

# Valuing Historic Places

## Introduction

Historic buildings and places have played an increasingly central role in the delivery of a range of public benefits, including education, economic development, sustainable growth, urban and rural regeneration, repopulation of inner-city areas, improved competitiveness, cultural development, and providing facilities for local communities. The historic environment underpins many successful projects aimed at improving quality of life, transforming failing areas, empowering local people 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 charters and conventions (UNESCO, Council of Europe, etc). Value is also conferred by every authority and amenity body in the UK and by the growing popularity of historic buildings and places in the public mind.

## Value and Benefits of Heritage

The historic environment delivers a range of public benefits:

### **Social, Economic and Environmental Value**

#### **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 21<sup>st</sup> century needs and helping in the transformation of failing areas into thriving communities.

#### **Enterprise, Innovation and Creative Industries**

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

#### **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.

#### **Tourism**

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

## **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.

## **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.

## **Areas of Deprivation**

In areas of market failure and deprivation, schemes to improve and enhance heritage assets can often help to create confidence, improve image, attract investment, create new facilities for social enterprise and act as a catalyst to reverse economic decline.

## **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.

## **Sustainable Patterns of Development**

Historic areas were designed for a low-carbon economy, usually having environments based on the needs of pedestrians with rear of pavement frontages and permeable layouts,

## **Mixed Use**

Older areas usually provide a fine grain of mixed use

## **Human Resources**

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

## **Public Value**

### **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.

### **Public Support**

Surveys have shown that protecting heritage, including twentieth century buildings, enjoys the support of the vast majority of the population.

### **Legacy for Future Generations**

There is a public acceptance that we have a duty to conserve the built heritage for current and future generations.

### **Local Distinctiveness and Pride**

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

### **Local Empowerment**

Historic buildings are used by local voluntary groups and third sector organisations, such as building preservation trusts and development trusts, to provide facilities for local people to improve their skills and opportunities.

### **Urban Design Quality and Variety**

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

## **Cultural, Learning and Skills Value**

### **Education**

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

### **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.

## **Culture**

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

## **Skills**

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

## **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.

# **The Future for Historic Environments**

It is only through proper protection, conservation and management of the historic environment, supported by 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 practitioners in the public, private and third 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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