

## **Newcastle & Gateshead conference report 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005**

Delegates arriving on Wednesday afternoon at the Gateshead Visitor Centre (formerly St Mary's Church) were given a tour of Gateshead which included The Sage at Gateshead, the Quays, the Baltic and the Millennium Bridge. This was followed by a welcome from the Mayor of Gateshead and the Sheriff of Newcastle. John Devlin, Director of Development and Enterprise at Gateshead MBC, then gave a comprehensive summary of the history of Gateshead's development and recent renaissance, with facts and figures which demonstrated the size and complexity of each of the recent projects and the strategy as a whole. Delegates then enjoyed dinner at Sabatini's on Newcastle's quayside.

On Thursday **Cllr David Faulkner, Heritage Champion at Newcastle City Council**, welcoming delegates to the Assembly Rooms, said that he and colleagues were working together as champions for heritage, arts and tourism. The renaissance of the quayside was bringing the City back into contact with the river and has created a City proud of its heritage and culture.

**Ian Poole, Chair of EHTF**, invited the next three speakers to give a national and international view of the use of heritage and cultural assets in regeneration.

**Ben Cowell, Head of Social & Economic Research at English Heritage**, began by establishing that "its no longer grim up north" according to a recent Guardian article. He said that English Heritage was working to measure the impacts and the value of heritage. *Value* includes non-monetary concepts and Government is beginning to address this. Sustainable improvements can be brought about through heritage regeneration, as indicated in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the 'Heritage Counts Annual Report'. This recording of value can help to focus funding and to lever in investment.

He emphasized the value that heritage adds through tourism with various statistics:

- Tourism industry in UK = **£76 billion** (4.4% GDP)
- Employs **2.1 million** people (7.4% of the working population)
- **86%** of England's tourism revenue comes from domestic visitors
- In a survey of overseas visitors to UK...
  1. **37%** said visiting heritage sites
  2. **29%** said exploring historic towns/cities
  3. **29%** said visiting artistic/historic exhibits

...were important to their decision to visit

- Around **25%** of UK visits are to heritage attractions
- **10 million** visitors to Anglican Cathedrals, generating **£150 million** for their local economies

- In the **North East**:
  - 40 million visits
  - 3.5% of regional economy
  - Supports 50,000 jobs directly, plus a further 50,000 jobs through indirect effects

Another example he cited was the impact on property prices:

- the premium associated with historic buildings
- general higher rent
- lower maintenance costs

The research also measures the impact of heritage schemes especially CAPs & HERs, for example £125m investment levered in £1bn investment in total in Newcastle.

'Heritage Dividend' also measured impacts – where there are knock on impacts to local businesses and suppliers to other businesses etc.

There are also 'non-use' (indirect) values – including social, symbolic and aesthetic values.

Opinion polls reveal the public support for heritage:

- **86%** think 'the heritage in my local area is worth saving'
- **76%** agree their lives are richer for having the opportunity to visit heritage sites
- **98%** think heritage is important to teach children about the past

In '**Who do you think you are?**' a North East study:

- **96%** agreed 'that it is important to keep historic features wherever possible when trying to improve villages, towns and cities'
- **93%** agreed that 'heritage can mean my local area as well as historic castles and stately homes'
- **84%** think that 'my local area would not be the same without heritage'

This is consistent with many public surveys which show that people value the heritage. This is not only in the form of the built environment but skills (for example Bristol's Circus School and the Birmingham back-to-backs, which encouraged training in conservation skills). There is also contingent value – how much people are prepared to pay (for heritage). All this evidence will be taken to Government in order to demonstrate the value of heritage.

In conclusion, Ben summed up the **Direct value**:

- Creates jobs and tourism

- Enhances property prices
- Promotes sustainable use of resources

and the **Indirect value:**

- Retains identity and sense of place
- Creates new space for culture
- Enhances quality of life

**Tom Lonsdale, of Camlin Lonsdale and CAFE Enabler**, explained the relationship of CAFE with Government as “iterative”! However, through CAFE Enablers and the Design Review Panel, a positive engagement encourages constructive debate, and with early consultation, processes can be creative.

The priorities, he said, should be living, working environments, *whole* environments, with a balance of reverence & celebration – the life force of a place. Some places need refurbishment and rejuvenation – a light touch with repair & traditional materials, others require renewal and rebranding, in which case vitality is more important than sentiment. It is possible to retain the best and most usable, but to add more contemporary ingredients.

He suggested a sequence of actions: locate things of value, protect these, repair, adapt, arrange new elements to take account of the ‘treasures’ – celebrate these – polish up and display the treasures. We can also acquire new treasures – be forward looking.

Tom gave some examples of positive projects he had been involved with:



**Leeds:** a work in progress; a former goods marshalling yard with a rail history but with a few treasures left. There was a need to understand the history, to identify what and decide how to display it. Through a masterplanning process, and the

use of maps, routes, etc it was possible to develop a footprint, to connect to historic centre of city, to bring back the bridge into use and to restore a lost route.

**Hume in Manchester:** it was possible to restore permeability and to liberate some treasures; a quarter of the city was suffocated by modern development and very uninviting. However, traces of heritage are still there and pedestrian movement to the city centre has been restored. The Zion Building and park has developed into a quality green space environment. Contemporary design has aided these developments.

**Monmouth:** a 13<sup>th</sup> C gated bridge, which was not up to modern demands and a suffocated south end of the town, with failing shops, traffic pressures etc; it was necessary to *understand* the town and tackle the problems accordingly. The project creates public space, pedestrian movement and enhances the historic bridge. This also creates areas of opportunities in other parts of town and improvements in town centre, with vibrant spaces eg: Mill Lane, Cardiff where all grant money has been spent on the public realm.

In summary, Tom emphasised that high quality materials are essential – in both contemporary and historic projects.

**Mike Loveday, Chief Executive of Norwich HEART and Director of the EU North Sea Region Livable City Programme,** talked about the importance of “joined up heritage” and the benefit of *measuring* it; we need to *prove* what we believe, he said. He listed the heritage (mis)conceptions and the reasons that we need to measure the benefits and identify the failings. He said we should look more deeply, identify good practice, and study the holistic framework, which includes people, stories, records etc. These measures must inform future work and identify the gaps.

The Heritage GAP is

- Incrementalism & Fragmentation – of both the product and the agencies working on elements of it
- Lack of Focus – no single vision of where Heritage in a particular location is going
- Little recognition of the Resource Burden – funding agencies sometimes see bits of the trees but never see the whole wood – and no one helps them to see it
- Rarely a Regeneration Product – how often do we think of joined up heritage as a driver
- Negligible Demonstration of Benefits – ‘it’s all about doing up the odd old building isn’t it?’
- No Promotion – we don’t really tell people about it – even local people

The HEART perspective is the knowledge, glue, vision facilitator, innovator, funding enabler, demonstrator and promoter.

It is possible to look at best practice internationally – eg: Ironbridge Gorge; Philadelphia Independence National Historical Park; Ghent – which took the bold step of reclaiming space and created an event which is now a *major* festival in N Europe.

Lyon, which has created a series of iconic urban spaces and combined with innovative water features and, possibly, the leading urban lighting strategy in Europe, has created a stage for a broad range of festival activity and urban animation.



Management plans bring together time and space, with signage and waymarking aiding movement, taking pressure off hot spots and spreading the load into less high profile areas.

By linking the aspirations to delivery it is possible to create a whole programme of activities – the two lists are linked:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Knowledge Gap                               | - More Information   |
| • Lack of Involvement                         | - Greater Engagement   |
| • No Vision                                   | - A shared & understood vision   |
| • Piecemeal, stereotypical change             | - Strategic, directed, innovative change                               |
| • Resource starvation                         | - Programmed regeneration  |
| • A building preservation output led approach | - A social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits led approach |
| • Confusion and a lack of profile             | - Carefully articulated products marketed in a targeted way            |

It is then possible to measure the delivery – a Heritage Delivery Plan eg:

- No. of media; quantum of information; satisfaction with both
- No. of activities; no. of people & organisations involved; satisfaction

- No. of facilities
- No. & value of new activities; level of enhanced adjacent activity; no. of proposals; volumes in public domain; energy expended; density
- No. & diversity per element etc etc

Michael introduced “novel thoughts” which could also be applied:

- ‘Hedgerow’ Analysis
- Whole Life Environment Assessment
- Value of Heritage to Culture
- Long term Citizenship Study

He summarised the direct and indirect economic benefits, which should also be linked. Eg: ownership > respect > less graffiti > lower maintenance costs.

He said that the way ahead included discovering:

- Where are the best practice examples?
- What have they achieved?
- What are the best performance measures?
- How do we measure them consistently?
- and producing a Best Practice Tool Kit

He has already undertaken a benefit study for EEDA and there was a proposal for an EHTF / UWE joint study, which could be a unique piece of work.

Having explored the breadth of the topic, the next two speakers explained to delegates how it had been applied in Newcastle and Gatehead.

**Ian Ayris, Historic Environment Manager at Newcastle City Council**, set out to explain the strategy to integrate transport into the historic environment. First, he gave the historical context including the impact of Richard Grainger (1797 – 1861) who reversed the exodus from cities and developed the City Centre as a place to be celebrated and enjoyed. Railways became a crucial element of development and, with the gentrification of the upper part of town, the quayside was seen as a ‘dirty and inconvenient place’. Following a cholera outbreak and a fire in 1854 quayside was destroyed and replaced with Victorian buildings and improved links to Grainger’s work on higher ground. However the importance of quayside was diminishing. *Shopping* and a main route took over in Northumberland Street; buses, trams, cars, and football began to bring people into the town. A university and administrative sector grew in the North. This gives Newcastle a ‘time-deep’ heritage, he said. He then handed over to his colleague to explain how the transit scheme would link these various geographically- and time-separated parts of the City.

**Keith Taylor, Project Manager of the Quayside Transit System**, explained how the project had grown from a proposal from the redevelopment

corporation, whose scheme was never finished, leaving no public transport links; there was some infrastructure in place but it was not finished.

However, with Government funding for the development scheme and an identified demand for links between the quayside and the rest of the City, the problems created by the topography and reliance on the car had to be addressed. An alternative to the car, for the 4 million leisure and work related trips per year, was needed.

The current proposal will:

- provide a sustainable transport system for the expanding Quayside areas
- provide an attractive alternative to the car
- provide existing public transport users with an effective service to complete their journey (rather than require them to walk 1km)
- integrate both Quaysides into the wider, high quality public transport system within the conurbation to maximise its use

The scheme will provide **a high quality, highly visible, frequent, integrated, reliable, bus based system.** There will be:

- State of the Art Buses
- Low Floor for Easy Access
- Highly Visible and Branded
- Powered by Alternative Fuels
- Visible, Purpose-built Stops
- Real Time Passenger Information

It also links with future plans for both Newcastle and Gateshead. The technology, in particular the buses, are state of the art. The prototype was trialed in May 2004, and certified in May 2005.



The central quayside area is a key point on both bus routes and is subject to regular peak hour congestion, so it is vital for securing reliability of services, that high levels of bus priority are delivered.

Achieving a high quality public realm, with natural stone paving comparable with Grainger Town, was also vital for the success of the scheme. Changes in the priority and traffic management proposals in Quayside area have also provided greater space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Ian took up the story again to describe the restoration of historic buildings in the City, in particular the Sandhill HERS scheme which included a visitors' information centre at the Guildhall. There were also projects promoting the river (the Tall Ships Race) and other activities facilitated by the transport system (the Stephenson Quarter) and using the heritage – the Keep, Castle and Cathedral – to demonstrate the ability to move around the town to see all key parts.



**Geoff Underwood, Senior Planner for Gateshead Council**, considered that you must identify the important things before you start - both the ordinary and the extra-ordinary. Joint working with English Heritage and a joint housing project with Newcastle Council, had all added to the recent achievements in Gateshead.

The Council had undertaken several arts and culture led regeneration projects as well as heritage led regeneration projects; eg:- Saltwell Park and the Bridges Townscape Heritage Initiative.

In order to recognise local distinctiveness, a local listings initiative, which involved local people was undertaken. These were both the special and the ordinary and places which were special to Gateshead – not necessarily of national interest. This offered no statutory control but inclusion on the local list is now a 'material consideration' when planning decisions are made. It recognises important elements of the historic environment, assists in interpretation, informs regeneration proposals and understanding and assists with funding bids by registering a degree of heritage merit.

A total of 540 nominations were received; these included 294 buildings, 26 parks and gardens which were adopted by the Cabinet. The emphasis was on local importance and featured buildings which were atypical elsewhere in the country - eg: the miners' welfare hall & Greenside & River Police HQ, also churches & chapels & a Mission Chapel – a tin one ! with a rich heritage of pubs, clubs and hotels, some late Victorian & Edwardian, as well as industrial, commercial

buildings and agricultural buildings, which are typical of N Durham and Northumberland, together with Memorials and some early 20<sup>th</sup>C buildings of exuberant architecture which came about with the changes in mobility.

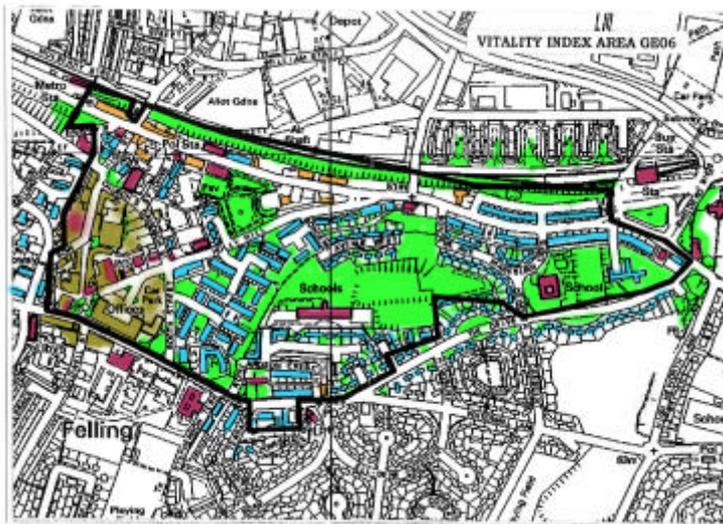


There were local management issues as the listing offered no additional controls and no protection, but the *value* is important locally as well as nationally.

In collaboration with English Heritage, a publication about Gateshead was launched in 2004, with four main themes – industry and economy, public buildings, housing and conservation and change. Gateshead was one of 24 towns chosen to take part in this project which recognised a) that urban regeneration would have far reaching effects and b) the importance of everyday architecture. This did a lot for Gateshead within the Borough for self esteem and to influence decision making through better understanding.

**Jules Brown, from the North of England Civic Trust**, described the Urban Landscape Townscape Assessment methodology. He said it was vital to have an “*understanding* of what you’ve got before you make changes”; that is, market renewal must be informed by an understanding of the historic environment. The use of ULTA could provide this.

His brief, when undertaking the work with Gateshead, was to provide a physical assessment to complement the social counterpart completed by others, in order to provide a summary ‘portrait’ of the Pathfinder area - a short, sharp look at the character, after which it would be possible to look at the details. It was a very large area, split into 26 Vitality Index Areas (‘VIA’) – defined by local factors not only built environment factors. – “an informed impression of character” and “a base of environmental and experiential data”.



### Gateshead Pathfinder ULTA

The methodology included a desk study, on-site surveys, photographs and maps. These collected and collated information on land use, access networks, landmarks, views, urban form, local details & character, topography, the impact of vegetation and open spaces. It was also possible to make assessments about heritage, movement, colour, safety, stimulus, consistency and ecology. This information was written up into a report which included a results table, map and defining photographs. A great deal of original research data was collected and digitalized.

Jules summarized that the major findings were:

- there is no 'one size fits all'
- no obvious age/condition correlation
- 'period prejudice' is not always true
- interesting housing from all periods
- exemplar housing from several ideologies
- some successful types wherever they are
- analysis of local perceptions needed

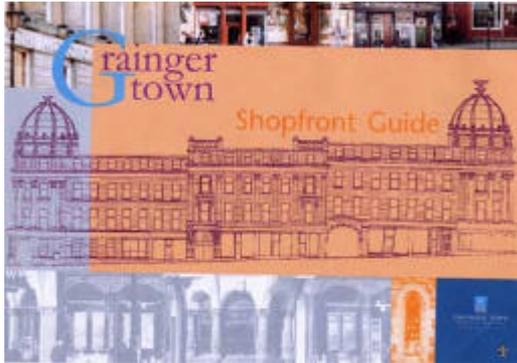
and the uses might be:

- a starting point only...
- manage character, guide investment
- pathfinder, DC, LDF, implementation
- orientation: consultants, developers, staff
- education: schools, libraries
- civic pride: residents groups, local history

He concluded that "understanding is always the first step (before intervention)".

Delegates then had the opportunity to put questions to the panel of speakers, before lunch, which was followed by walking tours of Gateshead and Newcastle to see the details of the projects which had been presented.

On their return to the Assembly Rooms, Ian Poole introduced two speakers who described the INHERIT Network from the perspective of Newcastle and Belfast.



**Fiona Cullen, Heritage Officer for Newcastle City Council**, described INHERIT as an international network of historic cities committed to sustainable heritage-led regeneration with the aim of promoting and sharing good practice. It was launched in 2002 by the Grainger Town Partnership, Newcastle City Council and the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EAHTR). Initially four cities, Belfast, Gothenburg, Newcastle and Verona were involved, they were joined in 2004 by Gdansk in Poland and Ubeda in Spain. The project is co-ordinated by EAHTR, and has held four meetings in Paris, Verona, Belfast and Norwich, with an Interreg IIIc grant approved in March 2005. The overall objective of this is to facilitate cities to regenerate through investing in their heritage by:

- Exploring the experiences of partner cities
- Identifying the processes followed and the key factors that lead to success
- Producing policy tools to improve the ability of other cities to undertake heritage-led regeneration
- Evaluating relevant EU regional policies to improve their current and future effectiveness

The Gateway methodology will be used to identify the keys to success through twelve operational objectives. Each city has a specific role to feed back into the whole –

- EAHTR: BENEFIT AND REALISATION
- BELFAST: POLICY AND LEGISLATION
- GDNASK: GOVERNANCE
- GOTHENBURG: METHODOLOGY
- NEWCASTLE: GOOD PRACTICE
- UBEDA: STRATEGY
- VERONA: QUALITY

This recognises the best practice which Newcastle demonstrates.

The results of INHERIT will be:

- Sharing/transfer of experience between partner cities and across the wider network of heritage cities
- Identification of the key characteristics of excellence that could be developed into a 'quality standard'
- Increase in the awareness of the benefits of heritage-led regeneration amongst practitioners and policy makers
- Production of clear guidance on how to realise the full potential of heritage as an asset and a catalyst for regeneration
- Compilation of a report on the regional policy implications of heritage-led regeneration – potential to influence EU policy and the deployment of resources

After this fairly lengthy run-in period, the real process of INHERIT is beginning – with a symposium in Gothenburg, to which other interested parties are invited; this will help to establish the Gateway methodology:-

1. detailed audit - essential
2. the regeneration strategy carried out by EDAW – which levered in lots of investment; themes guided the project and development principles and identified elements to measure as success; multi-layered conservation planning approach
3. project structure – with contributions from all partners
4. project implementation – individual projects:
  - quality of the environment
  - business development and enterprise
  - housing – encouraging people to live in the city centre
  - non housing property development – changing the perceptions of developers, encouraging investment in converting listed buildings
  - access to opportunity – jobs, skills etc
  - arts, culture and tourism – events to promote and enhance the vibrancy of the city
  - management, marketing and promotion – leaflets to raise awareness of the historical significance and what is going on; continue to promote the project which has won many awards from UK and Europe
5. monitoring / evaluation – which has been very positive
6. forward strategy and maintenance charter – which will be monitored by the City Council's 'City Centre Team' and 'City Centre Panel' who will champion future improvements and help to protect and maintain the Grainger Town legacy. Production of a Maintenance Manual for owners to reduce costs; ongoing education and information.

There are several lessons to be learnt from the Grainger Town experience which will feed into the INHERIT project to inform others:

- need to establish broad based partnerships

- need to change perceptions
- importance of early wins
- importance of an ethos of quality and excellence in design
- importance of a coherent yet flexible strategy
- need to raise aspirations by looking at best practice elsewhere
- need to have a dedicated professional project team

Fiona concluded that they were all very proud of the achievements in Newcastle and keen to exchange information with others.

Ian said that he would be attending the Gothenburg symposium on behalf of EHTF and would welcome examples of good practice to take to the meeting. (Please send to [lan.poole@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:lan.poole@stedsbc.gov.uk))

**Ronald Kane, the Culture and Heritage Officer, from Belfast City Council,** explained that the role of Belfast in INHERIT links with what is currently going on in the City and offers the opportunity to harness the built heritage for regeneration and for the preservation and sustainable development of the built heritage.

He considered that the current, re-active, arrangements limit Belfast's economic development capacity. His aim was to capture the local heritage and give it value for local people and to be pro-active, with an advocacy role. There have already been some events in order to try to engage young people, and to discover what *they* value. There is also a Culture and Arts Plan which was adopted by the Council in 2003 which also ties in with heritage.

However, the experience of Belfast being 'over governed' is one which can contribute to the lessons for INHERIT.

Key actions under Theme 'Place' are:

- a skills audit + skills development within the heritage sector
- providing a Heritage for Youth Initiative
- an economic and social impact analysis of Belfast's Culture and its Heritage
- contribute to INHERIT
- building heritage into the Belfast Cultural Strategy
- producing 'Belfast Historic Atlas Part 2 (1840-1900) an Enduring City'
- a Heritage Policy + Strategy for Parks and Cemetery

Recommendations resulting from this are;

- the development of a 'local list' of buildings for submission to Town Planning Committee with no statutory status developed within BMAP
- to seek support of Development plus Town Planning in taking recommendations to DoE

However, Belfast is overburdened with strategies – 93 altogether! It is not an example of joined up government! Of the four most important strategies which he identified, Ronald considered that a review of the public administration was the most important.



INHERIT can help in this process as the study of the economic impacts of the built heritage showed that:

- there are substantial direct and indirect benefits in sustaining the built heritage
- it impacts in key areas as a direct employer and in investment and visitor spend
- the majority of the top 20 visitor attractions are related to the natural or the built heritage

This understanding of the value of the built heritage can help the Council to position itself as the leader of regeneration in the City and to protect and enhance the surviving historic fabric. It will also support the integration of good modern design into the historic environment.

Belfast City Council owns many of the buildings and land. It can use these assets to lever in funds and to encourage other projects. For example the St Georges Market received Heritage Lottery money but other markets are becoming established and it is now a very successful area. Renovation of the Albert Clock - in a former red light district and *leaning* - has brought the area back to life and renewed links with the river front, levering in investment.

Ronald hopes that in Belfast they will be able to develop a strategy for regeneration and to provide information to assist other towns throughout Europe.