

## Case study for Heritage Counts 2015

Theme demonstrated by case study:	Caring for and managing heritage at a local level
Name of project/group:	Scarborough Studios Ltd
Location:	Scarborough Railway Station, Scarborough
Duration (if applicable):	2013 and ongoing
HEF member who provided case study:	Peter Cooper, Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies

### Short description of project:

The objective of the project is to provide strategic leadership for the development of artists' studios in the Old Parcels Office, Scarborough. The project will re-develop the listed Old Parcels Office on the platforms of Scarborough Railway Station which offers excellent potential for a range of studio spaces meeting the needs of artists of all levels.

The not-for-profit company limited by guarantee is made up of six volunteers with varying backgrounds – some with built environment experience, some with an arts background. The group was brought together over a period of time with help from the Scarborough Borough Council and the local civic society. The group received funding from Historic England, Arts Council England, The Railway Heritage Trust and Network Rail. The group has been running since about 2008. The project is on-going, the building has been rescued but further funds are needed to complete the conversion to a fully usable space.



The building before repair (Photo: © Scarborough Studios Ltd).



The car park elevation of the repaired building (Photo: © Scarborough Studios Ltd).



The Big Draw event held in the Old Parcels Office Artspace in October 2015 (Photo: © Scarborough Studios Ltd).

What would have happened without this project/group?

No other group had arisen which was prepared to champion this building. At one point the group was advised to discontinue the project. It is safe to say that the Grade II listed building would have become even more derelict and eventually it could have been lost. When the group commenced work on site it was in a very poor condition.

How did the project achieve its objectives?

Using funding raised, the volunteers employed various advisers to prepare and then help carry out a scheme to repair the building using a local building contractor.

What difference has it made? Main outcomes and outputs.

Repair of the Old Parcels Office has added to the work carried out by Network Rail to make Scarborough Railway Station an asset to the area. This achievement resulted in a commendation in the National Railway Heritage Awards in 2014 and a commendation in the Historic England Angel Awards in the same year. Some of the individuals concerned are using the experience gained to tackle another derelict building. It might be that this effort by volunteers in Scarborough helped achieve a remarkable score in the national RSA Heritage Index, the Borough of Scarborough achieving third place.

What were the main lessons learnt or challenges would anything be done differently?

The volunteers say they underestimated the time that the project would take to bring to a conclusion. Procurement of advisers and contractors was a major challenge. Managing the large number of advisers took a large amount of resource and they seemed to spend a large amount of money before a brick was laid. Despite strenuous efforts they were not always fortunate in their selection of advisers. Managing cash flow was also a significant challenge, matching payment demands from contractors with grant drawdown applications was often rather fraught.

What is the future for the case study?

The project is ongoing. The group continues to receive support from the Railway Heritage Trust. They continue fundraising to complete the conversion to a working art-space. Most of the original directors are still involved with the project and they are gradually raising the profile of their building and showing more and more people what it has to offer. They have a series of events planned for next year and tenants are continuing to work there despite the lack of facilities. The 'can do' approach demonstrated here has encouraged another group to

tackle a derelict 'problem' building. Some of the directors have given talks to other groups to show what can be done.

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