

Heritage at Risk



Historic England

West Midlands Summary 2016



There are **430 entries** on the 2016 Heritage at Risk Register for the West Midlands, some 8% of the national total of 5,341. In 2015 we have continued to see the removal of entries from our Register, reflecting the national trend and clear testament to the hard work of all who engage with conservation across the region. Our local Heritage at Risk team, led by Rhodri Evans, continue to work in partnership with owners, local authorities and other stakeholders to find sustainable solutions for sites on the Register and have identified ten varied top priorities for the coming year. The Register is a dynamic list and, even with the successes we have seen, we continue to add entries, such as increasing numbers of places of worship.

Veryan Heal Planning Director, West Midlands



We have 100 **places of worship** on the Register having removed 22 from the 2015 Register, but adding 31 to the 2016 Register. The Heritage Lottery Fund's Grants for Places of Worship scheme is critical in helping congregations

fund much needed repairs. In many cases the Places of Worship Support Officers we part-fund in the dioceses of Hereford, Worcester and Lichfield have helped secure these grants. We are currently in discussion with the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham to part-fund a similar position within their organisation. Grant aid is an important element of all their work but a strategy and action plan for these buildings at risk is also needed. We are developing this with our Places of Worship Support Officers and will be approaching potential partners in the year ahead.

To tackle some of the issues effecting the 88 **listed buildings at risk** we have been working with our specialist legal advisers, quantity surveyors and engineers to provide training for local authority staff and councillors in the effective use of their enforcement powers. We have provided detailed support at Pitchford Hall in Shropshire, and Big Mill, a grade II listed building in the Leek Conservation Area, where we offered grant

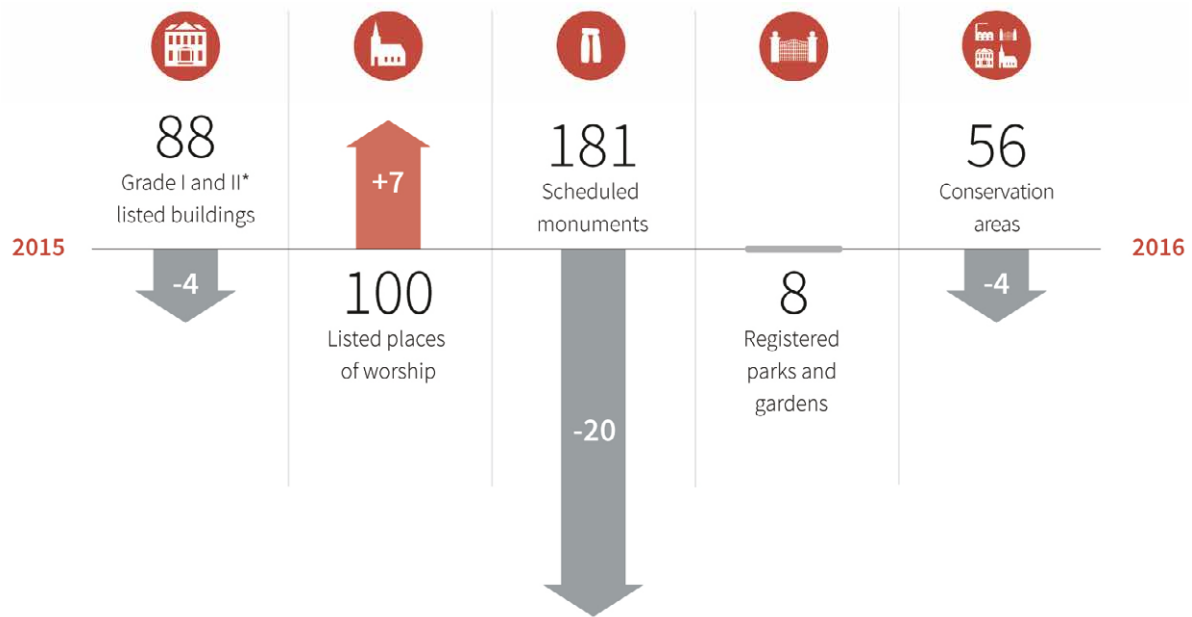
aid to support an Urgent Works Notice. In 2016 we will focus these grants and our Partnership Schemes in conservation areas where local authorities have heritage enforcement strategies informed by the **Conservation Area Survey** and grade II building at risk surveys.

We have identified **ten top priorities** for engagement through our advice and grants in 2016. Each one bring their own issues and reflect the range of challenges we, and our partners, face. Last year's analysis showed that 34.5% of the nation's castles at risk were in the West Midlands. As a result we have responded by including two of these castles, Snodhill and Clifford, in the top ten and our local team will be working hard with owners to improve their condition through grant aid. The others are 31 High Street, Droitwich, the Burges Conservation Area in Coventry, the Price & Kensington Teapot Factory in Stoke on Trent and Stoke Town Conservation Area, Bedlam Furnace in the Ironbridge Gorge and the former School of Art and the Public Baths both on Moseley Road in Birmingham and Curzon Street Station, Birmingham.

Rhodri Evans
Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

Cover image: In 2016 Historic England helped local residents of **Snodhill in Herefordshire** establish the Snodhill Castle Preservation Trust to save their castle. A professional team commissioned by Historic England has prepared a schedule of urgent works which will tackle the worst areas of collapse. The new trust will take these forward with one of our Repair Grants for Heritage at Risk and hopes to win Heritage Lottery Fund funding for further repair, research and interpretation to bring the castle back into the heart of the community.

Designated assets on the 2016 West Midlands Register



There are **433** assets on the West Midlands Register, **21** fewer than in 2015

St Joseph Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire



This remarkable Roman Catholic Church with its pedimented west end and flanking west towers was built in 1925. Its allusions to Rome are clearly evident in its use of Romanesque forms and Italian iconography and its design, influenced by local materials, including polychromatic brickwork and buff-coloured pantiles which quickly became

discoloured by the smoke of the surrounding potteries.

The exterior is in sharp contrast to the interior, where focus is on the lavishly decorated apsidal sanctuary with Christ in Majesty surrounded by angels and saints. The decoration of the church is attributed to Gordon Forsyth, superintendent of art education at the Burslem School of Art from 1920. Under his tutelage, parishioners were

instructed in the decorative arts and produced most of the stained glass windows and the scheme of decoration for the nave and gallery ceilings.

The primary threat to the church was water ingress through defective roof coverings, rainwater goods and high level brickwork in need of repointing: parts of the gilded sanctuary ceiling had already been damaged by leaking gutters. Grant-aided repairs carried out under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme in 2011 left the nave roof, its eaves gutters and clerestory masonry to be attended to as a second phase of works. Though this work was urgently required, an application to the then new Grants for Places of Worship scheme in 2013 was unsuccessful. The Church subsequently made a successful bid to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in 2015 and the outstanding repairs were completed in spring 2016.

Moseley Road Baths Balsall Heath, Birmingham

Opened in 1907, Moseley Road Baths is one of the most complete examples of Edwardian Bath Houses in England. The baths occupy an ornate brick building with terracotta detailing and decorative round-arched cast iron trusses over the pools. The building retains first and second class pools, changing booths, drying racks, ticket offices and slipper baths for individual bathing.

Owned and operated by Birmingham City Council, the grade II* baths have been on the Register since 2005 and continue to decline in condition. The leaking roof and chlorine used in the pools have resulted in extensive corrosion of structural ironwork, rendering the 'Gala' pool's viewing balcony unsafe. The 'Gala' pool closed in 2004 and swimming in the smaller pool is now under threat. The use, repair and maintenance of this building present a major challenge.

The Friends of Moseley Road Baths and the Moseley Road Baths Action Group responded to the plight of the baths following the collapse of the City Council's plans for a



Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Through their hard work, and our funding, an Options Appraisal has been completed and we look forward to working with the community and City Council to develop a sustainable future for the building.

50th Anniversary of Conservation Areas

In 2017, Historic England will celebrate the 50th anniversary of conservation areas. These precious historic areas, from urban and industrial to rural and remote, create a strong sense of place and are likely to be what you think of when you think of special local character.

We'll carry out research into people's attitudes towards conservation areas and the challenges they

face in protecting them. We also plan to analyse local authorities' conservation area survey data to better understand what puts conservation areas up and down the country at risk. Finally, at a time when local authority resources are under pressure, we'll ask how local civic groups and organisations can become more involved to help safeguard conservation areas.

For more information contact:

Rhodri Evans, Historic England West Midlands
The Axis, 10 Holliday Street,
Birmingham, B1 1TG
Telephone: 0121 625 6870
Email: west.midlands@HistoricEngland.org.uk
Twitter: @HE_WestMids

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