

Maximising the value of industrial heritage in historic towns: restoration, regeneration & reuse

Annual Conference, Newcastle 17-19 October 2007

Wednesday 17 October

Early arrivals in Newcastle enjoyed a Green Badge guided tour of the City in glorious sunshine. This was followed by the Annual General Meeting held at the Thistle Hotel, a Reception at the Discovery Museum hosted by The Lord Mayor, Cllr Peter Arnold, with a guided tour of the museum and supper in the Turbinia Hall.

Thursday 18 October

The Lord Mayor, Cllr Peter Arnold, welcomed delegates and reiterated his support for the conference, adding that it was vital to use old buildings – and collections of old buildings – as people are justly proud of their inheritance. Newcastle had resisted the temptation to sweep away the old but he could not deny that there were challenges to be overcome in order to accommodate modern uses.

Brian Human, Chair of EHTF, thanked Cllr Arnold, adding that political support for the work of EHTF was vital and much appreciated. He then introduced the first of the morning's presentations:

The industrial heritage as an opportunity and driver – re-use is nothing new

Keith Falconer, Head of Industrial Archaeology, English Heritage, offered case studies which demonstrated the value of industrial buildings – Dean Clough Mills in Halifax, Saltaire Mills, Telford and Ironbridge, the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter – all of which had undergone successful conversion. There were many books on the subject and developers who specialise in this work. He gave examples of the work of Urban Splash at Manningham Mills and the Royal William Yard, Plymouth, as well as other docks, warehouses and railway works. However, he considered that “understanding, through research and survey, is the key to good development”.



Ironbridge

Economic Case for Regeneration – Heritage Works

Rob Colley, of Drivers Jonas, explained his contribution to 'Heritage Works' which looked at the economic case for the reuse of industrial buildings. He offered two quotes: “Buildings, like people and places, need to adapt to survive” - Ros Kerslake of The Prince's Regeneration Trust and “People and economic activity, not paint and plumbing fixtures, ultimately add economic value” – Rypkema. 'Heritage Works' published in 2006 aimed to support the reuse of heritage assets by offering guidance and signposting information sources. It was aimed at a wide audience, including, owners, developers and planning authorities. He showed the economic flow chart:

original economic use > economic decline > no use > economic revitalisation > new economic use

Nottingham Lace Market was used as an example. There was a turning point which brought people back into the area encouraging retail, office and other support uses. He emphasised the fact that it was streets - not roads - which were essential for genuine - not contrived - activities.

The concepts of value were both direct and indirect and could be difficult to measure, but new ways were being found to do this and the 'Heritage Counts' suite makes a contribution to this. Case studies are also important, he said, to encourage others with challenging projects. He explored the benefits of clusters and webs of small businesses where 'creative quarters' had been established, which might also offer a sustainable model for living and working in the same place. Flexibility is the key, he said, and through conferences and publications to spread good practice and boost confidence, problems can be overcome. Recognition of the uniqueness and cultural identity of a place, together with its character, must be balanced with the needs of modern society, but Rob concluded that valuable heritage assets have an important part to play as catalysts for regeneration.



“streets - not roads - are essential for genuine - not contrived - activities”

Adaptive Reuse: the national picture

Michael Coupe, stepping in for Fred Taggart, and representing The Prince's Regeneration Trust, considered that it is the creeping blandness which has made us appreciate our heritage more. There are social resources as well as other assets embedded in historic buildings and it is possible to re-invent them, creating places where people want to be. He explained how the Trust could support projects and act as facilitator for the private and community sectors. He highlighted case studies which demonstrated the range of projects, stakeholders and outcomes, some creating cultural clusters, others visitor attractions, housing and a variety of small businesses.

Surprising 'a-sides' may also be discovered, as in the case of Harvey's Foundry at Hayle where Harvey's original drawings were found, making a valuable contribution to the Heritage Centre visitor attraction.

Michael added that many industrial heritage sites are on water and this adds to their attraction for visitors. He recommended the "Regeneration through Heritage Handbook" published by The Prince's Regeneration Trust which could help people through the process.



"There are social resources as well as other assets embedded in historic buildings"

Preserving industrial character – grim up north or a new Jerusalem?

Ian Ayris, Historic Environment Manager, Newcastle City Council (& Tyne and Wear County Industrial Archaeologist and English Heritage Adviser) looked at problems of perception. His presentation was animated with songs which expressed the 'poverty and darkness' which were associated with the industrial north. In contrast to this, Newcastle was seen by Grainger as the 'City of Palaces' and the epitome of modern elegance. Ian said that it is important to inform young people to whom industrialisation is an alien concept, and, for the most part, a negative one. He talked about the importance of Newcastle's industrial past in terms of identity and distinctiveness, public value and managing change through understanding the character – what he called the Heritage Cycle:

by understanding > by valuing > by caring >
from enjoying > by understanding etc.

Having established its value, factors leading to the preservation of the industrial character include: the form of the buildings; the critical mass of features and the capacity for regeneration. Ian went on to describe three examples

of this in Newcastle: the Stephenson Quarter, the Lower Ouseburn Valley and the Quayside. Today, he concluded, the City is a mix of modern development and industrial and engineering heritage, which is epitomised by the Tyne bridges – a modern day version of "building a new Jerusalem amongst the dark satanic mills!"



Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle in the late nineteenth century

Adaptive Reuse - finding uses that fit buildings

Kate Edwards, Chief Executive of Seven Stories Project presented the Tyneside Experience – a case study of Seven Stories, the centre for children's books. The charity was founded in 1996 and inspired by Elizabeth Hammill and Mary Briggs "to preserve Britain's unique heritage of children's literature", which includes manuscripts and illustrations, with contributions from J K Rowling and the Children's Laureate, Michael Rosen, and to provide interpretation and reading space.

Finding the right location brought together an area with an important industrial past and landscape heritage – the Ouseburn Valley, a thriving artistic community and a regeneration area. Kate described the industrial past of the Grade II listed former storehouse, which was in a serious state of disrepair, but which was purchased in 2002 for the project. Through wide consultation and working with schools, teachers, authors and illustrators the vision grew. A long and complex design and building process followed, with contributions from a range of funding sources. Since the opening in August 2005, the centre has welcomed 150,000 visitors; it has five galleries, a book shop, café, performance space and creative discovery centre.



Seven Stories national centre for children's books

After lunch delegates were offered a choice of guided tours of the Stephenson Quarter, the Lower Ouseburn Valley or the Seven Stories centre for children's books, which offered the opportunity to explore the local case studies first hand.

On their return, four 'expert discussion groups' were facilitated by the speakers, Rob Colley, Ian Ayris, Keith Falconer and Andy Roberts, in order to delve more deeply into the topics of particular interest to delegates and to exchange experiences.

The very lively discussions were drawn to a close by Brian Human who made a few key observations of the day's proceedings:

- The wide ranging nature of the industrial heritage – and the fact that the issues were not new.
- How important research and understanding are, especially as an evidence base for work on the industrial heritage.
- The importance of the industrial heritage in terms of identifying perceptions of the industries of the past and the way we take advantage of it – ie: the forms of the buildings; some can not be used; the critical mass and capacity for regeneration are also factors.
- Consultation and engagement, community and partnerships are vital and should include private sector investment in heritage.
- Most important is the need for vision; exceptional people with exceptional ideas are the way to make progress in this sector.
- Finally: regeneration takes a generation; it is not instant, but takes patience and the long view.

The Conference Dinner was held at Blackfriars Restaurant and guests were entertained by **Ira Lightman**, poet and artist, known locally for his work at SPENNYMOOR on the public art project there (www.iralightman.com).

Friday 19 October

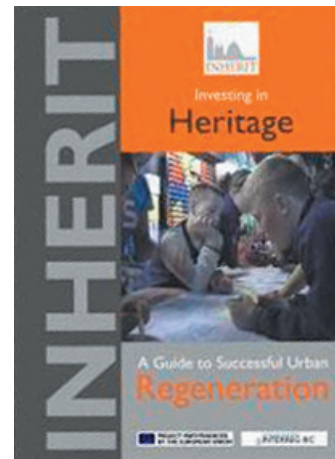
After a résumé of the previous day, Brian opened the second day which would move from the wider perspective to local, UK and European case studies.

Europe

He introduced **Brian Smith**, representing the European Association of Historic Towns & Regions (EAHTR) who introduced 'Investing in Heritage – A Guide to Successful Urban Regeneration' which would be published in December. This was the culmination of the three year INHERIT project across six European countries. Each of the cities explored particular elements of the topic: Newcastle – the processes; Ubeda – the public domain and new uses for palaces; Gdansk – adaptive re-use; Goteborg – four different urban regeneration case studies; Verona – re-use of palaces and military architecture and Italy's unique approach to funding; Belfast – the cultural quarters. Working with Queen's University, Belfast, the project tests and validates emerging themes:

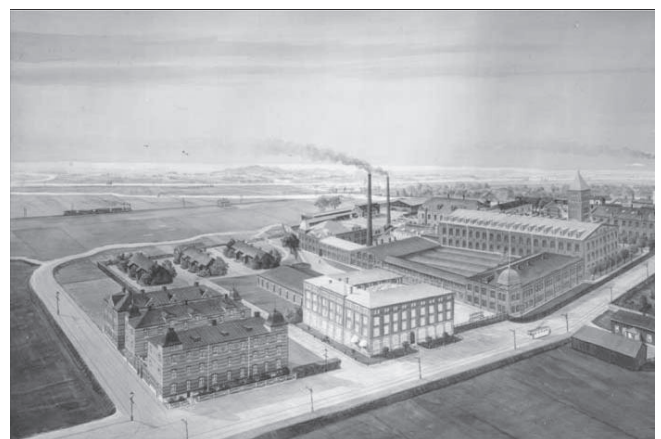
- Identity & diversity
- Local authority investment – in particular in the public realm
- Working in partnership
- Thinking and acting strategically

The project contributes to EU Regional Policy, which includes the importance of making clear the contribution of cultural heritage to urban regeneration, sustainable development and social well being. Brian emphasised the need to lobby governments and regions to integrate heritage led regeneration in national framework programmes. Free copies of the document can be obtained from **bsmith@historictowns.org**.



INHERIT publication

Anders Svensson, from the City of **Göteborg** Planning Authority, expanded on the Gamlestadens Fabriker case study, which was the modernisation and upgrading of a former industrial area. The large scale factory buildings were in an insecure neighbourhood but the qualities of the buildings were seen as an asset and the driving force of the regeneration process. The aims of the project were to improve the social status of the area and to create a dynamic and competitive area in the historic environment. He listed the important lessons learned from the project which can be seen in the in detail in the document.



Textile factory 1854-1970s . SKF and Volvo both started in the area

Newcastle

Andy Roberts, of Waring & Netts Architects, took the Stephenson Quarter as a case study, a strategically important site in the city, which was associated with the industrial revolution and a cultural association with George and Robert Stephenson. After The Rocket (1829) the area became the world centre of engineering excellence for 30 years. However this advantage was lost leading to a decline and relocation of many other industries. The area also had archaeological significance and a full assessment was undertaken. Planning policy for the site took account of the importance of the wider context, its strategic importance, the connectivity and the need for mixed use redevelopment. Attention was also paid to the constraints of the site and the necessary movement hierarchy. A full site analysis was undertaken, followed by concept diagrams and a masterplan proposal, which included massing, building uses, spatial proposals and details which included landscaping. Working with Newcastle City Council, English Heritage and CABE, the project involved a full range of skills and established ways of connecting to the river and the City, using the historic radial patterns and referencing the listed buildings. Animation of the area was achieved by paying attention to the importance of the ground floor uses – restaurants and retail. Summarising, Andy emphasised the importance of not ‘cutting corners’, time and effort is a good investment.



Stephenson's Quarter

Scotland

Eleanor McAllister, the Managing Director of **Clydebank Rebuilt**, asked whether the industrial heritage offered a route out of decline. She considered that it effects lives and people and offers a range of opportunities from visitor interest, family heritage and respect for the past of local people, to the fulfilment of the needs of developers and planners to ‘deal with’ and protect the industrial heritage. There were, however, issues which had to be dealt with – the cost of restoration, contaminated sites, access requirements and developers’ perceived liability. Clydebank had experienced economic decline and the ravages of the blitz. The Urban Regeneration Company was formed to act as developer, project manager and facilitator. It is essentially ‘public facing’, she said. The focus has become the 100 year old ‘A’ listed Titan Crane which was purchased and

restored. The surrounding land has also been reclaimed and transformed into a business park, with the old shipways marked by the new access ways. The restoration, painting and lighting of the crane was a major undertaking, along with the building of a lift, for access. The civic launch took place on the 26 July, with the involvement of those who once worked on it, with the crane opened to the public by a Government Minister the next day. The scheme has included the creation of new public spaces, workshops, lighting and signage schemes. The Forth and Clyde canals have also been upgraded, with improvements to access and to the north bank area. Eleanor emphasised the importance of high quality throughout, which has led to three awards for the project. There is now a Heritage Trail which also includes Glasgow Merchants City, the East End, Castlemilk, Port Glasgow and Glasgow Green. So, she concluded, the industrial heritage can be a driver for regeneration as it offers opportunities to attract visitors, to get commitment from funders and developers, to engage with the local community and the ‘potential to develop iconic representation of area renewal’.



Titan Crane

Wales

Judith Alfrey, Historic Buildings Inspector for CADW, presented a project focused on the restoration of **industrial workers’ housing** in Wales. The emergence of Wales as an industrial nation made an overwhelming impact on the lives of the people and on the landscape of housing. The building of terraced workers’ housing was a major part of the rebuilding of Welsh towns and cities in the nineteenth century. The historical value of these buildings has not always been recognised, although some are listed or may be in conservation areas. However, the emerging idea that the maintenance of local distinctiveness in planning is central to the Wales Spatial Plan, has brought into focus the value of the building stock – both the design and the materials. There have been local initiatives to preserve local character as well as an acceptance of the collective value of heritage assets. A booklet has been published by CADW encouraging the care of houses, which offers guidance but also serves to raise awareness. A website – My Valleys House – also offers detailed advice about care and maintenance, with links to grant programmes. Attitudes to the causes of incremental damage (uPVC windows!) is changing and a pool of skills and training has been established, linking with other initiatives. For example the Townscheme Partnership, a funding programme established

in 2004 with CADW and local authorities, which attempts to extend the conservation approach to less recognisably historic areas. The reinstatement of architectural detail, such as Welsh slate roofs, sash windows and chimney stacks, can make a positive contribution to the area as a whole. Judith gave several examples of schemes in Wales, each with specific qualities but all contributing to the social, economic and cultural history of the country. Characterisation has emerged as a useful tool for recording local features, which in turn relate to local history, and the result of these studies is an account of the complexity and richness of the urban industrial landscapes.



Industrial workers' housing

Ireland

Paul McTernan, of Colin Buchanan, talked about **Irish industrial heritage within the context of the new Ireland**. It was necessary, he said, to start with a 'state of the nation' report; to look at the context of recent years, both North and South. There is now a new role for the private sector – especially in tourism. The Celtic Tiger has emerged as Ireland has gone from the poorest to the richest country in Europe. Remarkable changes have been seen, with 'frenzied' development and a 'knock it down and move on' attitude prevailing. The 'short break' phenomenon has concentrated attention on the cities and reduced heritage to a 'commodity'. There has been a clearance of the old docklands, pollution of the waterways and limited protection for historic structures. Alongside, however, there is now a growing awareness in the community of the value of the heritage and the need for mechanisms to protect it. Projects have emerged which balance development with restoration. The Shannon Navigation scheme includes management of the waterways corridor, improved understanding and retention of distinctiveness, together with a baseline audit of the resource and an assessment of its significance.

The 'short break' amounted to a kind of voyeurism, Paul thought, and evidence of the real history had already gone, although investment in places like the Titanic Quarter, the City of Derry and the Cathedral Quarter were showing economic returns. He showed examples of the evidence of the more recent past – the watch towers and wall paintings – reminders which drive the current priorities for the North, to achieve peace and stability, demilitarisation, economic catch up, neighbourhood regeneration and private sector investment. The industrial heritage resource, he said, must find its place in this renewal agenda. Good things are happening and awareness is improving, although he thought it was vital that local authorities should have the relevant powers to protect the historic built environment, listing should still be controlled centrally. Overall he shared the Irish optimism.



"'frenzied' development and a 'knock it down and move on' attitude"

A short discussion session followed, during which the issue of adapting old buildings using current sustainability criteria was raised. Steve Bee for English Heritage said that research was being carried out on this and a website for homeowners was being developed.

Brian ended with the question "what happens when the industrial heritage moves out of living memory?"

After lunch delegates were able to visit Greys Monument or to tour the historic public house architecture and interiors.

Copies of the presentations are available by contacting ehhf@uwe.ac.uk.



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