

THE IMPACT OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT REGENERATION

Executive summary

This executive summary presents the research methodology and findings from analysis of the impact of historic environment regeneration. The research covers the historic environment's role in local areas, and its economic and wider community impacts.¹

1. The research methodology

To assess the impact of historic environment regeneration, two issues were examined:

- The historic environment's role in the economic and social life of towns and cities.
- The economic, social and environmental impacts of investing in historic buildings and places.

The analysis is based on information collected from a number of areas that received investment in their historic environment. These were chosen by English Heritage and sector stakeholders in consultation with AMION and Locum.

In total, five areas which had received investment in their historic environment were surveyed in detail.

- **Aylsham Historic Environment Regeneration Scheme (HERS), (East of England)** This scheme maintained the historic fabric of the market town of Aylsham. It was funded by English Heritage and Broadland District Council.
- **The Regent Quarter, Kings Cross (London)** The regeneration of a dilapidated part of Kings Cross by the developer P&O Estates, re-used existing 19th century buildings to create a mixed use development.
- **The Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ), Sheffield (Yorkshire and the Humber)** The restoration of 24 hectares (59 acres) including nine listed buildings in a pivotal part of the city centre through investment funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
- **Staircase House and the Covered Market Hall, Stockport (North West)** The restoration and rejuvenation of a medieval town house and the adjacent Victorian hall. The work was funded by the HLF, English Heritage and other public sector partners.
- **Stourport canal, Stourport (West Midlands)** This project, funded by British Waterways, HLF and other public sector partners, involved the restoration and enhancement of historic canal basins in Stourport on Seven.

In each of these areas, surveys of approximately 200 people and 20 businesses were undertaken; 1000 individual and 122 business surveys overall. Information was also collected for a number of other investments in the historic environment listed below. This was through a direct questionnaire of people involved in the projects and an analysis of existing project research.

- **Albert Docks, Liverpool (North West)** The regeneration of the Albert Dock, situated on the edge of Liverpool's waterfront and containing a large number of listed buildings. Carried out by the Arrowcroft Group in conjunction with the Merseyside Development Corporation.
- **Cromford Mill (East Midlands)** The acquisition, conservation and regeneration of a Grade I listed mill complex within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, funded by a number of public sector partners.

¹ A summary of this research combined with a summary of research into the impact of investing in historic visitor attractions can also be found in Section 1 of Heritage Counts 2010
<http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/content/pub/HC-Eng-2010>

The views expressed in this executive summary are those of AMION Consulting and Locum Consulting. They do not necessarily reflect the views of English Heritage

- **Curson Lodge, Ipswich (East of England)** A structural restoration and refurbishment programme led by Ipswich Building Preservation Trust of a Grade II* listed building.
- **East Lindsey HERS Scheme (East Midlands)** Grant funding by a number of public sector partners for the repair and restoration of several buildings in a rural area.
- **Fort Dunlop, Birmingham (West Midlands)** The conversion of a derelict tyre factory into office/retail space and a hotel by the property developer Urban Splash supported by Regional Development Agency (RDA) funding.
- **Gloucester Quays (South West)** The regeneration of a historic industrial area to the south of Gloucester docks, by the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company.
- **Newburgh Street (London)** Investments in buildings and the public realm in a historic street in London's West End, undertaken by the property developer Shaftesbury plc..
- **New Road, Brighton, (South East)** Improvements to the public realm in a street with a number of listed buildings in a cultural area. Funded by Brighton and Hove City Council.
- **North Shields Fish Quay, (North East)** Refurbishment of shops and former industrial buildings in a historic area at the mouth of the river Tyne. The work involved the re-use of a number of derelict historic buildings and was funded by the local council and RDA.
- **West Auckland Partnership Scheme for Conservation Areas (PSCA), (North East)** Historic building and shop fronts grant scheme, public realm improvements, conservation area character appraisal and management proposals in a rural area. The work was funded by the local council and RDA.
- **Plymouth Barbican (South West)** A partnership between Sutton Harbour Company and Plymouth City Council, established to ensure the regeneration of the historic Barbican and quayside area.

The research on the economic and social role of the historic environment is primarily a qualitative analysis.² The Regent Quarter and Newburgh Street in London, New Road in Brighton, the Plymouth Barbican, and the Staircase house and Covered Market in Stockport, are specifically examined in this work, which also draws on information from the other case studies and existing research.

The analysis of the effects of investing in the historic environment is a quantitative impact assessment. It is based on the survey findings of the five detailed case study projects and, where available, questionnaire information from the other case studies. Its focus is on the **additional** impact i.e. the benefits that can be directly attributed to investment in the historic environment alone.³ It therefore does not include benefits that would have been achieved or still existed without the investment. The potential for adverse effects, such as the displacement of existing activity, are also considered. The analytical framework principally considers the impact at the local level, across a broad range of factors.

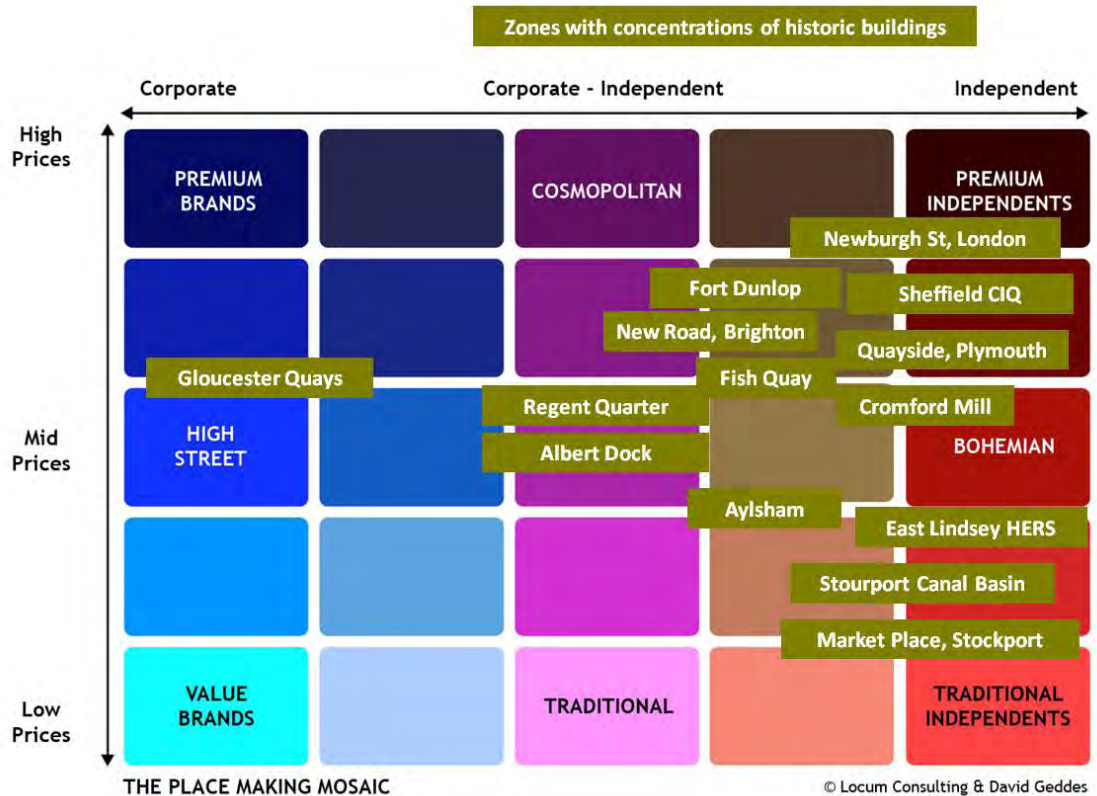
2. The historic environment's role in the economic and social life of towns and cities

Existing research, reviewed as part of this study, provides evidence of something that, intuitively, most people would probably accept – that places which are known for the quality and quantity of their historic assets tend to be more popular destinations. People like being in historic environments.

The case studies examined in this study convey a more subtle message about the role that historic buildings and places have, however. They nurture types of commercial, leisure and cultural activity that are not easily created otherwise in towns and cities. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of the historic areas assessed in this study are dominated by commercial and other activity that is independently owned and managed. The case studies show that this is a characteristic which often differentiates historic areas from other parts of the town/city centre.

³ The methodology used was that consistent with the Government guidelines on evaluation as set out in the Green book.

Figure 1: Case study locations plotted on the Place Making Mosaic framework



The West End, Brighton, Plymouth and Stockport are alike in that they have concentrations of unique businesses in historic environments. However, while these historic environments are diverse, they share other characteristics. All of them have a mix of uses, and all of them have a substantial leisure dimension, particularly in the form of bars and restaurants. This again differentiates them from other parts of the town/city centre.

The research evidence from Plymouth and Stockport examined in this study has shown that this happens because people feel relaxed and comfortable in historic environments. The Plymouth research provides direct evidence that the further people live from a city, the more likely they are to be influenced to visit it by the nature and quality of its heritage assets. This explains why places like Brighton, which nurture large scale commercial activity in historic environments, become so popular. There is a strong direct relationship between the number of listed buildings and their popularity as a destination for a day out.⁴

The conclusion that can be reached from this is that every town and city should look carefully at its historic environments and how best use can be made of them, especially by using them to encourage one-off and leisure-orientated uses.

⁴ Research for the North West Visitor Research Programme 2009-10 Locum Consulting and Arkenford Ltd for the North West Development Agency

3. The economic impact of historic environment regeneration

An estimate of economic impact has been calculated for the five detailed case study projects, using information provided through: 1000 'on-street' surveys of local residents, workers and visitors; 122 business surveys; and data provided by project contacts. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 1. For each of the five projects, investment in the historic environment was found to generate increased business turnover, leading to higher levels of economic activity (GVA) and employment.

| Table 1: Additional cumulative ten year impact | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| Case study | Public sector cost | Indicative impact | | |
| | | Business turnover | Cumulative GVA | Employment |
| Aylsham HERS | £0.3m | £3.2m - £6.6m | £1.0m-£2.0m | 4-9 |
| Regent Quarter, Kings Cross | Privately funded | £10.9m - £34.4m | £3.3m - £10.3m | 10-31 |
| Sheffield CIQ THI | £3.1m | £9.5m - £10.7m | £2.8m - £3.2m | 15-17 |
| Staircase House & Covered Market Hall | £5.3m | £7.3m - £10.6m | £2.2m - £3.2m | 12-16 |
| Stourport Canal Basins | £3.3m | £24.6m - £38.4m | £7.4m - £11.5m | 35-55 |

Where it was possible to assess the economic impact for the remaining case studies, an estimate was calculated based on the findings from the detailed case studies considered most comparable. This is shown in Table 2. As the remaining case studies did not have dedicated on-street and business surveys, more assumptions have had to be made to arrive at these impact figures. They are therefore given separately from those in Table 1.

| Table 2: Additional impact attributable to public sector funded historic environment regeneration | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Case study | Public sector cost | Comparative project | Indicative impact | |
| | | | Cumulative GVA | Employment |
| Albert Dock, Liverpool | £40.0m | Stourport Canal Basins | £88.0m-£140.0m | 424-667 |
| Cromford Mill, Derbyshire | £6.8m | Stourport Canal Basins | £15.0m-23.8m | 72-113 |
| Curson Lodge, Ipswich | £0.7m | Staircase House & Covered Market Hall | £0.3m-£0.4m | 2-3 |
| East Lindsey HERS | £1.0m | Aylsham HERS | £2.8m-£5.9m | 12-27 |
| Fort Dunlop, Birmingham | £10.0m | Sheffield CIQ THI | £9.0m-£10.0m | 49-55 |
| Gloucester Quays | £6.0m | Sheffield CIQ THI | £5.4m-£6.0m | 29-33 |
| West Auckland PSCA | £0.5m | Aylsham HERS | £1.5m-£3.0m | 6-14 |

The analysis of the case studies suggests that, on average, £1 of investment in the historic environment generates £1.60 of additional economic activity in the local economy over a ten year period (see Table 3). This is comparable to established benchmarks for public realm projects.⁵

| Table 3: Value for money | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Cumulative GVA:public sector cost |
| Aylsham HERS | 2.9:1 – 6.0:1 |
| Sheffield CIQ THI | 0.9:1 – 1.0:1 |
| Staircase House & Covered Market Hall | 0.5:1 – 0.6:1 |
| Stourport Canal Basins | 2.2:1 – 3.5:1 |
| Case study weighted average | 1.6:1 |
| Benchmark ratio (public realm) | 1.8:1 |

The scale of impact varies between case studies, nevertheless, all the case studies reviewed were deemed to have had a positive economic impact. Moreover, the benefits of investment in the historic environment will nearly always extend beyond a project’s economic return. The wider social and environmental benefits can also be significant.

4. The social and environmental impacts of historic environment regeneration

The study examined the social and environmental impacts of historic environment regeneration via the survey information collected. This found that a range of benefits were strongly associated with improvements to historic buildings and places. The survey findings identified that investment in the historic environment:

- **Improves perceptions of local areas** 93% and 91% of on-street survey respondents indicated that the investments in the historic environment had improved the image of the immediate project area and of the wider town or city respectively. 93% of respondents rated the projects as making a good or very good contribution to the local environment. Around 63% of business respondents indicated that the image of the project area and the town as a whole had been enhanced by the investments.
- **Increases civic pride and sense of identity** 92% of on-street survey respondents indicated they would rate the project examined as either good or very good in terms of raising pride in the local area, while 93% rated the projects as good or very good in terms of creating a sense of place;

⁵ See BERR (2009), *Impact of RDA spending – National report*

- **Improves social interaction** Approximately 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the project areas were now a good place to meet friends; over 90% of respondents indicated that investment in the historic environment had resulted in a nicer place in which to live, work and socialise, as well as creating a more attractive visitor destination;
- **Increases in community safety**– Following the investments, the proportion of respondents that indicated positive feelings of safety increased from 81% to 91% during the day and from 85% to 94% after dark;
- **Is an important factor in deciding where to live, work and visit** 91% of respondents identified the historic environment as an important or very important factor in deciding where to visit. The influence of the historic environment in decisions about where to live and work appears to be somewhat lower at 74% and 68% respectively, but this is still a significant proportion of respondents.

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