



ENGLISH HERITAGE

CONSTRUCTIVE CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE

The 20 exemplary schemes in this volume demonstrate the results of constructive conservation: a well-informed, collaborative approach to conservation-led development. The progressive local authorities, developers and architects in this book have responded to the very latest ideas in modern conservation practice and have combined pre application discussion with English Heritage and the elements of our Conservation Principles with their own creativity and confidence. The results are schemes which are not just commercially successful but have added distinctiveness and meaning to the places in which we live.



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FOREWORD

We all have a relationship with historic places. They are part of our evolving cultural heritage and they reflect the nature and history of the communities that created them. They add distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places in which we live, providing a sense of continuity and a source of identity. Historic places are also social and economic assets. Knowing accurately and objectively where their historic significance lies helps us determine how they can be adapted without losing what makes them special.

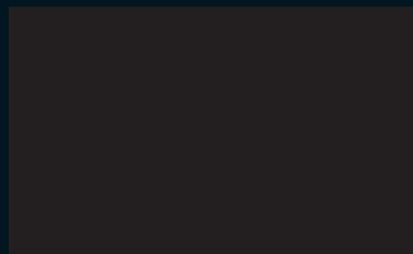
English Heritage has developed expert methods of doing this and is sharing these with conservation, planning and development professionals. Our aim is to help everyone identify the heritage values of historic places early in the development process, and be specific about how they might accommodate the changes that will keep them in use, and so secure their future.

Historic places have to be understood as assets if the benefits that can be gained through new investment are to be realised. Our *Conservation Principles* provide a robust framework in which to understand and value a site. When combined with English Heritage collaboration with local authorities and developers at the very earliest stages of a project, this understanding becomes the starting point for successful conservation-led development of historic places.

A few years ago we published the first volume of this series, *Shared Interest* (2006). It championed successful schemes that involved developers working with heritage professionals to exploit the commercial potential of historic places. Since then there have been even more successes. Our constructive approach to conservation is being increasingly adopted by other public agencies and in particular by local planning authorities, who are usually, and rightly, the first point of contact for developers seeking to make changes to historic places.

This second volume of exemplary conservation-led projects is offered to stimulate greater awareness of constructive conservation and to increase confidence in the use of historic places to support regeneration, place-making and community development. The cases chosen demonstrate the essential role of enlightened local authorities, with the necessary skills and confidence among both staff and Members, in bringing the ideas of talented architects and insightful developers to a successful conclusion. I am sure that everyone will be inspired by the case studies we present here. The combination of confidence and knowledge they display will help us all to capture the investment necessary to continue the story of precious places like these.

STEVEN BEE
Director of Planning and Development
English Heritage



INTRODUCTION

CONSTRUCTIVE CONSERVATION is the broad term adopted by English Heritage for a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change. The aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.

CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

At the heart of this, indeed at the heart of all that English Heritage does, are the *Conservation Principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*, published and formally adopted in 2008. These are not new to English Heritage but are a codification of our best practice. The Principles, available at english-heritage.org.uk/conservationprinciples, ensure consistency across our professional conservation advice and enable all others to see the basis on which we make judgements

The *Principles* acknowledge that we all engage with the historic places in which we live and work, and that we also share a responsibility for them. The *Principles* also underline the importance of a systematic and consistent approach to conservation. In order to provide this consistency, we are guided by a values-based approach to assessing heritage significance. This is our starting point for managing change to historic places.

Our all-embracing set of heritage values are grouped into four main categories: historic, aesthetic, communal and evidential. These can be used by anyone as a checklist to ensure that they have identified all aspects of the heritage value that might be ascribed to a place. Using these categories allows a precise recognition of a site's varying levels of significance and offers an objective way of assessing the scope for new intervention. Parts which have lesser heritage significance might in some cases be adapted or replaced to encourage new or continued use. This can trigger the investment that will secure and sustain the future of those parts that are of high significance.

HERITAGE PROTECTION REFORM

The process of constructive conservation will be assisted hugely by the reform of heritage protection legislation that is underway. The new legislation will put local expertise and public engagement at the heart of heritage protection and will be a major step forward in the way that England's heritage is managed. The new more accountable, less bureaucratic system will close gaps in protection, strip out red-tape and see decisions made at a local level and by English Heritage instead of central government.

The reforms are designed to provide a unified regulatory system that will encourage the application of our *Conservation Principles* by everyone. This new system will be based on a single unified list of historic places of all kinds, and a simplified consents regime for managing change. It will introduce the opportunity for Heritage Partnership Agreements, in which those responsible for a historic place can, in certain circumstances, be freed of the obligation to apply for fresh consent to make repetitive or straightforward changes. It will make the heritage protection system simpler, fairer and more effective.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT

English Heritage will continue to offer guidance and training for all involved in making changes to historic places, and through our HELM (Historic Environment Local Management) website www.helm.org.uk and events programme, we will help increase local capacity and capability in constructive conservation.

Confidence is a really important element of constructive conservation, as is evident in the examples that follow: the confidence to enhance as well as to protect; to see the essence of a scheme; to distinguish the relative values embodied by a historic place; and to find creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. We hope that these examples will inspire those local authorities that have not yet embraced the constructive conservation approach to search out the opportunities for it that lie within their own communities, and release the potential that may be locked up in historic places.

A good start in the hunt for such opportunities should be the Heritage at Risk Register, also launched by English Heritage in 2008. This has become a national register of historically significant places that are in danger of being lost unless we all take a constructive approach to their future. Several case studies in this volume present models for ways forward.

The case studies that follow have been selected from across England as exemplars of constructive conservation in practice. Some are still underway in some, works are yet to start but they all demonstrate the results of a well-informed, collaborative approach to conservation-led development. Indeed they demonstrate the passion, creativity and confidence in both conservation and development professions for securing the future of historic places.

THE BLUECOAT LIVERPOOL

Liverpool's elegant grade I listed Bluecoat Chambers is the earliest surviving building in Liverpool city centre. Built in 1717 as a school for poor children, it became an arts centre in 1911, and hosted the first ever UK exhibition outside London of works by Picasso, Matisse, Cezanne and Van Gogh.

The Bluecoat has undergone an imaginative £12.5 million conservation programme, reopening as part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture celebrations in 2008. Some demolition was involved, as well as the construction of a new rear wing.

English Heritage collaborated with Liverpool City Council, the Bluecoat, Dutch architects Biq, executive architects Austin-Smith: Lord, and conservation architects Donald Insall Associates, to solve the delicate problem of integrating the new parts with the 18th-century building. A key part of our role was to identify those less significant parts of the building that could best accommodate the major interventions necessary to house the new activities. One area, for example, had been rebuilt after bomb damage in the Second World War.

Demolition, expansion and conservation have all been successfully completed. The historic dome, the Queen Anne façade and a rambling series of 18th-century rooms have been conserved to the highest standards, along with what may be the oldest stone representation of a Liver Bird in the city. The venue has gained a 200-seat performance space, shops and eating places, four galleries, and 26 studios for artists and workers in the creative industries. A progressive institution of the 18th century has been successfully transformed into an equally forward-looking one for the 21st.

DEVELOPER:

The Bluecoat

ARCHITECT:

Biq with Austin-Smith: Lord and Donald Insall Associates

LEAD PARTNERS:

Arts Council

BIFFA

Northwest Regional Development Agency

Duke of Westminster

E Rex Makin

Garfield Weston Foundation

European Regional Development Fund

Heritage Lottery Fund

Leverhulme Trust

Liverpool City Council

PH Holt Charitable Trust

The Monument Trust

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CONSTRUCTIVE
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THE BLUECOAT
LIVERPOOL



“The redevelopment of the Bluecoat was a complex project that needed to be achieved with absolute sensitivity to the heritage of this extraordinary place. With English Heritage’s support we have achieved something unique, managing to create one of Liverpool’s finest 21st-century buildings whilst respecting and preserving one of its most iconic historical venues.”

ALASTAIR UPTON
Chief Executive, Bluecoat



FURTHER PUBLICATIONS FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE

For more information or for further publications
log on to www.english-heritage.org.uk/planning

Publications are also available in hard copy from Customer Services on 0870 333 1181.

CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES (2008) set out for the first time the values and criteria by which historic assets can be consistently and accurately judged. The principles form the basis of all the formal advice we give on planning and consent cases.

CHARTER FOR ENGLISH HERITAGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY SERVICES (2008) provides a checklist for successful applications, information on issues such as e-planning, and fully explains what you can expect from our advisory service.

HELM (Historic Environment Local Management) www.helm.org.uk is one-stop-shop for professionals seeking the latest published guidance on all planning topics and information on training and events.

SHARED INTEREST – CELEBRATING INVESTMENT IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT (2006) championed a number of successful schemes that had involved developers working with heritage professionals to exploit the commercial potential of historic places.

HERITAGE WORKS – A TOOLKIT FOR GOOD PRACTICE (2006) is a practical reference document for successful conservation-led regeneration, created in partnership by English Heritage, the British Property Federation, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Drivers Jonas. It is available free in hard copy or from www.english-heritage.org.uk/heritageworks.

BUILDING IN CONTEXT TOOLKIT (2007) provides advice for local planning authorities on how to raise the standards of new development in historic areas. Created by English Heritage and CABA it is available to download from <http://www.building-in-context.org>.

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