keep track of this has now been abandoned. The value in promotional terms cannot be accurately calculated but the regularity and quality of exposure would have cost millions, if its advertising equivalents had been purchased.

The Angel has become part of popular culture and, judging by the number of regions that now want their own respective angels of the East, West and South, it has also become a shorthand for public art and regeneration. Ultimately, the Angel is about local people and we estimate that more than 8,000 people visit the site every week. I think that shows just how much this new icon has been taken to heart.

Constructive Conservation in Practice

The 20 exemplary schemes in this new English Heritage publication demonstrate the results of constructive conservation: a well-informed, collaborative approach to conservation-led development. The progressive local authorities, developers and architects in this book have responded to the very latest ideas in modern conservation practice and have combined pre-application discussion with English Heritage and the elements of our *Conservation Principles* with their own creativity and confidence. The results are schemes which are not just commercially successful but have added distinctiveness and meaning to the places in which we live.

Copies of the book can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181 or by email to customers@english-heritage.org.uk. You can also click on **www.english-heritage.org.uk/constructiveconservation** to see a short film, download or read a copy online and find out more about English Heritage's constructive approach and how that underpins the advice it gives.



Cover illustration: Sheffield's Grade II*-listed Park Hill housing development after its recent refurbishment by Urban Splash. Photo: © Smoothe

The Grade II*-listed Midland Hotel in the seaside resort of Morecambe is one of the most important 20th-century buildings on the English west coast. After years of decline, it was taken on by Urban Splash with the aim of reopening the hotel. English Heritage was able to enrich the architects' good understanding of the building's history and advise on the most effective ways of integrating new features with the old. In parallel, Lancaster City Council's drive and enthusiasm helped Urban Splash bring back to Morecambe the 1930s' glamour exemplified by this exceptional building. © Simon Webb Photography

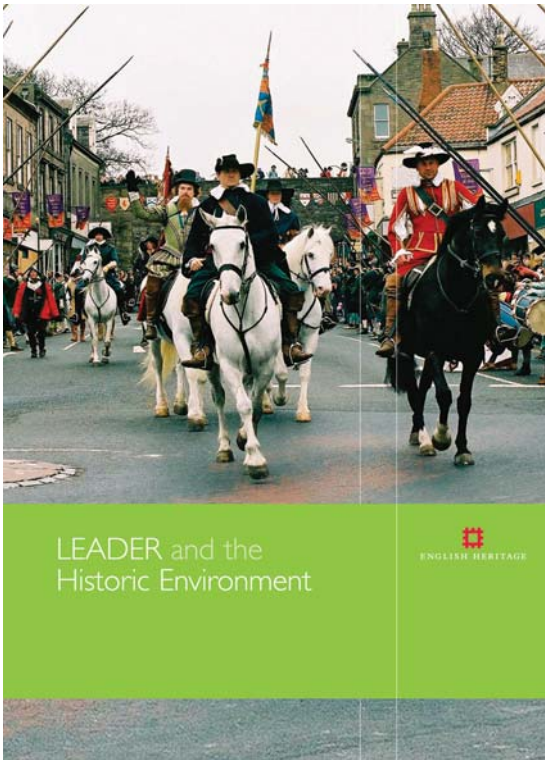
News from English Heritage

LEADER and the Historic Environment

LEADER is a European Commission initiative to support the development of rural areas across the European Union, which has been particularly successful in helping local groups identify and care for their heritage. Under the new Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2007–13, LEADER will become one of the main ways of distributing EU funds (5 per cent, or £110m based on current estimates) with its delivery being managed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).

This new publication describes some of the important work carried out by the LEADER+ Programme to realise the potential of the historic environment. English Heritage encourages Local Action Groups (the local partnerships), working alongside the RDAs and others, including Natural England and the Forestry Commission to build on this good work. It is hoped the examples contained within this document will inspire others during the delivery of the 2007–13 RDPE. Copies can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181, by quoting Produce Code 51455, or it can be downloaded from **www.helm.org.uk**

Contact: Shane Gould; tel: 020 7973 3119; email: shane.gould@english-heritage.org.uk



Progress on improved protection of World Heritage Sites

Of the three initiatives to improve the protection of World Heritage Sites announced by the government in the Heritage Protection Review, the inclusion of all World Heritage Sites in Article 1(5) Land came into effect on 1 October. This limits some forms of permitted development.

Consultation has been completed on the new draft call-in regulations, which included a provision requiring local authorities to refer to the secretary of state any development proposal to which English Heritage has objected because of the potential impact on the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of a World Heritage Site.

Consultation has also now been completed on the draft planning circular on World Heritage Sites together with its supporting English Heritage guidance note. The circular and guidance note will provide updated policy guidance on the level of protection and management required for World Heritage Sites.

Contact: Dr Christopher Young; tel: 020 7973 3848; email: christopher.young@english-heritage.org.uk

Updated guidance on enabling development

Following a full consultation process, English Heritage's *Policy and Guidance on Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places* has now been published and supersedes the previous June 2001 edition.

It should be stressed that the policy approach itself has not changed, although its wording has been updated to align with English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (April 2008). The guidance has been updated to reflect practical experience, changing legislation, some Planning Inspectorate decisions, and the terminology of the Principles, Policies and Guidance.

Copies can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181, by quoting Produce Code 51452, or it can be downloaded from **www.helm.org.uk**

Contact: David Tomback; tel: 020 7973 3369; email: david.tomback@english-heritage.org.uk

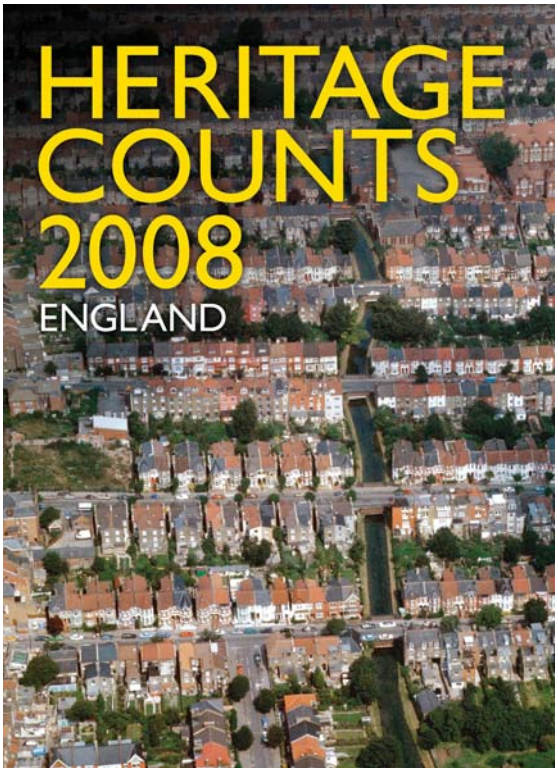
Maximising participation

DCMS have recently asked for expressions of interest in a major research project with the short title 'Maximising Participation'. The purpose of the project is to improve understanding of the drivers of, and the value and benefits afforded by, engagement in culture and sport. English Heritage, Arts Council England, Museums Libraries and Archives Council, Sport England and the Regional Cultural Consortiums are partners in this research project. The timescale of the project is three years, but with interim and final outputs on different aspects of the project likely to be published during the three-year period. More details can be found at:
http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/research_and_statistics/5389.aspx
Contact: Geoff Dawe; tel: 020 7973 3840; email: geoff.dawe@english-heritage.org.uk

Heritage Counts 2008

English Heritage's *Heritage Counts* publication, the annual survey of the state of England's historic environment, has just been published. This year's report focuses on climate change and the sector's positive contribution in tackling this very important issue. It explores a number of initiatives currently under way that aim to reduce carbon emissions from the historic environment and looks at how the sector is preparing for the changes caused by climate change, ensuring that the historic environment will continue to be enjoyed be generations to come. As in previous years, there is also a summary of the policy developments affecting the sector and a discussion of the key data trends.

Alongside the national report, a suite of regional reports provides further detail on the state of the historic environment in the nine government regions. Further details can be found at: **www.heritagecounts.org.uk**
Contact: Laura Clayton; tel: 020 7973 3730; email: laura.clayton@english-heritage.org.uk



Planning Policy Statement reforms

As part of the Heritage Protection Reforms, drafting is under way on a Planning Policy Statement (PPS) to cover the historic environment and replace the current Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* and 16 *Archaeology and Planning*. DCMS and CLG are planning to begin the formal consultation around Christmas to align with the passage of the Bill through Parliament.

DCMS and CLG have asked English Heritage to take the lead in the early stages of drafting and soundings are being taken from organisations in the historic-environment sector with further events planned after Christmas. The final version of the PPS will be brought into force at the same time as the Act, sometime in 2010.
Contact: Charles Wagner; tel: 020 7973 3826; email: charles.wagner@english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage website survey

English Heritage is running a consultation to find out how well the current website (www.english-heritage.org.uk) meets users' requirements and to identify which new services and improvements should be a priority for development. This stage in the consultation is a short, anonymous, online questionnaire. We would value your views, so please take two minutes to fill in the survey at www.english-heritage.org.uk/websurvey

The National Monuments Record
News and Events

The NMR is the public archive of English Heritage. It includes more than 10 million archive items (photographs, drawings, reports and digital data) relating to England's historic environment. Catalogues are available online and in the NMR search room in Swindon.

The following information gives details of new web resources and exhibitions.

Contact the NMR at:
NMR Enquiry & Research Services,
National Monuments Record,
Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ
tel: 01793 414600
fax: 01793 414606
email: nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk
web: **www.english-heritage.org.uk/nmr**

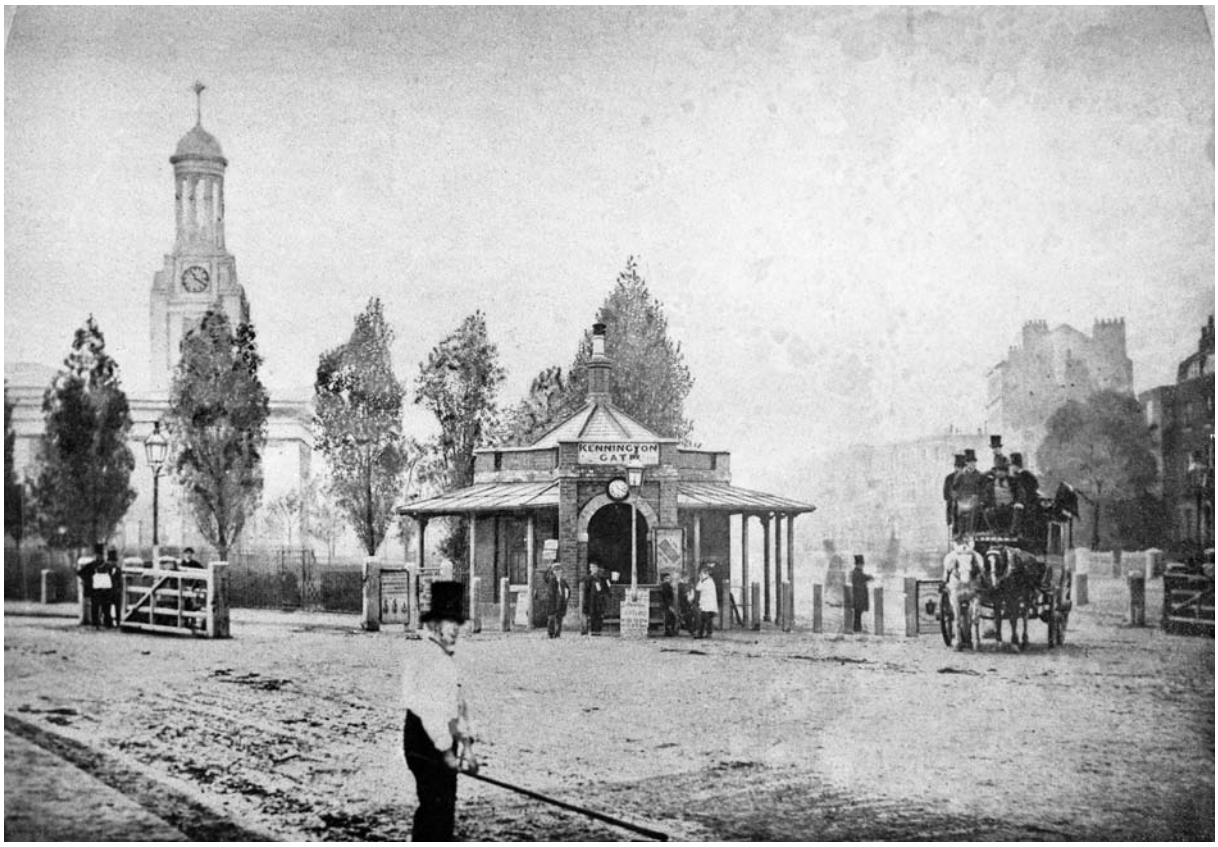
Online Resources from the NMR

PastScape

PastScape is the publicly accessible online version of the national database of monuments recorded at the NMR. During 2008 the website (**www.pastscape.org.uk**) has undergone major development work to improve its functionality and accessibility, and to add new features. These improvements include a new Map Search and Advanced Search to make searches more effective and results more relevant. By registering, website users are also able to Save Searches and have access to free Downloads. Public users are now able to access detailed descriptions associated with many records, which are linked to references such as bibliographical sources, information from maps, websites etc. Together these build up a rolling history of our knowledge of the site or monument in question. These changes will be especially useful for the retrieval of Maritime Records. This development represents part of a major commitment to improve public accessibility and understanding of NMR datasets.

ViewFinder

ViewFinder (**www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder)** is an online picture resource drawing on the NMR's national photographic collections. New material is added quarterly.



A toll gate stood at the intersection of Kennington Park and Camberwell New Road, Lambeth, until the toll was abolished in 1865. The toll house and gate are photographed here *circa* 1853, in a view from the B E C Howarth-Loomes Collection.
Reproduced by permission of English Heritage.NMR BB79/08403

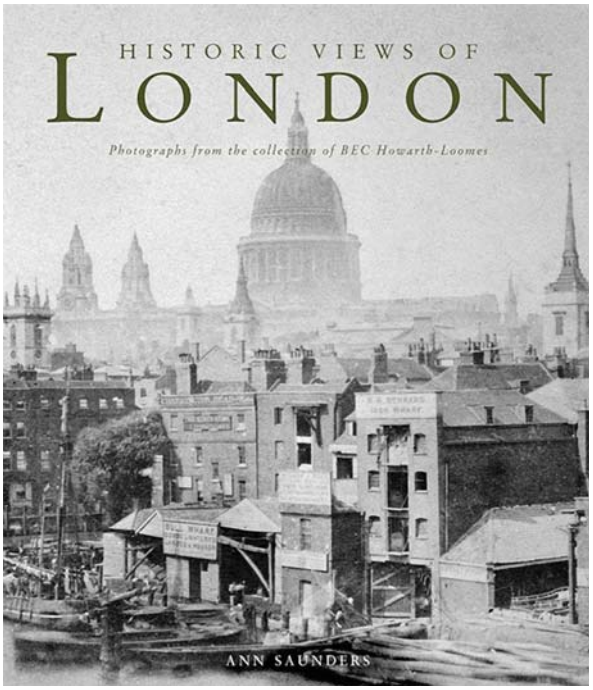
The chorus dressing-room in the Apollo Victoria Theatre, Westminster, being used by the cast of *Starlight Express*, December 2001. © English Heritage.NMR AA032294

London West End theatres

About 1,500 photographs of London's West End theatres have recently been added to this website. Taken as part of the English Heritage West End Theatres project, these photographs record both the familiar front-of-house and the hidden back-stage areas. A selection of these images appeared in the book *Scene/Unseen: London's West End Theatres* (S Barson *et al* 2003. London: English Heritage)

Historic Views of London by Ann Saunders

Historic Views of London: Photographs from the collection of B E C Howarth-Loomes presents a selection of views of London. Ranging in date from 1852 to 1915, the subject matter is as varied as the city itself. Containing more than 200 historic images, this book provides an impression of how London was seen by Victorian and Edwardian photographers, and is a fitting tribute to a remarkable collector. (Published by English Heritage, price £19.99, ISBN 978 905624 188, Product Code 51348.
SPECIAL OFFER PRICE: £17.00 until 31 January 2009 – see back page for further details.



Legal Developments

Smithfield Chop Axed

Jane Burgess and Mike Harlow, *English Heritage Legal Team*

The tests for demolition of a building in a conservation area have recently been closely examined in a long and hotly contested public inquiry.

Smithfield's General Market Building is a large unlisted Victorian building that together with the neighbouring poultry and meat market buildings (which are both listed) forms the spine and heart of the Smithfield conservation area on the fringes of the City of London. The area is undoubtedly well stocked in character. It provides a contrast to the neck-craning glass and steel monoliths of the City and mid-town office blocks.

A developer planned to demolish the General Market Building and a couple of neighbouring smaller buildings to provide an office block with ground-floor retail. Despite some very complicated facts, the Inspector's report, adopted by the Secretary of State in her call-in decision, is seductively clear in its reasoning.

English Heritage argued that the only true test of whether a building had an economic life was to see if anyone would buy it on the market.

He started first by looking at the value of what is already there. He concluded that the buildings make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Critically, that meant the tests in PPG15 for demolition of listed buildings applied in this case, notwithstanding that the principal building was not listed. Permission for demolition could be given if the building could be shown to be unsustainable in economic terms, or, if there was a substantial community benefit to be derived from the replacement building.

A complicating factor for the site is the Thameslink railway over which the building forms a bridge. The building needs repair and it was argued that this needed to be done for safety, had to be done urgently before planned development of Thameslink took place and would cost a bank-breaking amount of money (if we can still use that phrase to mean 'large').

English Heritage argued that the only true test of whether a building had an economic life was to see if anyone would buy it on the market. The building had not been fully marketed. The developer said, in short, that in light of the costs of the repairs and the need to crack on with them, it could be shown on paper that no one would find the building economically attractive.

Stuff that has been identified as interesting is to be kept, unless there is a good reason not to do so. This applies to all designations and all grades.

The Inspector agreed that a re-use scheme looked 'borderline' on paper. But even in a paper exercise he said that one should ignore the costs of repair due to the owner's neglect. This improved the figures for the building's retention.

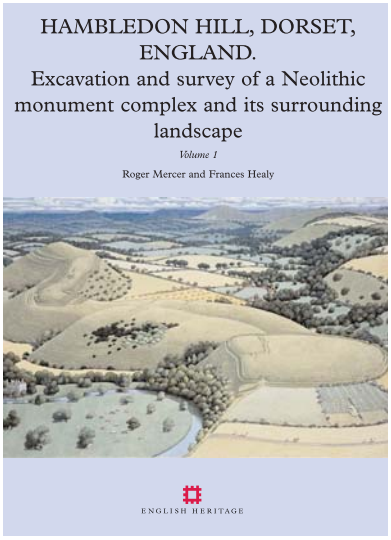
However, the tipping point of the Inspector's reasoning was this: genuine marketing was the only true way to prove that no one would view the existing buildings as economically attractive. He did not consider that such marketing had taken place. The inspector did also consider the benefits of demolishing and, as a result, being able to replace the structure over the railway sooner. That was a benefit, but not enough, in the circumstances, to outweigh the loss of the buildings.

Although not key to the decision to retain the buildings, the Inspector did comment that the proposal for the replacement building caused harm to the character and appearance of the area, partly by being out of character with the small-scale uses in Smithfield. Indeed, what is very notable is that the Inspector emphasised the importance of current uses and unit size in giving the area its character – looking at activity as well as the bricks and mortar that envelop it.

Permission for demolition and the new build were refused. There is a truly important message being reinforced here. Stuff that has been identified as interesting is to be kept, unless there is a good reason not to do so. This applies to all designations and all grades. The good reasons for letting something go are set out in PPG 15. Proving you have a good reason is an intentionally rigorous task.

While the future of the building is not yet clear, the planning considerations that apply to its future most definitely are.

New publications from English Heritage



Hambledon Hill, Dorset, England: Excavation and Survey of a Neolithic Monument Complex and its Surrounding Landscape

Roger Mercer and Frances Healy

A programme of excavation and survey directed by Roger Mercer between 1974 and 1986 demonstrated that Hambledon Hill was the site of an exceptionally large and diverse complex of earlier Neolithic earthworks. The abundant cultural material preserved in its ditches and pits provides information about numerous aspects of contemporary society and the distinct depositional signatures of various parts of the complex reflect their diverse use.

A complementary relationship with Cranborne Chase is indicated by a fairly abrupt diminution of activity on the hill in the late 4th millennium, when the massive Dorset cursus and several smaller monuments were built near by. Excavation proves, however, that there was renewed activity on the hill at various times during the 3rd and 2nd millennia before the site was finally used for the construction of a major Iron Age hillfort.

One of the first titles in English Heritage's new print-on-demand programme, this important new research report is illustrated with 348 line drawings and half tones, 9 colour plates plus 193 tables.

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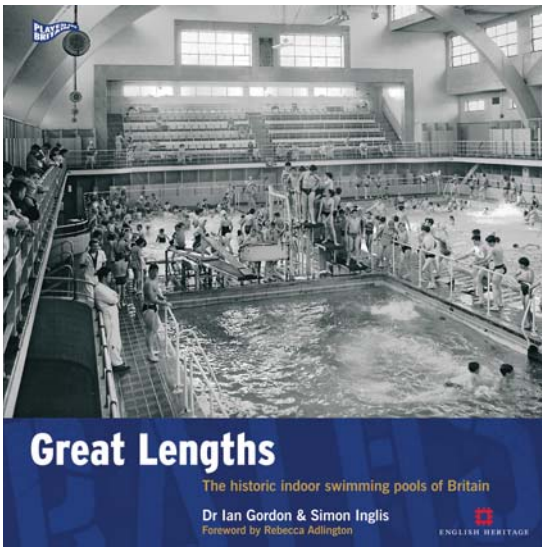

Great Lengths: The Swimming Pools of Britain

Ian Gordon and Simon Inglis

Great Lengths, the eighth book in the acclaimed Played in Britain series, traces the development of indoor public baths and pools, from the earliest subscription baths of the Georgian period to the current generation of leisure pools with their flumes and potted palm trees.

Between the 1880s and 1914 more than 600 baths were constructed, many rich in architectural detail and technological innovation. Together they reflect the civic pride of their creators, as greater awareness of hygiene and physical fitness brought safe swimming and recreation to the urban masses. A further burst of activity between the wars saw a new generation of concrete and glass Art-Deco baths and in the 1960s these were joined by classic Modern designs.

Great Lengths is no mere exercise in nostalgia. Scores of Victorian and Edwardian baths have been allowed to deteriorate. Dozens remain closed and the subject of long-running campaigns for restoration. Yet many modern baths built in the late 20th century have also been found wanting. For this reason, this book will serve as an important reference for anyone involved in the current debate, whether as swimmers or providers.

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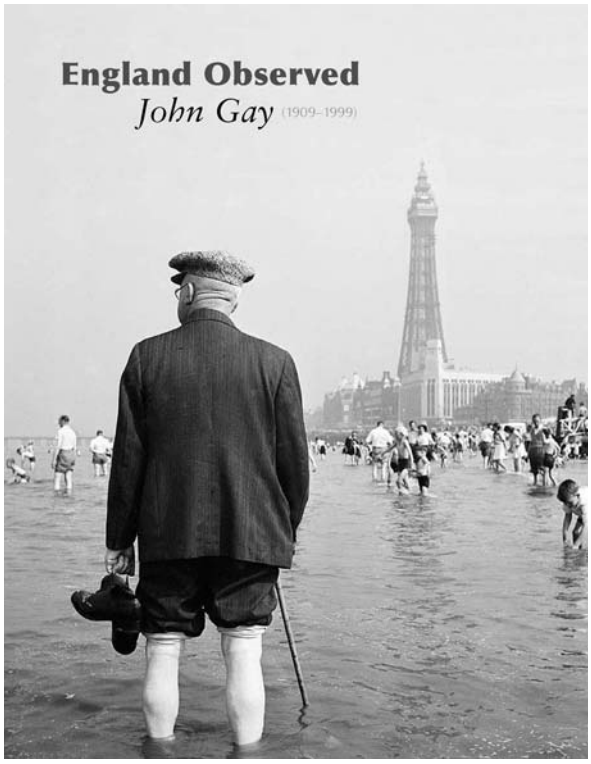

England Observed: John Gay (1909–1999)
edited by Andrew Sargent

John Gay was one of the most respected photographers of the mid-20th century but, unlike some of his contemporaries, his work is now largely overlooked. This important book includes 300 evocative photographs from the large collection of his photographs held by the National Monuments Record.

John Gay came to England in 1935 from Germany, and much of his photographic output can be viewed as an exploration of his adopted homeland. John Gay worked extensively for *Country Fair*, *The Strand*, *Farmer's Weekly*, published several photographic books and collaborated with authors such as Sir John Betjeman and the architectural historian Gavin Stamp.

To celebrate the centenary of John Gay's birth an exhibition of his images, drawing on the substantial collection bequeathed to the NMR, will be held at Kenwood House, from 29 January to 29 March 2009, open daily from 11.30am to 4pm. Short tours of the exhibition will take place at 2.30pm, Friday – Sunday, admission free.

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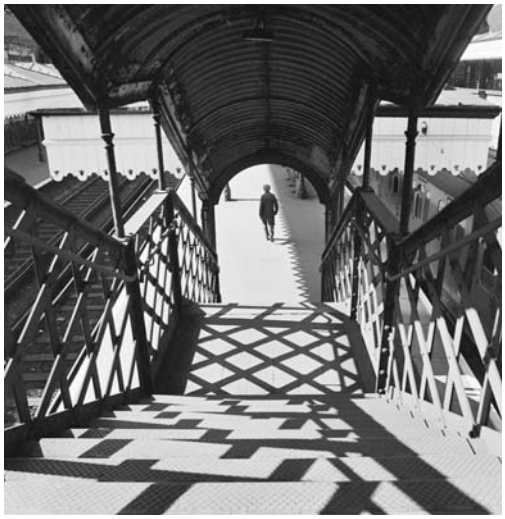
SPECIAL OFFER

Until 31 January 2009 *Historic Views of London* (see p 45) *England Observed* and *Great Lengths* will be available to *Conservation Bulletin* readers at a special discount price of £17.00, plus £2.00 P&P, through English Heritage Postal Sales at the address shown below (please quote CONBULL59).



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