



INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

Valuing Historic Places

Historic buildings and places have played an increasingly central role in the past decade in the delivery of a range of public policy objectives including education, economic development, sustainable growth, urban and rural regeneration, repopulation of inner-city areas, improving competitiveness, cultural development, and supporting local communities. The historic environment underpins many successful projects aimed at improving quality of life, transforming failing areas, empowering local community groups and creating a better and more sustainable environment. Historic Buildings have their own intrinsic value and any nation that claims to cherish cultural achievement in any field has a duty to care for them. The value of historic buildings and places is recognised in UK legislation and in our being a signatory to various international conventions (UNESCO, ICOMOS, Valetta, etc). Value is also conferred by every authority and amenity body in the UK and by the growing popularity of historic buildings/places in the public mind.

The historic environment delivers a range of benefits, as follows:

Education

The Historic Environment provides a tangible resource for the teaching of social, economic, political and human history, creating a better understanding of contemporary society, contributing to effective school, continuing and adult education.

Sustainable Communities

The historic environment is crucial to the delivery of sustainable communities and the creation of places where people positively choose to live, work, invest and spend recreation time.

Intrinsic Value

Historic Buildings and places have intrinsic value in their own right as the fabric of human achievement in arts, design and construction, essential to the spiritual and cultural well being of the nation

Regeneration

Historic buildings and areas are key elements in the regeneration of cities, towns and rural areas all around the UK, facilitating the modernisation and adaptation of places to 21st century needs and helping in the transformation of failing areas into thriving sustainable communities.

New Businesses and Innovation

Historic buildings help to provide diversity in the nature and affordability of commercial and industrial floorspace and are crucial to the development of small businesses, creative industries and innovation.

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Economic Development and Competitiveness

A high quality environment, old and new, is a prerequisite to maximising economic development potential, projecting a positive image, attracting high value jobs and investment, and improving competitiveness.

Creative New Design

The historic environment provides a basis for understanding architectural design and urban morphology and creates a context and stimulus for creative and innovative new designs and the development of new architectural styles.

Responsibility to Future Generations

There is a duty to conserve the built heritage for current and future generations.

Urban Design Quality and Variety

Historic areas provide demonstrably superior urban design, including permeable and pedestrian friendly places, legible townscapes, mixed use, greater variety of urban forms and superior public realms.

Sustainable use of Resources

The conservation and refurbishment of historic buildings is an intrinsically sustainable form of development, avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment, and helping to achieve sustainable growth.

Skills

Conservation practice creates more skilled jobs (professional, technical, skilled manual, and vocational) and employment in craft-based industries.

Human Resources

Compared to new-build development, building refurbishment generates higher levels of pay and investment in local economies.

Local Distinctiveness and Pride

Investment in historic places helps to support local businesses, industries and communities, preserve local distinctiveness and identity (sense of place), and foster local pride.

Supporting Local Communities

Selective redevelopment based around the historic environment is almost universally more successful than large-scale comprehensive redevelopment, better fulfilling the needs of local communities and maintaining local cultural, social and economic diversity.

Social inclusion

Historic buildings and areas can provide accommodation for a range of social and community facilities, better accessibility and choice for non-car owners, low rental business accommodation, affordable housing, and a basis for transforming under-performing areas and creating new life opportunities.

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Tourism

Historic places and buildings attract visitors and are an essential element of the Tourism industry, an important sector of the UK economy.

Culture

The historic environment is the embodiment of local and national culture, whilst also accommodating a range of cultural artefacts and activities.

Leisure and 24 Hour Economy

Historic areas often provide the focus for leisure facilities, from theatres and art installations to restaurants and bars.

City Living

Historic buildings, areas and waterways are a catalyst for the repopulation of inner city areas and development of new housing markets.

Rural Renaissance

Historic buildings and places have helped to accommodate new uses, facilitate economic diversification and form a basis for tourism and the visitor economy in rural areas and small settlements.

Enhanced Values

Listed buildings, in office or domestic use, deliver consistently higher yields and values than other buildings.

The Future of Historic Places

It is only through proper protection of the historic environment and investment in its maintenance, repair and adaptation that these substantial benefits can continue to be realised.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional body for the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

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