



## **Developing Training for Conservation Professionals: EH/IHBC Annual Schools 2008 & 2009**

### **IHBC Annual School Guildford 2008 HEEP Project 5540 MAIN**

#### **1. Introduction**

IHBC members represent specialist historic environment professionals working across the entire spectrum of historic environment activities. Members range from educators, archaeologists and historians to planners, surveyors, architects and project managers. IHBC members also come from a variety of service providers - including the public, private and voluntary sectors. The work of members varies from overseeing small-scale traditional repairs to managing multi-million pound area regeneration projects. 67% of local authorities in England benefit from an IHBC member on their staff (Quantifying Local Planning Authority Conservation Staffing, 2006/7) and around half of the IHBC membership is employed in local authority work. The IHBC is uniquely capable of representing the full range of specialist disciplines in historic environment conservation.

The 2006 Annual School in Plymouth attracted 150 delegates (99 full residential, 10 full non-residential, 41 day school) and the 2007 Annual School in Liverpool attracted 165 delegates (104 full residential, 16 full non-residential, 45 day school). By 2008 attendance had risen to 199 (76 full residential, 9 full non-residential, 114 day school). The significant rise in Day School delegates was felt to be down to careful organisation of the School but also affected by the proximity of the event to London and the South East. The combined delegate numbers gave the 2008 Annual School the largest attendance of any IHBC Annual School.

At the time of the 2007 Annual School the IHBC had 1,587 members and 8.4% of the total IHBC membership attended. Almost 20% of delegates were from outside the IHBC membership.

By the 2008 Annual School the IHBC membership had risen to 1,783 and 143 of the 2008 School delegates were members of the IHBC. Thus 8% of the IHBC membership attended the 2008 Annual School. This maintained the average of around 8% of the entire membership attending each year.

The School clearly also provides important training opportunities for those who are not members of the IHBC with almost 30% of 2008 delegates being from outside the membership.

## **2. Ensuring maximum feedback from school**

All delegates were provided with a printed copy of a feedback form and asked to return them at the end of the event, or that part of the event they were attending. By the end of the Annual School only 12 forms had been returned which was an insufficient number to analyse feedback adequately. In order to ensure better feedback all delegates were emailed with an electronic copy of the form immediately after the event. A further 40 forms were returned electronically almost by return. Over the next few weeks 27 further forms were received by post - a combination of those given out to delegates and those sent out electronically. A total of 79 feedback forms were received.

The multi pronged approach to ensuring feedback this year has paid dividends with a very substantial increase in feedback from previous years. The level of feedback information and quality of responses has also increased.

The quality and relevance of questions in the feedback form was also carefully considered to ensure that responses were relevant and usable. A larger number of free text questions were included which allowed delegates to discuss how the School met their CPD requirements, which elements of the school they felt most beneficial and other general comments.

### Number of delegates and return of Feedback Forms 2006-2008

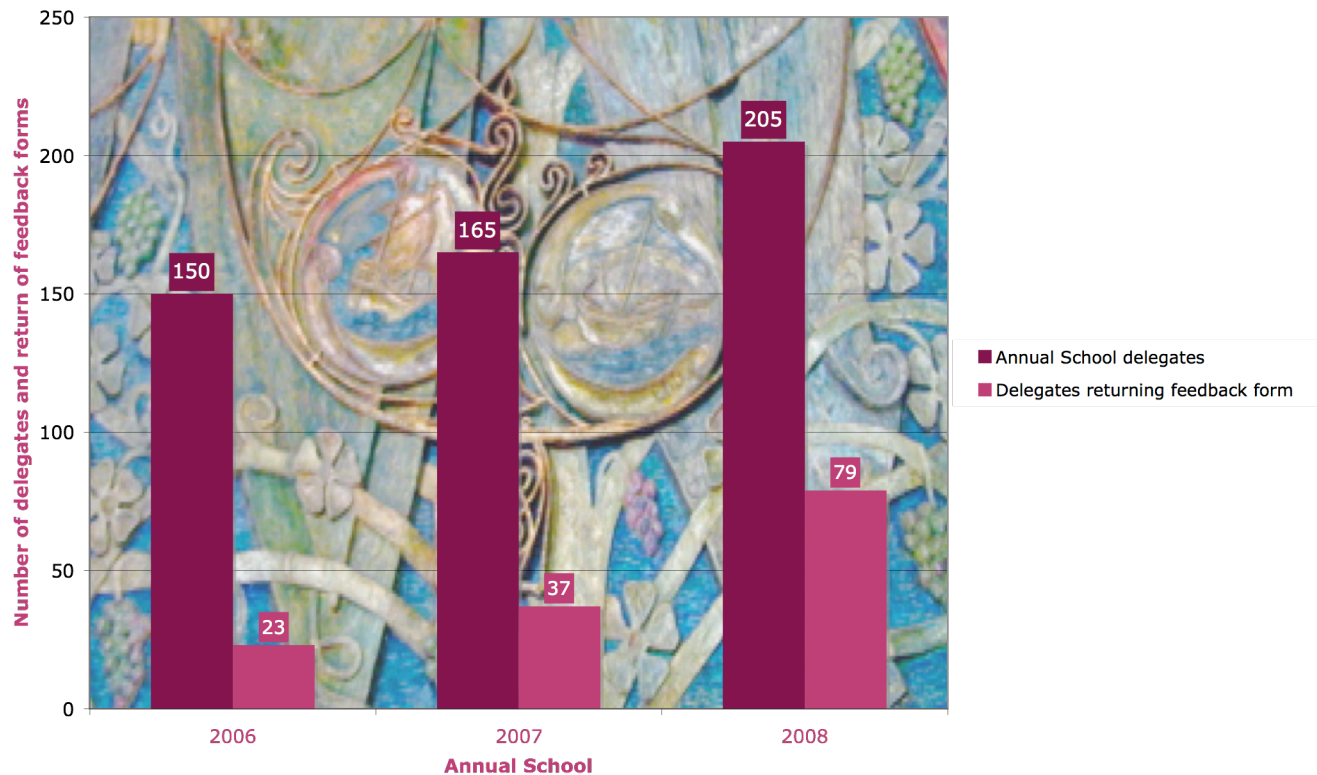


Figure 1 Delegate feedback received

### 3. Monitoring success of training capacity of school – meeting the IHBC competences

The IHBC Annual School helps members' meet the IHBC's Areas of Competence and maintain these competencies. These Competences are the key membership criteria of the Institute and Annual School programmes are developed to cover as many aspects of them as possible. The Competences are shown in the table below (with more information available at [http://www.ihbc.org.uk/1main\\_pages/membership.html](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/1main_pages/membership.html)). The Areas of Competence are, however, equally relevant to non members, conservation professionals and other built environment professionals.

Professional Competences	Practical Competences 1: Investigation	Practical Competences 2: Management	Practical Competences 3: Implementation
PHILOSOPHY(1)	HISTORY (3)	LEGISLATION & POLICY (5)	DESIGN & PRESENTATION (7)
PRACTICE (2)	RESEARCH, RECORDING & ANALYSIS (4)	FINANCE & ECONOMICS (6)	TECHNOLOGY(8)

Figure 2 IHBC Areas of Competence

The matrix below explains how the 2008 Annual School provided training to meet the IHBC Areas of Competence and also dealt with the identified themes of the school (placemaking, planning, governments roles, principles of conservation and historic areas). It shows that the Annual School provided almost 30 hours of quality CPD and that the sessions provided training options to cover all of the IHBC Areas of Competence. It is possible using the various options available for delegates to further develop all or some of their competences. The 2008 School was very strong on the training for the Practice competence reflecting the Schools strongly practice based themes of placemaking, planning, governments roles, principles of conservation and historic areas.

Figure 3

INDICATIVE MATRIX OF COMPETENCES AND THEMES ADDRESSED: IHBC ANNUAL SCHOOL 2008

	Thursday 26 June		
Areas of Competence (Competence) & Themes	Fringe School	Town tours	Guildford
Professional (Philosophy)			
Professional (Practice)			
Practical: Investigation (History)			
Practical: Investigation (Research, Recording Analysis)			
Practical: (Management (Legislation & Policy)			
Practical : Management (Finance & Economics)			
Practical: Implementation (Design & Presentation)			
Practical Implementation 1 (Technology)			
Themes: Placemaking			
Themes: Planning			
Themes: Government Roles			
Themes: Principles of conservation			
Themes: Historic Areas			
CPD Hours (Grouped totals by session)	2.5	2.5	0.5

	Friday 27 June Day school lectures							
Areas of Competence (Competence) & Themes	Keynote	English Heritage	Landscape Urbanism	Tools in placemaking	Spatial management	Area evaluation	Building in Context	Trends in planning
Professional (Philosophy)	Kay Andrews	Steve Bee	Graham Marshall	Rob Cowan	Rynd Smith	John Cattell	Nigel Barker	Ben Linscott
Professional (Practice)								
Practical: Investigation (History)								
Practical: Investigation (Research, Recording Analysis)								
Practical: (Management (Legislation & Policy)								
Practical : Management (Finance & Economics)								
Practical: Implementation (Design & Presentation)								
Practical Implementation 1 (Technology)								
Themes: Placemaking								
Themes: Planning								
Themes: Government Roles								
Themes: Principles of conservation								
Themes: Historic Areas								
CPD Hours (Grouped totals by session)	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6



	Friday 27 Day school classes									
Areas of Competence (Competence) & Themes	Clay Cross Regeneration	Conservation area management	Tools in area evaluation	Survey and landscape survey demo	Area Community Engagement	Informing priorities place management	Unsuspected fund and strategies	Project development & area interventions	Rural opportunities	Understanding Lim
Professional (Philosophy)										
Professional (Practice)										
Practical: Investigation (History)										
Practical: Investigation (Research, Recording Analysis)										
Practical: (Management (Legislation & Policy)										
Practical : Management (Finance & Economics)										
Practical: Implementation (Design & Presentation)										
Practical Implementation 1 (Technology)										
Themes: Placemaking										
Themes: Planning										
Themes: Government Roles										
Themes: Principles of conservation										
Themes: Historic Areas										
CPD Hours (Grouped totals by session)	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

	Saturday 28 June					Sunday 29 June	Totals
Areas of Competence (Competence) & Themes	Odiham talk	Bramshill House talk	Catterham Barrack talk	Odiham & Bramshill visit	Catterham Watts gallery visit		
Professional (Philosophy)							
Professional (Practice)							
Practical: Investigation (History)							
Practical: Investigation (Research, Recording Analysis)							
Practical: (Management (Legislation & Policy)							
Practical : Management (Finance & Economics)							
Practical: Implementation (Design & Presentation)							
Practical Implementation 1 (Technology)							
Themes: Placemaking							
Themes: Planning							
Themes: Government Roles							
Themes: Principles of conservation							
Themes: Historic Areas							
CPD Hours (Grouped totals by session)	0.3	0.3	0.3	6	6	2	29.3

#### 4. Monitoring success of training capacity of school – delegate feedback

Delegates were asked to give details of the presentation tour or seminar which they felt they gained the most from. The good spread of choices for their preferred presentation demonstrates that the school succeeded in providing something for all CPD requirements<sup>1</sup>. The particular popularity of talks and tours related to the main conference theme<sup>2</sup> demonstrates the success of the CPD produced in the intended focused area. General comments made by delegates on the CPD value of the conference and various aspects of it are reproduced at Appendix 1.

<sup>1</sup> Delegates rated 4 of the 9 tours, 9 of the 13 talks and 9 of the 10 classes as their preferred choice.

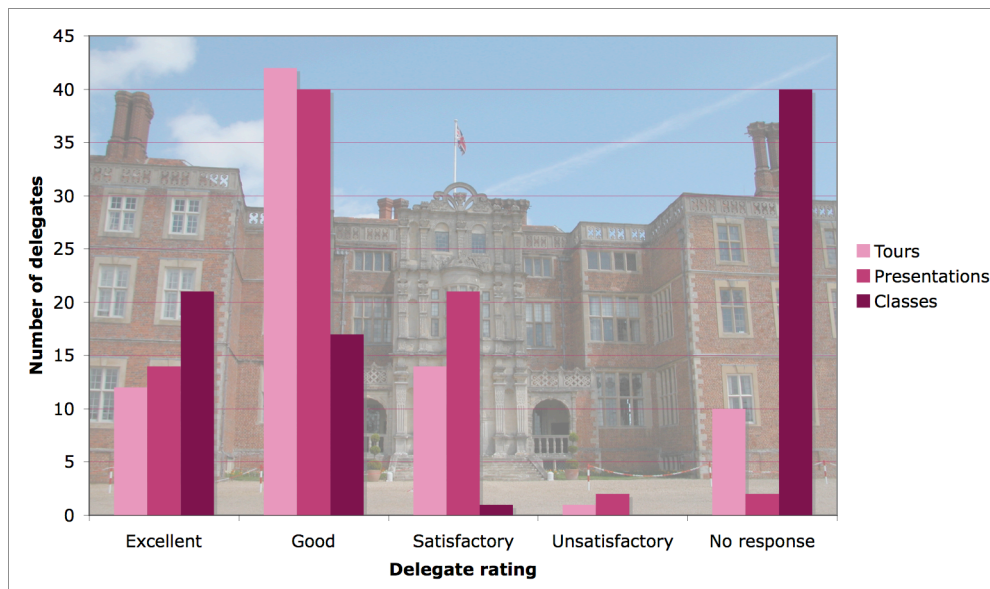
<sup>2</sup> Design and place - tools in placemaking - Rob Cowan (Friday talk), Catterham Barracks (Saturday tour), Landscape Urbanism - Graham Marshall (Friday talk), Conservation Area Appraisals (Friday class), Masterplanning tools in area evaluation (Friday class).

### Preferred presentation, tour or seminar



*Figure 2 Delegate choice of talk, class or tour from which they gained most*

Delegates were also asked to rate their general view on the quality of the presentations, classes and tours at the School. Over 60% of delegates rated the various aspects of the School as good or excellent (see figure 3).



*Figure 3 Delegate rating of quality of presentations, classes and tours.*

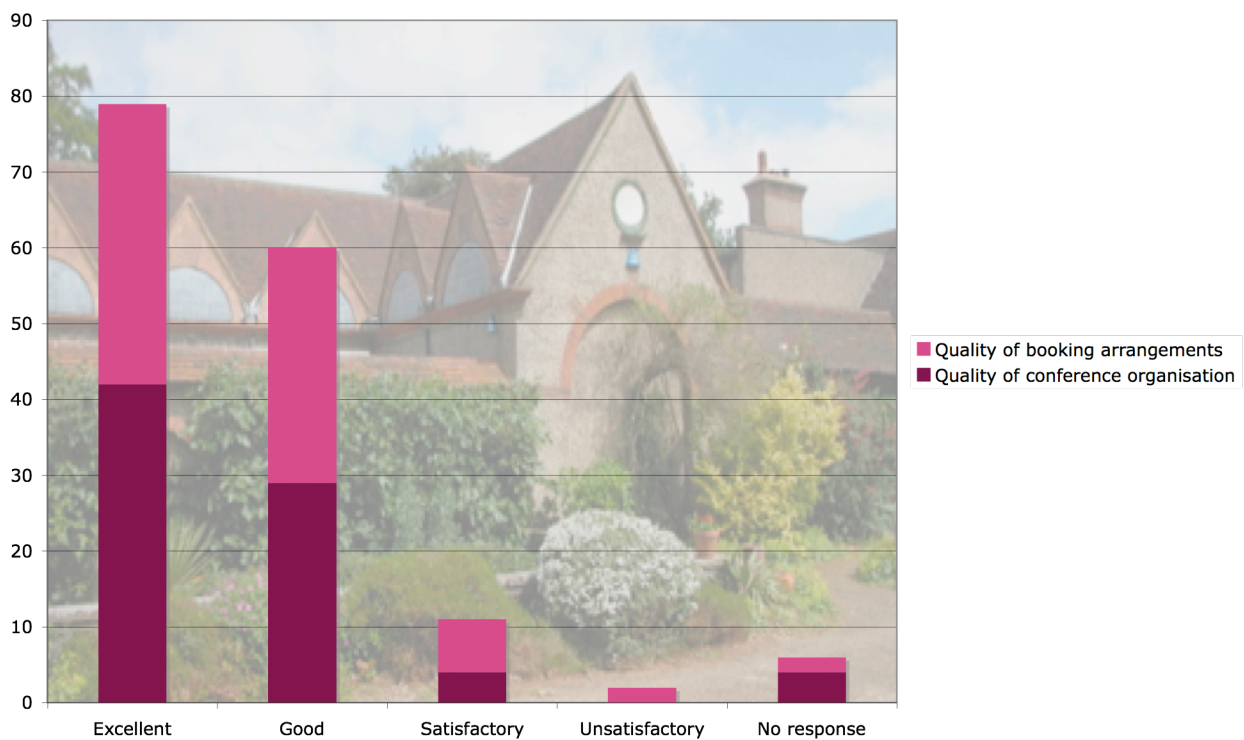
Delegates were asked to rate the organisation of the conference and the booking arrangements. This assessment was very important to the IHBC National Office as this was the first year that centralised booking through a fully web based booking system had been introduced. 88% of delegates rated the organisation and aspects of the School as good or excellent (see figure 4). Some delegates suggested that payment by credit card would be a useful service. This was investigated prior to the School but was found to be too expensive for a relatively small number of bookings. Many delegates offered unprompted comments on the organisation of the event such as the following examples:

- The Annual School was a well-organised and an enjoyable event.
- A well organised, great weekend through which I met some lovely people and learned a lot, thank you!!
- I thought that the whole thing was excellent – very professional.
- A good experience. Well-organised programme. Well controlled. extremely well organised 1 day event. Timely relevant and focused.
- Another very good Annual school. The organisers had obviously worked very hard but produced a smooth and seamless series of events.
- I really can't think of any negatives.

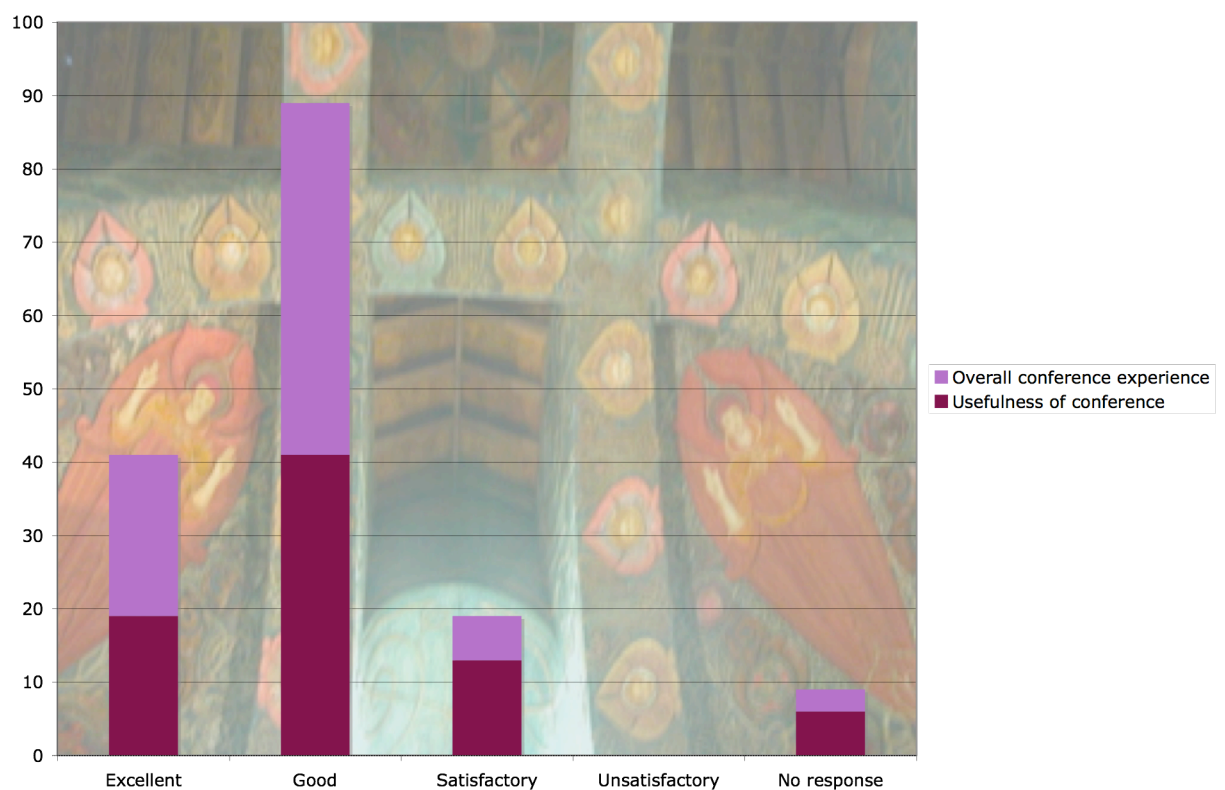
Delegates rated the overall experience they had at the conference and its usefulness very highly with 82% rating it as good or excellent. (See figure 5). They were also very keen to point out that aside from the formal training obtained from the Annual School one of the key benefits for them were the networking opportunities. Comments made included:

- It was useful to have the opportunity to network with other colleagues in the profession.
- The networking opportunities are fantastic and the social events add greatly to this.
- As with all such events, there was a positive benefit in interacting with peers and learning from the experience of others.

- Useful to hear talks, but also to discuss with other delegates on an informal basis.
- The discussions and exchange of experience and views with peer professionals is also a very valuable element in the conference experience.



*Figure 4 Delegate rating of conference organisation*



*Figure 5 Delegate rating of conference usefulness and overall experience*

#### **4. Developing the product on from previous years**

In line with recent changes in IHBC, including the appointment of professional staff, the IHBC is strengthening central support for, and direction of, national educational objectives. Stronger central input has been a key aspect of the 2008 Annual School. The IHBC National Office has managed bookings and carried out administration. It has also had a much more hands on involvement in the organisation of the event and especially the Day School.

This has allowed the branch volunteers to concentrate on delivering a very high standard of events which add a local flavour such as tours and social events. Feedback on social events was also very positive and many delegates commented that the "social events were very well organised and very enjoyable", "combining historic venues with good hospitality"

The expansion and better organisation of the School classes first introduced in 2007 has helped the IHBC offer a wider variety of training opportunities to delegates which can be tailored to meet their identified individual CPD requirements. It allows delegates from the same employer to attend the same conference but to each get something different out of it. The classes are still being refined but feedback from last year was used to help ensure that delegates knew which class they were supposed to be attending in advance and that they were able to get in their main choice of class where possible.

#### **5. Lessons for the future from feedback**

The more extensive free text options on the feedback form allowed delegates to express concerns about areas of the Annual School which did not live up to their expectations or which they felt could be improved. This is important information as it allows the IHBC to consider how improvements can be made on the basic product of the Annual School.

##### **i) Venue**

###### **(1) Lecture Venue**

A number of delegates raised concerns about the lecture venue at the University of Surrey. The principle concern was poor sound quality in the hall. This has been fed back to the University but as the conference will be in another venue next year the only lesson to be learnt is to try and ensure that facilities are as good as possible and that sound, light and heat are all controllable with ease.

###### **(2) University Campus**

As the theme of the School was the spaces in between looking at a number of urban design issues the university campus came in for a good deal of criticism on account of its poor urban design, poor legibility and poor urban environment.



### **(3) Accommodation**

In 2007 feedback on the accommodation was very mixed. The Grade II Listed Adelphi Hotel was an excellent choice for location, convenience, economy and historic character but did have an air of faded grandeur that some delegates did not appreciate. Others however felt that staying there was a significant part of the experience of the Annual School.

The University of Surrey student accommodation provoked equally mixed feelings. Many delegates were happy with the accommodation but some felt that the rooms “felt grubby and not pleasant” were “tired” and one even felt that “The accommodation was third world. Stop using universities”. The quality of accommodation and venue are clearly very important to some delegates. Each conference location will have different accommodation and venue availability. The 2009 School is to be accommodated in a 4\* hotel so it is hoped that this will prove adequate. As the School uses different sorts of venues depending upon the region, location or theme it would not be possible or appropriate to introduce a standard for accommodation or other venues.

### **(4) Catering**

A number of delegates were concerned not about the standard of the catering but about the time taken in the university for food to be served and the long queues to serving points. The speed of catering at such events is always an issue and in knowledge of this the University were asked about the number of serving points, capacity and speed of service specifically on a number of occasions. This points to a need for further managing of the venue to ensure that they are able to deliver what is required.

## **ii) General comments on conference content**

### **(1) Adherence to theme – the spaces in between**

A large number of delegates expressed concern about the adherence of the Day School to the conference theme ‘Managing the spaces in between.’ For the Day School the IHBC had been able to assemble senior speakers from major heritage and planning organisations including the Planning Inspectorate, English Heritage and the Royal Town Planning Institute. In the main it appears to be these speakers who were considered to have spoken too much about their organisation’s role or aims rather than its contribution to the spaces in between.

Twenty two delegates made comment about this issue and it was by far the greatest noted comment or criticism. For example:

- My key concern was that the school did not stick to its theme. Too many sessions had nothing to do with conservation, management, and enhancement of spaces between buildings in historic places.
- The theme did not act as a strong thread throughout the day school.

- I'm not sure the title of the conference was applicable to all presentations.
- With the day school, some of the speakers covered subjects which had little to do with the conference theme.
- The lectures did not focus directly enough for me on the subject matter.
- Poor focus on conference theme

Whilst this issue was identified by some delegates a number also added that they had still learnt from the speakers and felt the CPD content of the talks to be useful even if they felt it to not be so directly related to the theme.

This issue is a difficult one to resolve. The speakers were told the subject of the conference and it was anticipated that this would be reflected in their talks. However their status and position did lend to the School a level of authoritativeness and explanation of cutting edge information that has perhaps been missing in some previous events.

## **(2) Discussion and timing**

Some delegates commented they felt that there was insufficient time given over to discussion. Others felt the workshops too rushed and workshop leaders had little time to properly develop their presentations. These two timing issues are very difficult to get right. Whilst some people may want discussion, debate and questions others would rather have information delivered to them by speakers or perhaps discuss the content afterwards. Delegates learn in different ways and the mix of learning opportunities presented by the School gives each person an opportunity to learn from methods which suit them best. Timing of sessions including the classes was handled as carefully as possible. It was felt by some that to keep things running to time a timer or more forceful chairing was required to ensure this was the case but generally the timing of the event went as planned. It may be that class tutors were trying to get too much into the time available.

## **(3) Handouts**

A number of delegates asked that handouts be provided on talks. This is very difficult to achieve with a conference of this type and is logistically very complicated. However the addition of papers to the web site will help address this and the provision of speakers synopsis for distribution in 2009 is being investigated.

## **(4) English focus**

Some delegates felt the focus on English planning legislation was not very relevant to those in the audience from other countries. This point will be born in mind for future Schools.



## **6. Conclusion**

The IHBC's Annual School has been operating successfully since before the foundation of the Institute in 1997, and is developed from the Schools pioneered by the Association of Conservation Officers and operated effectively each year since the mid 1980's. The Annual School is the principle platform for training and professional development for historic environment conservation specialists. It is the IHBC's flagship national annual event drawing from customer base of IHBC members, non-member conservation professionals and broad sector interests.

The successful delivery of the 2008 School has reinforced the importance of the IHBC Annual School in the annual training calendar of conservation professionals and provided the opportunity for delegates to obtain over thirty hours of Continuing Professional Development. The Annual School provided up to 4 days of focused training for conservation professionals through a series of different training methods including lectures, workshops, visits and networking opportunities.

As well as providing training opportunities for conservation professionals the Annual Schools have helped develop IHBC branch networks and increased volunteer capacity to provide a professional standard of training delivery.

The proceedings of 2008 Annual School were described in some detail in Context the journal of the IHBC (Issue 106 September 2008).

## **Appendix 1**

### **How did you feel the conference met your own training or CPD requirements?**

#### **Generally good for CPD**

- Very good
- There were a large number of interesting points raised
- Excellent.
- Very good.
- The School is essential part of my CPD since it gives me the opportunity to discuss and hear concerns and learn about national issues.
- As an introduction to the needs of and challenges faced by conservation professionals (particularly conservation officers) it was very useful.
- Like most conferences its difficult to get all you're looking for however the topics/talks were relevant.
- The presentations were good as an updating exercise and thought provoking
- Such conferences are always useful for CPD matters.
- Broadly relevant with several highly relevant presentations and the consistent opportunity to network
- As an associate member I found much of interest and much to learn.
- I felt all the presentations were appropriate to the school theme and my own training requirements
- It helped to put things in wider context and reinforced much practice
- Very relevant
- Several very good presentations
- Very useful
- Good learning experience
- So much packed into the Day School

#### **Not so good for CPD**

- Not sure it was overly helpful in this respect – the networking and tours perhaps yielded the most as the day school lectures were quite general in nature.
- I found most of the main presentations were too general to be of much assistance. Whilst it is comforting to have a government minister in attendance – at least they know the IHBC exists – I found that presentation particularly bland. The classes were of more use.
- There was little that was new to me
- Very little, nothing new, quite poor, preaching to the converted.
- I didn't learn as much as I hoped

#### **CPD points raised**

#### **Legislation**

- Good updates on heritage bill, planning bill etc.

- In particular it brought me up to date with current issues – new legislation pending etc.
- It's been extremely valuable as it increased my awareness of different legislative issues, initiatives within the sector as well as build on my knowledge of different stakeholders in the heritage environment.
- Keeping up with the latest changes to legislation/policy
- Enhanced understanding of planning framework and new legislation
- Update on emerging changing legislation and national planning guidance.

### **Current issues**

- It was keeping me up to day with what is happening south of the border.
- It addressed current issues in conservation
- The most helpful contributions were briefings on very current developments in legislations and policy.
- Informed me of current conservation issues
- Good for updating current practice and experience

### **Best practice**

- It is also good to see schemes of excellence, learning from best practice.

### **Practical solutions**

- Learning about practical or technical solutions is the most helpful aspect and I consider the emphasis should always be on this side of the school.
- I think that the presentations at the conference could have been improved by using interesting practical examples and allowing more time for discussion, particularly as the audience is very knowledgeable.

### **Theme of conference**

- My own training and / CPD requirements were met through the presentations of Area Initiatives, Landscape Urbanism, Design and place, Area evaluations, Building in Context and Challenges in spatial management the context of which widened my appreciation and understanding of spaces and settings that provide the framework for historic structures which is important towards the management of the historic environment.
- Furthermore, the visits to Bramshill House & Police College - provided an insight into the management of running a complex organisation highlighting immediate and future problems and issues.
- The town visit to Odiham which was lead by members of the parish committee, local historians and interested residents raised issues such as traffic, parking in association with new development,

demolition of a cottage and disabled access into a church further confirmed the pressures of modern day requirements on historic buildings and areas.

- As always it was a good networking opportunity, but it did not meet my aspirations as far as understanding/learning about areas as opposed to buildings.
- Very well, I am involved in the management of historic areas and so it was particularly relevant.
- It was a useful update and reminder of issues relevant in particular to Conservation Areas and design in general.
- Learning about place-making and evaluating historic environments

### **Themes of future conferences**

- Its useful that these annual schools always tackle different subjects ensuring variety.

### **International Perspective**

- In my opinion, the conference was very good and it would be great to have a larger international perspective with speakers from other countries in Europe as well as the world as it would give it a truly global perspective