# The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010



# Contents

- 1 Our Vision: Introduction and Overview
- 5 What do we mean by the historic environment?
- 7 The value of the historic environment
- 14 The role of Government and our Partners
- 17 Current and future context Progress and Challenges
- 20 Our commitment

This report has been prepared by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The following partners have contributed to this statement:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Department for Children, Schools and Families

Department for Communities and Local Government

The Crown Estate

The Department of Energy and Climate Change

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**English Heritage** 

Department of Health

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Defence

Natural England

#### **Image**

Front cover. Albert Dock Pump House and Pier Head, Liverpool, Merseyside, England Photo: © Britainonview /

# Our Vision: Introduction and Overview

**The Vision:** That the value of the historic environment is recognised by all who have the power to shape it; that Government gives it proper recognition and that it is managed intelligently and in a way that fully realises its contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the nation.

The Government believes that the historic environment is an asset of enormous cultural, social, economic and environmental value. It makes a very real contribution to our quality of life and the quality of our places. We recognise that while some of today's achievements may become tomorrow's heritage our existing heritage assets are also simply irreplaceable. We realise the importance of understanding, conserving, and where appropriate, enhancing the markers of our past. We believe in encouraging a wider involvement in our heritage, in order to ensure that everyone, both today and in the future, has an opportunity to discover their connection to those who have come before.

Aside from its inherent cultural value, the historic environment also has an important role to play in helping Government to achieve many of its broader goals. It can be a powerful driver for economic growth, attracting investment and tourism, and providing a focus for successful regeneration. Alongside the best in new design, it is an essential element in creating distinctive, enjoyable and successful places in which to live and work. Heritage can be a significant focus for the local community, helping to bring people together, to define local identities and to foster a new understanding of ourselves and those around us.

The historic environment even has a role to play in assisting us to meet one of the greatest challenges we face for the future. By promoting the inherent sustainability of historic buildings and their surroundings and by learning from them and the other types of evidence left by the low carbon economies of the past, we can make real progress in helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

To fully realise all this potential, however, it is vital not only that those who actively manage the historic environment, but also all those who have the potential to impact on it, recognise the contribution it can make to our collective aims.

Opposite. Heritage Trust for the North West. Craft workers outside Higherford Mill, Pendle Photo: James O. Davies © English Heritage

At the same time we must recognise that change is inevitable. While it is right to provide protection and support for our past, this must be managed intelligently, with an appropriate balance of priorities and an understanding of what could be gained or lost.

For Government this work starts, but does not end, with our statutory responsibilities for heritage protection; the designation and consent systems for heritage assets, and the management of the planning process. In shaping places, Government at all levels must give priority to creating high quality environments for those who use them, developing and implementing policies which seek to retain local distinctiveness and give due weight to the obligation to protect, enhance and promote the historic environment. At the same time it is also important that the public sector continues to invest in our own significant historic estate, recognising the impact we have on quality of place, and our responsibility to provide examples of good practice to others who own and seek to develop historic places.

Nevertheless, caring for our heritage is not something that we could, or should try to do alone. Government does have a significant role to play in setting strategic priorities while English Heritage provides expert advice to assist Government in carrying out its responsibilities, and a number of publicly funded bodies look after, and open to the public, historic properties which are the responsibility of Government. However the vast majority of our heritage is owned and cared for by others, including private individuals, faith communities and charitable bodies, so achieving our aims requires strong and effective partnerships. This is something to which we are firmly committed.

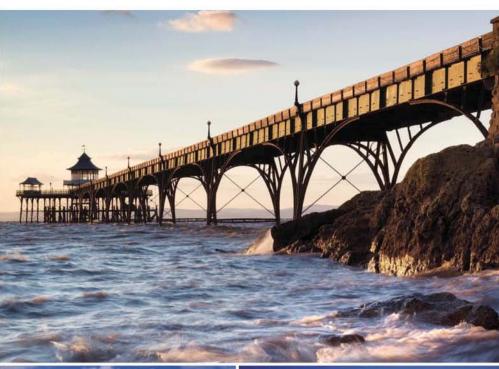
This document is intended to help Government to realise its vision for the historic environment, and to assist us in working jointly with others to achieve our aims. In it we set out our understanding of the value of the historic environment, and the many roles that Government and others can play. We consider the key opportunities for future involvement and the challenges we must address. Our analysis of these challenges and opportunities has led us to six broad strategic aims that we should strive to meet.

## Strategic aims for taking us forward

- **1 Strategic Leadership:** Ensure that relevant policy, guidance, and standards across Government emphasize our responsibility to manage England's historic environment for present and future generations.
- **2** Protective Framework: Ensure that all heritage assets are afforded an appropriate and effective level of protection, while allowing, where appropriate, for well managed and intelligent change.
- **3** Local Capacity: Encourage structures, skills and systems at a local level which: promote early consideration of the historic environment; ensure that local decision makers have access to the expertise they need; and provide sufficiently skilled people to execute proposed changes to heritage assets sensitively and sympathetically.
- 4 Public Involvement: Promote opportunities to place people and communities at the centre of the designation and management of their local historic environment and to make use of heritage as a focus for learning and community identity at all levels.
- **5 Direct Ownership:** Ensure all heritage assets in public ownership meet appropriate standards of care and use while allowing, where appropriate, for well managed and intelligent change.
- **6** Sustainable Future: Seek to promote the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and as part of its sustainable development agenda.













# What do we mean by the historic environment?

#### Images:

**Top left.** Fulwell Windmill *Photo:* © *Sunderland City Council* 

**Top right.** Clevedon Pier, Avon *Photo:* © *English Heritage* 

Middle left. The Grade One listed De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill Photo: © Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

Middle right. Dover Castle Roman Pharos & St Mary's Church Photo: © English Heritage

**Bottom**. Wheal Peevor (HLF) Photo: © Ainsley Cocks, Cornwall Council The physical legacy of thousands of years of human activity in this country is all around us in the form of buildings, monuments, landscapes and sites. It is a legacy of trade, population movement, architectural and artistic endeavour, economic, political and social development and the use of natural resources from prehistory to the present.

It is easy to identify the historic environment with iconic buildings and monuments, the cathedrals and castles of tourist guidebooks. These are rightly important to us and are of special interest to many people, but they are only a small part of the historic environment. Our history is equally reflected in the homes of ordinary people, in the street plans of historic towns and cities, in farm buildings and factories, in our public places, the landscapes we have created, and sites beneath our seas.

Many of the most significant heritage assets are given specific protection through our national systems of listing, scheduling, designation and registration. Some are also recognised internationally as World Heritage Sites and others are locally designated. It is also true that some heritage assets are not currently designated, but that should not necessarily be taken as an indication of their lack of significance.

At the same time we recognise that our sense of ourselves and our place in history does not derive solely from the historic environment as we describe it above. Our heritage embraces much more: from the smallest preserved objects of our past to historic ships and trains, and our intangible heritage of folklore, skills, traditions and biodiversity. All of these things are of significance and deserve to be cherished. While this statement does not seek to address these forms of wider heritage, it is important to note that the Government supports efforts to sustain them and make them accessible to everybody. We continue to value the advice we receive in all such areas, from bodies ranging from the Advisory Committee on National Historic Ships, which operates national registers of the most significant vessels and advises Government on all related matters, to the Treasure Valuation Committee which was established to provide independent scrutiny of valuations of finds of treasure that museums wish to acquire from the Crown and to advise the Secretary of State on related matters.



# The value of the historic environment

#### Images:

**Top left.** The Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life *Photo: James O. Davies* © *English Heritage* 

**Top right.** Dragon Hall Photo: © Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART)

**Bottom.** Investment in Whitby's distinctive historic townscape *Photo*: © *English Heritage* 

Investing in heritage makes good sense. The historic environment includes some of our most important cultural artefacts which offer economic, environmental, social and personal benefits and can play a significant role in providing for sustainable development.

In May 2009 the Government published *World Class Places – The Government's strategy* for improving quality of place.

#### In it we stated that:

"Quality of place matters in many ways....Bad planning and design and careless maintenance encourage crime, contribute to poor health, undermine community cohesion, deter investment, spoil the environment and, over the long term, incur significant costs." <sup>1</sup>

The strategy identifies four elements of quality of place, one of which is the treatment of historic buildings and places.

"High quality places ....understand the value of and make the most of their historic environment – of the infrastructure and buildings that past generations have bequeathed them." <sup>2</sup>

Indeed, evidence suggests that 9 out of 10 people agree that when improving local places, it is worth saving their historic features.<sup>3</sup> The Government would like all places to be attractive, valued, safe and sustainable, with a good mix of facilities, services and opportunities, a strong sense of identity, ample green space, a lively public realm and good community life. The historic environment clearly has an important role in this and should be seen as a vital contributor to improving the quality of place, and quality of life, for all.

- <sup>1</sup> World Class Places: The Government's Strategy for Improving Quality of Place, May 2009 p.6
- 2 Ibid p.12
- 3 Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport; DCMS

#### The Economy

Heritage contributes to prosperity by providing employment and training at every level, adding value to many developments and acting as a vital component of our tourism industry. A well cared-for historic environment is one of the keys to making a locality attractive to people, encouraging the retention of skilled workers and attracting inward investment.

Heritage can act as a catalyst in helping towns, cities and rural areas to regenerate and transform to modern needs. In areas of economic change and industrial decline, historic buildings have provided a focus for schemes and projects that have helped to trigger wider regeneration. They have been usefully adapted for cultural purposes, like art centres, galleries or museums, and flexible accommodation has been created for housing, small businesses, social enterprises, creative industries, charitable organisations and a range of other occupiers.

Investing in the historic environment can also encourage local growth by providing jobs, maintaining and enhancing skills and encouraging the use of local materials and services. Conservation and heritage offer employment at a variety of levels, with great potential for developing professional and craft skills. These jobs tend to be distributed across the country, as our heritage is, reflecting the need for specialist local knowledge in vernacular materials, archaeological and construction techniques.

And of course heritage is also a key strength of England as a tourist destination, attracting both domestic and international visitors whether to historic town centres, faith buildings, homes and monuments, parks and gardens, the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the legacies of our industrial past, seen in the diverse range of heritage assets associated with our canals and rivers. Heritage tourism directly accounts for £4.3 billion in GDP and 113,000 employees in the UK. Including historic green spaces this figure rises to £7.4 billion and 195,000 employees, making the sector larger than car manufacturing and advertising.<sup>4</sup>

4 Investing in Success: Heritage and the UK Tourism Economy, Heritage Lottery Fund, p8



Image:

Above. Dragon Hall Photo: ©Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART)

## **Case Study**

# Norwich 12

Norwich 12 is an initiative by the Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART), to transform 12 fragmented, often competing and separately managed venues into a co-ordinated cultural heritage destination, showcasing the development of the English City over the last 1000 years. Delivering co-ordinated education initiatives, promotion, events, regeneration schemes and pioneering the use of new technologies, N12 has secured wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits. These have included a Dragon Festival generating 55,000 visits over a month, a promotional guide which won the Creative East Award for Best Factual Publication 2009, Conservation Management Plans for all venues – a unique achievement in the UK; the use of cutting edge virtual reality modelling, web site and Bluetooth delivery information systems and a wide span of education projects from adult evening classes, through student bursaries to projects with local schools. One of the UK's finest urban collections of individually outstanding heritage buildings spanning the last millennium can now function as a genuinely effective driver for economic, social and cultural regeneration.

Norwich 12 was funded through the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget, with the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

www.norwich12.co.uk









#### Images:

**Top left.** Thatching is one of the craft skills at risk as the current generation of craftspeople retire *Photo:* © *English Heritage* 

Top right. Leigh Murray, a trainee stone waller on the Northumberland National Park Authority Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills project Photo: James O. Davies © English Heritage

Bottom left. With support from the HLF Bursary Training Scheme, the Broads Authority has recruited trainees to learn traditional reed and sedge cutting skills, and about traditional mill restoration, conservation and maintenance Photo: © Sarah Heaffey

Bottom right. Traditional slate roofing being used in the restoration of a rural farm building Photo: James O. Davies © English Heritage

### **Sustainable Communities**

In addition to their economic benefit, adapting existing buildings to new uses can be the most environmentally sustainable option for development. When managed well, using what is already there can be both environmentally more efficient and result in high quality schemes which retain a uniquely valuable sense of character. Where materials for historic building and landscape conservation can still be sourced locally, development also supports local industries and their communities. This again helps to secure local investment and lower transport costs.

Investment in historic buildings can be an energy efficient option, saving the energy associated with demolition, the creation and delivery of materials, the building process and waste disposal. One quarter of our existing building stock dates from before 1919 and represents a considerable carbon investment in its own right. No-one would claim that retaining existing buildings is automatically the best choice. But there should not be a presumption that new build will be better. Research has demonstrated that it is possible to make cost effective improvements to historic buildings which save energy without damaging their appearance and contribution to the quality of the local environment. The options available in each case should be examined thoroughly and with the full range of relevant professional advice.





#### Images

Above. Trainee and trainer: Abdul Shamad and Emma Simpson discussing raking out techniques in St George in the East Gardens, Tower Hamlets Photo: © Alan Gardener Associates

**Top.** Learning new skills, fibrous plastering *Photo:* © *English Heritage* 

# Case Study

# **Engaging Places**

Engaging Places is a DCMS-supported initiative that champions teaching and learning through all aspects of the built environment, from grand historic buildings to the streets and neighbourhoods in which we live. It has been designed to help deliver the new secondary school curriculum, and supports initiatives including 'Learning outside the classroom' and 'Find your talent'. It is being delivered as a joint project by English Heritage and CABE, and is supported by a national partnership of leading cultural and education organisations. In January 2009 Engaging Places launched a major new online teaching resource, http://www.engagingplaces.org.uk/. Schools can use this website to access a nationwide directory of organisations and venues, including architecture centres, museums and historic buildings. They can search for high quality resources and materials by curriculum theme or whole school issues, and can access case studies from teachers.

#### Society

By supplying a focus for civic activity and offering opportunities for learning and recreation the historic environment can also be the foundation for more engaged and active communities.

At its most basic, in providing distinctive local features and a tangible link to the past, the historic environment is often central to local identity in both urban and rural areas. Local environments which offer a range of attractive and accessible public spaces, including local heritage, also encourage people of all backgrounds to enjoy them, creating places where people come together and mix.

Taking this one step further, by encouraging people not just to enjoy, but also to involve themselves in the management of historic places and make active use of them for their own benefit, we can help to create a sense of ownership in the locality and so help to strengthen local communities.

There are benefits for the individual too. Studies have shown that active involvement in cultural activities can offer a physical or emotional benefit to those taking part.<sup>5</sup> The historic environment can also be used to enrich formal and informal education and life-long learning, and for children in particular, OFSTED research has shown that learning outside the classroom offers real educational benefit.

Values and Benefits of Heritage: A Research Review, Heritage Lottery Fund, July 2008, p.12



Image

Above. Rope Walks, Liverpool Photo: © Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

## **Case Study**

# Liverpool Duke Street / Rope Walks

The transformation of the Rope Walks, Liverpool, an area in the very heart of the city, is an example of a highly effective Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme and evidence of the power of conservation-led regeneration. The area is of immense townscape interest and is protected as a conservation area and since 2004, as part of the Liverpool World Heritage Site. Having once been a thriving manufacturing and commercial area close to Liverpool's docks – second only to London as the most important port in the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the area entered decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the nature of both manufacturing and commerce changed. It suffered high vacancy levels and physical dilapidation. In 2000, the year the THI scheme began, many of the buildings were close to collapse or in ruins. The fortunes of the area are now turning full circle. £15m has been invested in the regeneration of the Rope Walks £7.5m from HLF, English Partnerships and the European Regional Development Fund and the rest levered in through private sources. "The local population has increased from some 100 – 200 people to several thousand and the area is now a thriving creative quarter in the city." CABE case study www.cabe.org.uk/casestudies/liverpool-rope-walks

- 18 buildings brought back into use, including listed warehouses & houses.
- 6000m<sup>2</sup> of building repair
- 2400 m<sup>2</sup> of residential space brought back into use (or 85 rooms)
- 4600 m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential space brought back into use
- A number of gap sites were filled creating 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> of residential space and 7,500m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential space.

"The completed scheme has created a coherent high quality network of streets and public spaces with a strong local identity. They have also helped to stimulate inward investment with numerous private conversions and new build residential and commercial developments bringing activity to a previously neglected part of the City." CABE

#### Culture

At its heart however we should never forget that our historic environment is a vital cultural asset which needs to be appropriately protected, supported and explored for the benefit of this and future generations.

In common with other cultural artefacts many of the buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites that make up the historic environment can be highly valued in and of themselves. They may simply have outstanding aesthetic appeal; they may represent important works by leading architects, designers or artists; they may embody significant innovations in design or technology or represent important primary evidence of a phase of our history. But they all help to tell us where we have come from and give us a sense of who we are.

Image

Opposite. Youth Voice community photography project, Great Hall, Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne Photo: James O. Davies © English Heritage



Image

Above. Capturing stories of people and place, from archaeology at Spitalfields

Photo: © John Sturrock

# **Case Study**

# Spitalfields: archaeology, regeneration and public benefit

Archaeological excavations in Spitalfields in London E1 were commissioned by the Spitalfields Development Group under PPG16. The work, carried out by Museum of London Archaeology, yielded important discoveries including 10,500 Roman and medieval burials, valuable research about more recent burials, 50 buildings including the medieval priory of St Mary Spital and evidence across 1.5 hectares of diverse 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century neighbourhoods including French Huguenots, Irish and Jewish settlers.

However, it was the imaginative approach to stakeholder engagement and inclusion which captured public imagination. The developers and archaeologists celebrated the archaeological discoveries in 'real time', creating opportunities for school tours, multi-media displays about archaeology, and a visitor centre on site that attracted 27,000 visitors in 24 weeks.

Thousands of local children, families, businesses and special interest groups – including groups initially against the development – actively participated in unearthing the historic and contemporary identity of Spitalfields. Community ownership of those stories was key, and the developers commented that the cumulative success of the stakeholder engagement programme was one of the single biggest factors in turning around local opinion.