



CGI of restored Temple Works, Leeds (FCB Studios for CEG)

# REPORT

## Future Cities Forum

### Heritage, urban planning and cities 2020

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A new square for the heart of the City: Walbrook Square, London EC4 (The Mansion House, St. Stephen Walbrook, N M Rothschild to rear, the Walbrook Building and Bloomberg)

## Introduction

Future Cities Forum's report 'Heritage and Urban Planning 2020' looks at the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on local and national efforts to save our UK historic buildings in towns and cities from falling into disrepair, the important role of historic buildings in determining current master planning schemes, how Germany is using heritage to regenerate its urban town centres and how Covid-19 has pushed forward the need for the 'greening' of our historic cities.

In this report, we talked to the Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ros Kerslake, Leeds City Council's Head of Regeneration, Adam Brannen and Historic England's Principal Adviser and Lead Specialist, Historic Places,

Clive Fletcher, along with Coventry City Council on working with heritage for its City of Culture year 2021. Urban planners and architects were also consulted to build a picture of the current concerns for heritage preservation and future master planning.

Ros Kerslake told us:

‘Nobody had Covid-19 in their business plan. We moved fast to survey the heritage sector to see what the effect would be of the pandemic, so we were able to get strong evidence of a devastating impact. Much of what we fund depends on tourism and visitors that do much to keep our economy going. We set up an emergency £50 million fund with a focus initially on what organisations would need to keep going.’

Place, with the accent on greening our towns and cities, which Covid-19 has brought forward as a necessity, in terms of providing ‘healthy’ spaces for people to retreat to, is no less important than individual buildings to the proper master planning of our environments and the risk of decay or inappropriate development to them has been of concern to conservationists.

Improving the attractiveness of our open spaces has grown in momentum. Historic England is working with Brighton and Hove City Council providing specialist advice to regenerate Madeira Terrace - a feature of the eastern seafront and an example of 19<sup>th</sup> century engineering with its iconic 805 meters of cast iron arches - but now with structural stability of serious concern.

In this report, we have looked at the historic centres of Leeds, Manchester and Bristol, the way industrial buildings are being preserved, as well as how medieval districts and eighteenth-century master plans are being adapted to current thinking and design for living.

We have included Stride Treglown Urban Designer Paul Seaver’s thoughts for example on the continued impact of the car on Bristol’s historic Park Street and how appropriate planting and street furniture could restore the streetscape to help the mental wellbeing of shoppers. Future Cities Forum has also given a focus in this report to the preservation of heritage in Germany’s towns with the demands of planning new retail districts.

With the fortunes of the high street in everyone’s mind and a particular focus for Future Cities Forum’s discussions, we talked to Historic England about their

work to preserve buildings in towns such as Derby, where heritage investment has given the town and high street a fresh chance for future prosperity.

We hope you enjoy reading this report with examples of our nation's important heritage showcased, the highlighting of work carried out by heritage organisations in preserving the look and master planning of our cities and the concerns for the future design of our urban environments from developers, councils, planners, architects and designers.

Future Cities Forum – November 2020.



Decaying iron work, Madeira Terrace Brighton (Historic England / Richard Rutter)

# The impact of Covid-19 on heritage and master planning

This has been a year like no other where the arrival of Coronavirus has impacted every aspect of people's lives around the world and no less so the fight to preserve the heritage architecture of our towns and cities.

Our heritage in the UK in a sense has always been 'at risk' from environmental damage over the centuries, but the pandemic has disrupted the ability of those working in the sector to carry out important preservation work.

Historic England has stated that due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the organisation has only been 'able to assess sites and collect data where it has been safe to do so. This has given us a helpful temperature check of the condition of our historic environment in the last 12 months, but it has not been possible to carry out analysis of trends as we have in previous years.'



Newington Green Unitarian Meeting House, Hackney, London – restoration funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (Historic England Archive)

However, it also says on a positive note, that there have been some sites rescued and removed from the heritage at risk register even with the impact of the C-virus, such as Newington Green Meeting House, Hackney, London where

leaking roofs, damp and structural movement had been present. It describes how the congregation of this historic place of worship with connections to political radicalism dating back over 300 years including Mary Wollstonecraft, carried out a comprehensive project 'Recovering the Dissenters Legacy'. This project encompassed full repairs to the historic fabric and improved access and facilities and was completed in June this year and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Despite the C-virus crisis breaking in March this year, by September the UK government announced an £80 million fund to over a hundred towns in England to help them 'build back better'. Funding, it says, that will kick start local projects, driving growth and improving the environment.

The Housing Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP also announced that he had appointed Nicholas Boys Smith to establish a new design body, tasked with driving up design standards and supporting local communities to produce design codes, defining beautiful design in each community.

Also announced was the appointment of Charles O'Brien as the government's Listing Heritage Adviser to help conserve some of England's historic buildings as part of the most ambitious local heritage campaign for forty years. The government states that this is the first time such a post has been created since the 1980's and has echoes of the famous Monuments Men who battled to save historic buildings and artefacts from bulldozers during the Second World War.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is now calling for expressions of interest from local authorities keen to take part in its local heritage list campaign with funding of £700,000. Local listing, Historic England explains is the creation of a non-statutory record of historic buildings, sites and structures, helping to protect them through the planning system. MHCLG is according to Historic England considering ways of supporting HE's existing programmes of work to promote local heritage in London.

Chief Executive of Historic England, Duncan Wilson stated:

'Although some local authorities have had local lists for a number of years, there are considerable gaps, and this very welcome initiative will help local authorities and communities bring greater protection to local heritage.'

‘We are delighted to work with Charles O’Brien, the Government’s independent adviser, to ensure this funding will help create new and better lists in places lacking them by investing in their preparation.’

Four hundred and forty five heritage organisations will share £103 million from two funds in the UK government’s Culture Recovery Fund, to restart vital repair and maintenance work on cherished heritage sites, and to keep attractions open and support those working in the sector.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden:

‘As a nation it is essential that we preserve our heritage and celebrate and learn from our past. This massive support package will protect our shared heritage for future generations, save jobs and help us prepare for a cultural bounce back post Covid.’

While Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund stated:

‘It is absolutely right that investing in heritage should be a priority during the crisis, and this support by Government is crucial. Heritage creates jobs and economic prosperity, is a major driver for tourism and makes our towns, cities and rural areas better places to live. All of this is so important for our wellbeing and will be particularly vital when we start to emerge from this incredibly difficult time’.



Ragged Schools Museum , Tower Hamlets London, Grand Union Canal (Historic England)

Future Cities Forum's discussion this autumn on the impact that Covid-19 has had on the heritage sector, allowed panellists to discuss the opportunities for preserving and re-purposing heritage buildings in our towns and cities, and what has been learned from successful projects that have anchored regeneration.

Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ros Kerslake, Leeds City Council's Head of Regeneration, Adam Brannen and MICA Architects' Director, Stuart Cade joined the discussion.

Ros commented on how they immediately listened to organisations needs in the pandemic:

'These organisations had a lot of challenges around issues for example of sufficient insurance, so we did not put a fixed deadline on our funding scheme. When we first announced the support, the Chancellor had not put his furlough scheme through but that was a terrific help. As time moved on, we put the focus on what help people needed in practical terms in order to open with Covid-19 still around, so there was lots of demand for signage and so on. We stood by the commitments we had already made including £1.1 billion pre-Covid-19, and actually increased these in some cases. I don't think there is a business plan out there that hasn't had to change.'

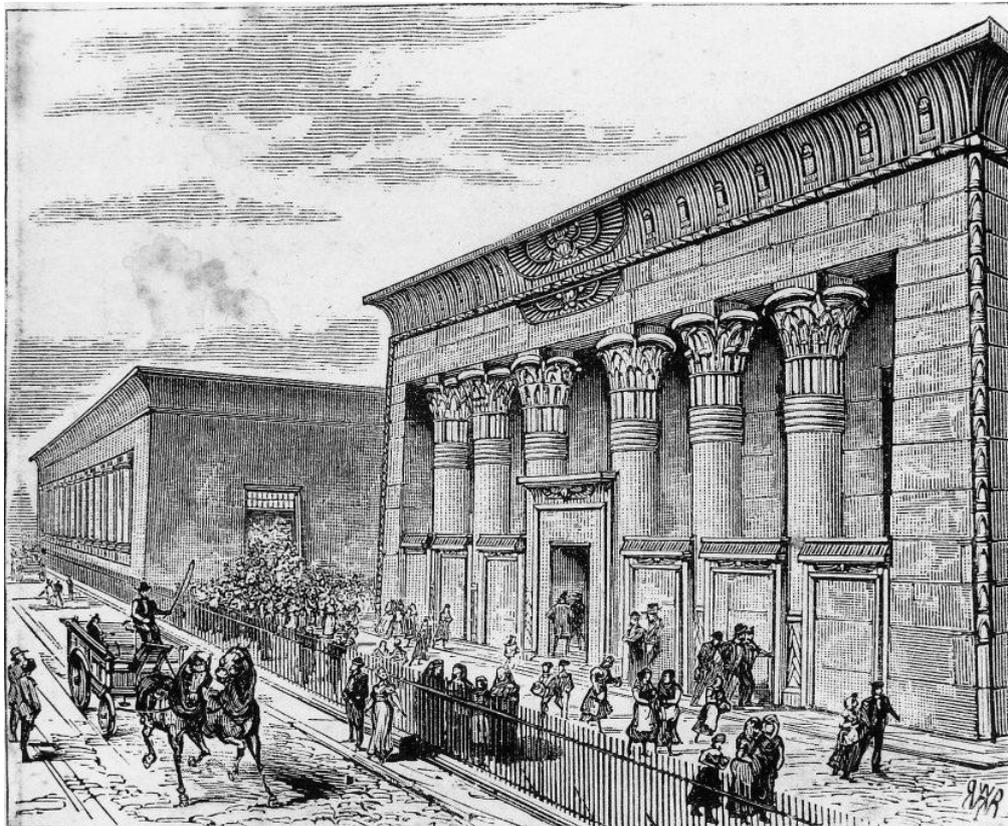
'We talked about – in one of your previous forums – how city centres and the high street needed to move away from pure retail. I remember it was a developer who was saying that we needed more art and culture on the high street to draw people in, to make these live and thrive. I don't believe we would have seen the £1.5 billion funding from the Chancellor given to support culture unless he thought it was vital for the success of our cities.

'Heritage is part of that package, part of what makes you want to go somewhere. UK and foreign tourists are looking for somewhere with the built heritage that defines a place and is different from where they come from.

'It's not just the Grade-1 listed heritage which is important. I spent some years of my career working in the Black Country on a regeneration project and what was overwhelming was the passion for a run-down industrial building that had strong links to the community and meant a huge amount to the generations of

people who had worked there. It was a real part of the sense of themselves. We musn't lose sight of that, of who we are and the sense of place.

'This is not to say the 'new build quality development' can't happen but we need to make sure that we have used all the resources we already have. A lot of new build over the last 20 years has not lasted well. We need to think carefully about the quality of what we build. We are building the heritage of the future.



Temple Works - engraving from the 1800s when it was a working flax mill (Leeds Civic Trust)

Leeds City Council's Head of Regeneration, Adam Brannen, reflected on the Covid-19 landscape and the impact on the city's built environment:

'From a regeneration point of view - and my role includes housing and economic development across Leeds - we recognise that heritage has a powerful role to play. But an uncertain economic climate means that buildings can be difficult to bring back into use because of the conservation deficit. This deficit is market failure on the cost involved so these deficits get bigger as invest-ability decreases, so the question is how can we fill this growing chasm with our expertise? Investors and developers are just beginning to retrench.'

Historic England defines 'conservation deficit' as the 'amount by which the cost of repair (and conversion to optimum viable use if appropriate) of a heritage asset exceeds its value on completion of repair and conversion, allowing for all appropriate development costs ('Enabling Development and Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning - Note 4' Published 30 June 2020).

'We have some great heritage-linked projects' continued Adam 'and a current example is Temple Works, which is a fantastic project for the British Library and Leeds. However, the cost is massive. It's an amazing building. The confidence is good with the British Library as strong as you can get for a global brand and with the prospects for bringing real change in that area (of Leeds Southbank) by being an anchor. The government has set aside £25 million to bring the British Library into Temple Works but this is only part of the solution. There are engineering challenges, especially regarding the span of the roof over what was at the time of building the biggest room in the world. There are some structural failures which make for cost challenges. We are working closely with Commercial Estates Group, the building's owner, to find solutions.'

According to Leeds Civic Trust, Temple Works - which was constructed as a flax mill in the 1800s, with a striking Egyptian-style colonnade and sheep grazing on the roof - is 'a crucial piece in the wider South Bank jigsaw', being close to the proposed Leeds HS2 station. The site had stood empty and near derelict for many years. In 2017 Burberry shelved its plans for a restoration of the building.



Mid-century heritage re-imagined: Restoration and development of Centre Point London (MICA for Almacantar) showing view through to new public square, restaurants and shops

Director at MICA Architects, Stuart Cade, was asked about whether re-purposing older buildings was always better than demolition, especially given Net Zero concerns:

'The greenest building is the one that is already there, so we have to reinforce that. These cost discussions are the ones which we challenge and think about in the early days of a project. The client is often advised (by others) that there is a premium for keeping a building. We always challenge those who think that retaining and re-purposing rather than demolishing puts an extra 20% on the costs of a project. This is lazy thinking.'

'Attitudes have changed to our mid-century buildings since 10 years ago. Centre Point is a good example. Revered and hated in equal measure when built, the site had become effectively a roundabout. Part of our proposal for the Centre Point project was to remove the buses that circled, and to put in new public realm creating a public square instead. There was a heritage debate about removing traffic at the base of the building.'

'We have also been working on a major cultural project in Croydon. Only fifteen years back Fairfield Halls - a Festival of Britain-era concert venue - was going to be replaced with a new auditorium on Purley Way. That would not be considered in 2020. Now there is a national, lovely warm feeling towards our mid-century heritage.'



Oxford Northgate project for Jesus College, improving Market Street (above) and repurposing mid-century office space fronting Cornmarket for student use and creating a raised quadrangle (MICA)

Stuart has over twenty years of experience working in master planning, education, performance, museum and gallery design with a particular expertise in contemporary buildings and additions to complex, often historic settings. Most recently Stuart has been leading a major new commission for Jesus College Oxford University working with buildings originating in medieval times and post war years, connecting educational provision with the 'high street'.

# Remodelling historic streets for climate change and community

Cornmarket in Oxford is a jumble of historical styles, having a Saxon church at one end, a 14th century timber framed building, completed in 1386 as the New Inn and a collection of 18th and 19th century buildings as well as modern shop fronts. In 2002, it was voted Britain's second worst street in a poll of listeners to Radio Four's the Today programme, due to the paving of the street into a pedestrianised zone.

The city and Cornmarket in particular have felt the effects of the enormous changes in retail due to online shopping and customer demands. Recently the £500 million project partnership between the Crown Estate, Land Securities and the two Oxford councils has seen the rebirth of the tired 1960's Westgate Centre to the South of Cornmarket, including luxury shops and a large John Lewis store.

In Cornmarket, the retail premises owned by Jesus College, Oxford, will be divided into smaller shop fronts, to take account of new retail ideas, behind and above which the college will provide for new student accommodation, a knowledge exchange, modern gate-house and a tower room for college dining or arts events, with a window framing a view of one of the most famous libraries in England, the Radcliffe Camera.

The college is trying to become more 'open' and 'welcoming' and has adopted MICA Architects' master-plan and designs, in the project called 'Northgate', both improving mixed use of academic facilities with student accommodation and retail in Cornmarket and Market Street.

The college's back on Market Street will be transformed into a positive front, in order to connect better with the surrounding streets and opening up an improved approach. The new college gatehouse will facilitate outreach and access, making Jesus more accessible both physically and virtually. Views through to academic spaces, the new Digital Hub and Fellows Garden, will allow increased interaction with the city.

On Cornmarket Street, retail provision will be on the ground and first floor with residential accommodation above. The corner of the new building itself is marked with a larger window into the café/event space within the college.

How we manage and future plan our historic shopping streets has also been in the mind of Stride Treglown's Urban Planner, Paul Seaver, when thinking about Bristol.

In his thought piece, 'It's time to park our toxic relationship with private vehicles', Paul showcases a historic area of Bristol – with an image of a street in Clifton – describing how it has been reclaimed for people. Gone are the cars and instead café visitors sitting on pavements around planting and cycle parking.



A street reclaimed from motor traffic in Clifton Bristol (from Stride Treglown / Paul Seaver 'Talking Spaces')

Bristol's eighteenth-century master plans were laid out with some care, when the city was first being planned. Between 1720 and 1840, hundreds of new buildings from increased prosperity through trade were built. Several residential squares with three-storey houses were laid out around central gardens. Those concerned about the slave trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Mary Carpenter, added to the build in the city through the establishment of 'ragged schools'. Other educational establishments followed such as Clifton College in 1862 and University College, the predecessor of the University of Bristol was founded in 1876.

Cities grow and sprawl as developments take place, but are we in danger of losing our sense of this historic city among recent tussles with traffic management, roads and car parks?

'Imagine a boulevard of trees up this beautiful Bristol thoroughfare in place of the parked cars along the right-hand side. Trees could be interspersed with cycle hoops, seating and planters, making it a nice environment for shoppers', writes Paul, although some aspects of master planning he admits have improved since he started living in the city.



Temple Quay Bristol panorama by Chris Bahn

'When I first arrived in Bristol there was a four-lane dual carriageway running through the heart of Queen's Square. Temple Quarter had a rollercoaster of a flyover onto Redcliffe Way. Not forgetting the huge figure of eight configuration of roads outside the Hippodrome with formal parks in the

middle.’ Paul says that evidence of the built environment ‘all demonstrates that our towns and cities are able to adapt to how we, as a society, wish to function. But at what cost?’

‘Our urban environments are flexing to accommodate vehicles but it’s those same vehicles that are wreaking havoc on our streets and our wellbeing. We have to view our streets, not as transport infrastructure, but as places for communities that respond to the social issues we’re currently facing such as climate change, air pollution, social isolation, obesity and the bio-diversity emergency. I’m particularly interested in how streets could be transformed at a city-wide level.’

‘We should be pushing to replace a minimum of every 20<sup>th</sup> (though ideally every 10<sup>th</sup> on-street parking space with a landscape feature every year for 10 years. After five year, 6.6 hectares of Bristol’s streets would be reclaimed for tree planting, raised beds, benches, cycling storage, water attenuation and artwork. After 10 years, that figure rises to 12.6 hectares of reclaimed streets. In the first year alone, 1,270 street trees could be planted across the city’.



‘Imagine a boulevard of trees’ Park Street Bristol (Stride Treglown)



Olympia Way (CGI by SPPARC) of the east façade and entrance to Olympia, London W14 with new public realm

## Modernising a Victorian ‘people’s palace’ for better public realm

Paul Seaver’s concerns to end the domination by the car of our historic places is echoed in the new proposals for Olympia Way, which puts the pedestrian first.

The new master plan will make Olympia, says SPPARC Architecture, ‘more open to its community and visitors by providing public spaces, routes and landscaping that will bring enjoyment to local residents and the public, regardless of whether they have a ticket for the exhibition halls.

‘The piecemeal development of London Olympia has resulted in a site which is disconnected from the surrounding area. The proposal seeks to remedy this

issue by allowing Olympia to reconnect with its neighbours and giving public access to the site.

‘A newly pedestrianised Olympia Way will turn a vehicle-dominated space, into a high-quality pedestrianised environment. The street will contain a mix of uses including shops and cafes which will be open to the public all year round. This piece of public realm will be a vibrant and active hub for the local community.

‘A new level 2 public realm will run through the heart of the site, allowing access from Olympia Way, along an elevated desk, to the west end of Hammersmith Road. This new route offers greater connectivity through the site as well as access to a number of public squares and green spaces.’

Architectural practice SPPARC in collaboration with Heatherwick Studio has been working with the heritage of Olympia in West London, (along with Deutsche Finance and Yoo Capital's design team) to re-invent the Victorian and Edwardian era's 'people's palace' for the next century, with a focus on new entertainment venues, hotels, retail and restaurants to complement the existing exhibition halls.

SPPARC is a renowned London based studio of architects, designers and thinkers. Founded by Trevor Morriss in 2007, the practice is known for its signature buildings but also master plans, interiors and product design. Refusing to subscribe to a ‘house style’, the practice takes an innovative approach to all its projects.

The £1 billion Olympia project received planning approval by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham in January 2019. The site contains a number of listed buildings, Grand Hall and Pillar Hall, National Hall, Central and MSCP. Working within the constraints and opportunities of the Listed Assets, the proposals envisage a diverse cultural hub for London with public and green space that will deliver significant public realm improvements and create permeability throughout the site.

SPPARC says that at a time of intense competition, it is ‘an unequivocal opportunity to set Olympia London apart on the global stage with supporting uses to the exhibition business by forging a leading role as a centre for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the UK by providing a wealth of new spaces and uses to support this vision.’

At the heart of this new public realm is a new glass canopy and garden with a mezzanine level offering unprecedented views of the historic exhibition halls.

In all of this, the design team has been working with the local community to understand its needs. The site will now offer new cultural venues including a cinema, a theatre and music venue plus two new hotels and commercial workspaces.



CGI of Blyth Road view of Olympia, West Kensington regeneration (SPPARC)



Manchester's Shambles Square (Visit Manchester)

## Medieval Manchester and terror attack memorial

How do cities fund improvements to their historic districts which draw in tourists and shoppers alike, while also master planning for important memorials commemorating tragic events such as the Manchester terror attack?

Manchester's medieval district remains an important area of the city, founded by the Romans and with significant buildings such as the Grade 1 listed Manchester Cathedral and Cheetham's Library remaining. The district grew dramatically in the 1400's when Flemish weavers moved to the town to produce wool and linen, and it began to be seen as Lancashire's major industrial centre.

The present city council has been working to improve the current look of the historic district with plans for planting and new river walkways.

A planning application for the memorial to those who lost their lives in the 22nd May 2017 Manchester terror attack has also now been submitted.

A public consultation on plans for the regeneration of Manchester's Medieval Quarter, the wider area which the memorial sits within, was held in May and June this year and found there was significant public support for the project.

Subject to the planning application being approved, the memorial will be located between Manchester Cathedral and Chetham's School of Music, at the foot of Fennel Street where it meets Victoria Street.

'Glade of Light' is designed to be a tranquil garden space, with a planting scheme planned to ensure year-round colour and reflect the changing seasons - a living memorial entirely using plants which grown naturally in the UK countryside. Tree locations have been circulated to maximise light and ensure the garden gets as much sunlight as possible.

At the heart of the memorial is a white stone ring 'halo' which will bear the names of the 22 who lost their lives set in bronze, with personalised memory capsules - containing memories and mementoes to be provided by their loved ones - held within the stone.

Plans have also taken into account positive suggestions from a number of consultees. This has resulted in the addition of a new outer circle path around the memorial and more seating. These changes are designed to improve inclusivity and accessibility and enable people to linger longer in the garden while preserving the memorial's intimacy.

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council said: 'Manchester will never forget those who lost their lives on 22 May 2017 and everyone so deeply affected by the terrible events that night.

'This memorial promises to be a beautiful tribute to them, a place for remembrance and reflection and a lasting part of the fabric of our city'.

Designers BCA Landscape and Smiling Wolf were appointed last year, in consultation with the families of those killed. It is intended that construction work on the memorial will begin in early 2021 with completion due in autumn 2021.



Plaza in front of new Primark building, Wuppertal, Germany (Chapman Taylor)

## Remodelling town squares in Germany

How is urban planning and design being re-thought in Germany compared to the UK? Are the differing histories of the two countries leading to varied design concerns and planning procedures? How do German architects view Bauhaus heritage post-war designed buildings over older historic examples when re-designing their town centres?

The architecture practice Chapman Taylor is reporting that Germany's town centres are facing a pressing need for mixed-use urban regeneration post Covid-19, a need that has been slowly growing due to the trend towards online shopping. The country is re-thinking its urban environments to create environmentally, socially and economically sustainable places to draw people

and businesses back. At the heart of this thinking, is how to use or link the surviving heritage of Germany's towns in new master plans that seem fresh and exciting.

So how to re-invent them? What of the existing buildings? How are these valued in a new master plan? These are some of the questions not just facing architects but also academics, as Germany evaluates the heritage it lost in the Second World War and the infill of 1960's architecture.

Writing in The Wall Street Journal, journalist Tom Fairless recorded the growing interest in Germany over the past two decades in the reconstruction of long-lost buildings or even entire neighbourhoods 'boosted by strong economic growth, renewed popular interest and rising tourism'.

However, he also points to the complexity which underlies this trend:

'efforts to rebuild Germany's lost architectural heritage are increasingly "ideologically fraught" according to Paul Nolte, a historian at Berlin's Free University. At its heart, the renewed debate is about how Germans can honor a pre-1945 history... In Britain by contrast, cities damaged by bombing were typically rebuilt in modernist style, and planners rarely looked back.'

Tom points out that there were different attitudes in different German cities:

'Munich reconstructed its old buildings...while Hanover and Cologne preferred new designs influenced by the modernist Bauhaus School.

'Today, supporters of reconstruction praise the return of a sense of history and identity to cityscapes pockmarked by poor-quality post-war designs. They say Germans are voting with their feet by choosing to live in historic neighbourhoods where architecture is human scale, not car-dominated.'

Future Cities Forum spoke to Jens Siegfried, Director in charge of Chapman Taylor's German studio, based in Dusseldorf. Jens has completed a wide range of projects and has an established track record in the design of retail and mixed-use schemes in Germany and in the Central and Eastern Europe region. He joined Chapman Taylor's London studio in 1989 but relocated to Germany in 2002.



View of Wuppertal City Plaza showing remodelled bridge from station (Chapman Taylor)

City Plaza in Wuppertal is one project that Jens has worked on and is the centrepiece of a large urban redevelopment project which links Wuppertal's railway station to the town centre. Wuppertal is a city in North-Rhine Westphalia, south of the Ruhr. With a population of 350,000, it is the largest city in the Bergisches Land and with its steep slopes, woods and parks, is known as the greenest city in Germany.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Wupper Valley was one of the largest industrial regions of continental Europe, with textile mills and blacksmiths shops. Some 4,500 buildings are classified as national monuments covering both Neoclassicism and Bauhaus and including the opera house – Opernhaus – and concert hall – Konzerthall Stadthalle.

Of the Wuppertal project Jens said: 'In 2012 the City of Wuppertal ran a master planning competition, wanting to redevelop the square and create a new link from the rail station to the centre avoiding the use of a 1960s concrete underpass. We entered the competition in collaboration with the developer and retail specialist Signature Capital.

'When we tackle projects such as these, we are tapping into traditional European ways of how cities are put together, and in this case we were helped by the listed railway building acting as an anchor.

'Destruction in the second world war has meant as in the case of Wuppertal that there are a lot of buildings from the 60's and 70's, so historic listed buildings dating earlier to this are treated with respect and are seen as a positive, something to work with.

'We want to create a tension between listed buildings and the new - that's what makes cities interesting - we don't copy what is just there and create a pastiche.

The retail outlet in the square - City Plaza – has a curved façade and is clad with brass panels, which alternate with the glass of the curtain wall, lifting the area's look and feel alongside major improvements to the surrounding public realm. It takes its inspiration from the city's 18th and 19th century textiles boom, drawing on the shapes of the yarns, fabrics and lace that were created and traded. The 'curtain wall' references fabric folds.

The plaza marks the rail gateway to Wuppertal's city centre, forming part of an assembly of impressive historical buildings which define the remodelled square in front of the railway station.

Jens continued: 'The existing proportions of the square at the time were all wrong and there was a big cube of a building which wasn't the most innovative in design. A lot of analysis later, the building was relocated and the bridge leading into the centre was widened. In order to create a seamless and pedestrian-friendly link, a highway had to be lowered by 6 meters and a new bridge built, flanked on both sides by retail pavilions.

'Wuppertal isn't a number one city in Germany and is in the shadow of first tier cities such as Cologne and Hamburg. Despite this, the council invested heavily in infrastructure improvements to make the connections work.

'Currently we are looking at the second level linked to the plaza to create an entirely new city point of arrival.'



View of Irongate and Saddler Gate looking towards Derby Cathedral (East Midlands Business Link)

## Historic England on boosting high streets in Derby and Nottingham

Future Cities Forum has been speaking to Clive Fletcher, Historic England's Principal Advisor and Lead Specialist, Historic Places, about the current opportunity to re-purpose heritage buildings for shop and office space for the economic regeneration of towns and cities.

The UK government in its 'build, build, build' announcement last June, called for a radical change to the planning system suggesting that new regulations would give greater freedom for buildings in our town centres to change use without planning permission. Builders it said would no longer need planning permission to demolish and rebuild vacant commercial buildings if they were rebuilt as homes. A building used for retail would be able to be used for a café or office without requiring a planning application and local authority approval.

Clive told Future Cities Forum that in his opinion converting the upper floors of heritage buildings is easier to deliver than new build, with less risk and more available finance:

'My experience is that the space above shops is very flexible, often great spaces that are not used and a better performance in terms of carbon footprint. However, they are usually tatty and difficult to let but the money needed to convert them sensitively is often modest.

'We have tended to lose bits of heritage in town centres and cities over the decades and this has been a real blow. It has been on a large scale like the original Bull Ring in Birmingham or on a smaller scale to shop fronts in many of our towns. Our work on shop fronts in Derby has meant that there is now an award-winning high street.'

In 2009, after years of gradual decline the historic streets of Derby were designated a 'conservation area at risk' and added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The city topped a national table of struggling towns and cities with nearly a quarter of its shops lying empty and many in disrepair. However, Historic England and Derby City Council took action by launching a partnership scheme and since 2009 this has refurbished 97 properties in the Cathedral Quarter and beyond. Both organisations contributed £844,000 over eight years with £900,000 coming from the private sector.

The payback Historic England says has been impressive. The scheme has brought back 2,800 square metres of floor space back into use. It's also created 42 new jobs and helped the Cathedral Quarter win the category of Best City Location in the 'Great British High Street Award' for 2016. As a result it insists, between 2008 and 2012, Derby weathered the recession far better than other cities. In the UK as a whole, high streets suffered an average 26% decline in footfall.

Research in Derby's Cathedral Quarter shows that it remained vibrant: footfall fell by only 7-9%, helping to make Derby much more resilient than similar cities. The designation of Derby's historic streets as a Conservation Area has been a major factor in turning the area's economic fortunes round. For businesses and shoppers in Iron Gate, Wardwick, the Strand, Saddler Gate and surrounding streets, the historic character of the buildings is an attraction.

'Development in towns and cities means keeping close to your ideas of how you want to brand a place and making sure that the changes that are made are consistent with that', Clive says.

Clive spoke about Historic England's work to redevelop lucrative office space in Nottingham's wharf buildings, which he says are very popular with the creative industries sector.

Historic England says its 'Heart of Nottingham Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) initiative comes at a moment when ambitions for the heritage in the city are higher than they have been for a number of years. Building on the multiple award-winning Nottingham Station project, it states that there is a desire to use the historic environment to improve the city's attractiveness to investors and visitors and to engage its residents.

The organisation states that in 2015, Nottingham was ranked eighth for the proportion of its wards in the top 10% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Thirteen of its 31 conservation areas are at risk in Historic England's conservation areas survey. On the local register, compiled as part of a pilot survey of Grade II listed buildings, 81 of its listed buildings are at risk, it says.

Resources requested are £1.6 million over five years from Historic England to be matched by £1 million public and private capital and a further £902,000 in associated projects and in-kind contributions from Nottingham City Council.

Bromley House, the Georgian subscription library situated on the Old Market Square has approached Historic England for a substantial grant towards roof repairs. Research and publication of a book about the Old Market Square will tell Nottingham's history through the key themes illustrated by that single area.

Clive also spoke of the importance of Historic England's work in encouraging younger generations to appreciate the value of heritage. Developed in response to the government report on cultural education in England, it aims to help school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. In Nottingham, local schools will use the heritage schools project to explore wider themes, telling the story of Nottingham in a way that will engage with the national curriculum.



Coventry's Priory Row – Lychgate Cottages

## Coventry to highlight heritage as UK City of Culture 2021

Specialist conservation contractors have been appointed to transform some of Coventry's oldest buildings into special short stay visitor accommodation in time for the city becoming UK City of Culture 2021.

Historic Coventry Trust (HCT) has awarded the £606,000 contract to Messenger Construction Ltd to restore three timber-framed Lychgate Cottages in Priory Row and convert them into four self-contained units which will be let for short breaks.

The black and white cottages were built in 1415 and are the only buildings from St Mary's Priory to survive the destruction of Godiva's Cathedral during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539.

Skilled craftspeople from Messenger Construction, who work with public and private property owners including the National Trust and Historic England, have started work on the careful restoration of the ancient timber framed structures.

Funding for the project has been secured from the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), the Cultural Capital Investment Fund and the Government's Getting Building Fund through the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Graham Tait, Assistant Director at HCT, explained that the project in the Cathedral Quarter would attract visitors who may not previously have stayed overnight in Coventry, boosting the local economy.

'These notable cottages have been under-used for many years. The project is part of the Trust's partnership with the Council to restore much of the city's ancient heritage in time for City of Culture in May 2021'

'The cottages will attract leisure visitors to Coventry to stay in a piece of ancient history linked to Lady Godiva.

'The Trust has completed a new 250-year lease from Coventry City Council ...and is seen as a national trailblazer for regenerating the city and its economy through its heritage'.

Cllr Jim O'Boyle, CWLEP board director and Coventry City Council's Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration said:

'This is another major step in our innovative partnership with the Trust following the restoration of The Charterhouse, Drapers Hall and regeneration of The Burges which are already underway...the level of investment is unprecedented and will put us in a great position to take advantage of the boost in visitors resulting from City of Culture'.



The Burges, Coventry (CGI of proposed restoration from Costorphine + Wright Architects)

‘Wider place making about a number of cultural buildings in ownership of the local authority is important to us in preparing for the city’s role as UK Capital of Culture 2021. Many of these were not in the best state as they had been left empty for three to four years. I looked at what we can do to improve things – taking inspiration from work on the Charterhouse (part of a Grade 1 listed Carthusian monastery built in the 1300s which is being restored with help from the National Lottery Heritage Fund) which had been transferred to the Historic Coventry Trust.

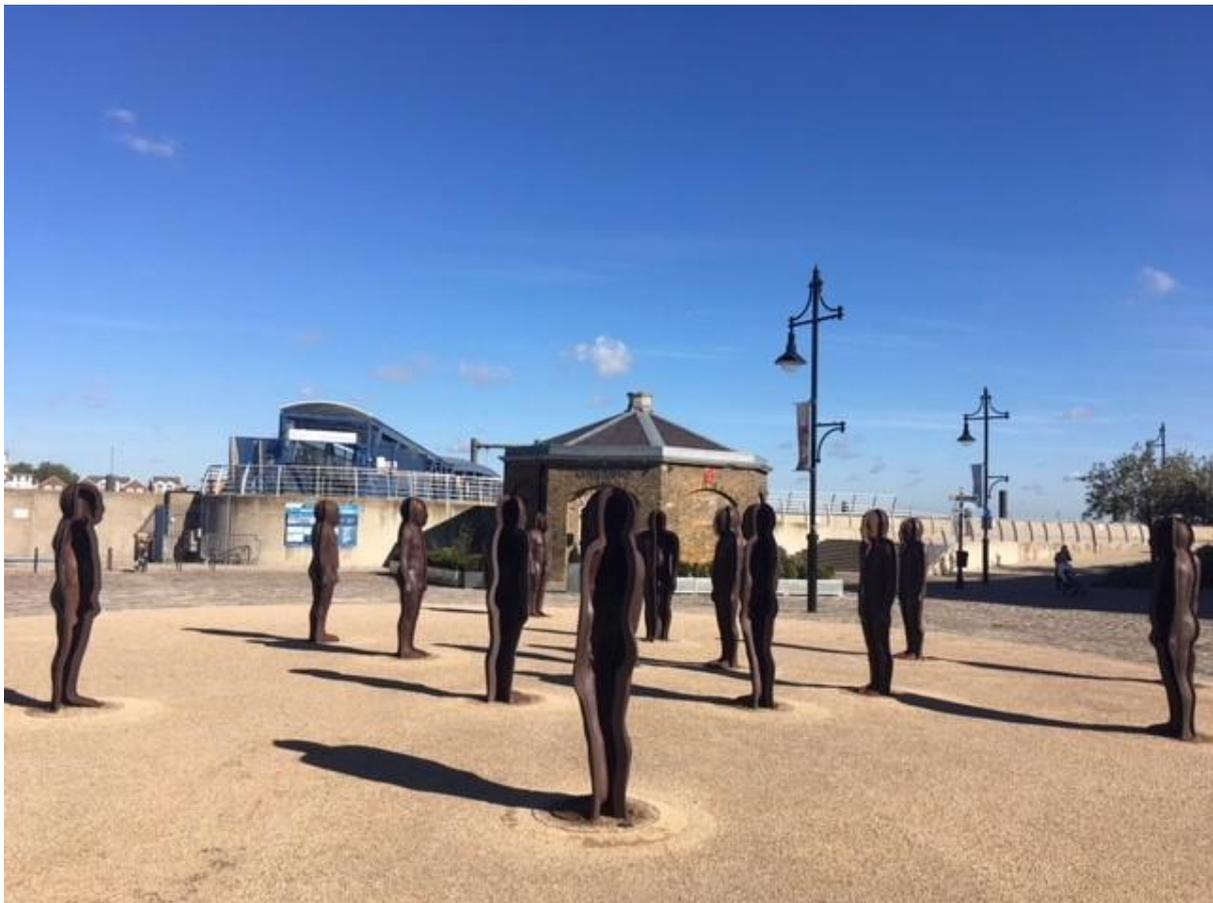
‘We didn’t have the finance to help restore all these buildings by ourselves. The gatehouses at Priory Row are the latest to be brought back to everyday use for the city, so both young and old can enjoy them. We have kept Coventry’s history too much as a secret, and much of this is 500 years old.

‘We are trying to bring buildings back into use and to treat them with respect. However, predicting how next year will be is difficult. The City of Culture title is not an end in itself, but is there to improve the lives of the citizens in Coventry.’

Historic Coventry Trust is working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund via a £4.3 million grant to develop the Charterhouse as a visitor attraction and heritage resource. Before dissolution in the reign of Henry the eighth,

Charterhouse Priory was only one of nine Carthusian 'silent order' monasteries in England.

Coventry city centre has also been able to benefit from the £95 million Historic England High Streets HAZ, on a project to restore The Burges and Hales Street. Historic Coventry Trust was given the grant by the DCMS as demonstrator for Historic England's programme to help reinvigorate high streets, in the wake of Covid-19.



**Assembly: iron figures by sculptor Peter Burke by the 1814 riverside guardhouse at the Royal Arsenal Woolwich development**

## Conclusions

- The National Heritage Lottery Fund says the UK should think carefully about the quality of its new build, as we are building the heritage of the future. Its' business plan has changed in line with adapting to the new environment that Covid-19 has brought to protect heritage and those jobs associated with it.
- Some historic buildings such as Newington Green Meeting House in London have been saved despite the impact of Covid-19, but there remain many as well as heritage of place, such as Madeira Terrace in Brighton, that remain at risk but are significant to our outdoor and coastal town environments.
- The role of the commercial partner in the preservation of heritage is coming into sharp focus potentially due to the Covid-19 crisis as investors and developers are starting to financially retrench – in part due to bank lending changes, which could lead to conservation deficits.
- MHCLG has made the significant appointment of Charles O'Brien as Listing Heritage Adviser, which the UK government says is part of the most ambitious local heritage campaign for forty years. £700,000 of funding has been earmarked for local authorities to help protect historic buildings through the planning system.
- In the last ten years in the UK, MICA Architects suggest that there has been a growing appreciation of mid-century heritage which is now receiving the appropriate attention and master planning that it deserves. Lazy thinking it says can lead to the myth that a 20 per cent premium is always added to preserving an old building, when this is not the case, and the lesser carbon footprints of older buildings should be considered as a reason for keeping them as part of master plans.

- An urban planner in the historic city of Bristol advocates replacing every tenth on-street car-parking place with a landscape feature every year for ten years to help combat the social isolation, obesity and bio-diversity crisis.
- The historic site of Olympia exhibition halls is being re-landscaped to provide pedestrian friendly areas in a new master plan to an area that has become unattractive, piece-meal and dominated by the car.
- Public consultation is essential in the planning of memorials when devastating events such as terrorist attacks take place, such as in Manchester, while sensitively planning their installation in historic city districts.
- Using the history of industrialisation and ancient trades, Germany is beginning to re-think its town centre redevelopments, taking design inspiration from the past and celebrating historic buildings, to create new and exciting master plans that will draw shoppers back to physical retail environments.
- Historic England is creating awareness that modest sums only are needed to restore and save historic shop fronts in towns such as Derby which can be a catalyst for future economic prosperity. Its' Heart of Nottingham Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is helping to develop the future office market in the city's historic wharf buildings.
- Coventry City Council is preparing for its UK City of Culture in May 2021 by restoring historic buildings for short stay accommodation. The council says investment in heritage restoration in the city has been unprecedented and this is helping to make tourists aware of the rich history of the city, despite the second world war bombings.

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