

## Case study for Heritage Counts 2015

Theme demonstrated by case study:	Repair and maintenance
Name of project/group:	Three Cranes Inn
Location:	Rotherham High Street
Duration (if applicable):	3 years
HEF member who provided case study:	HLF

Short description of project:

If you had walked past 25 and 27 High Street in Rotherham a few years ago, you would have seen an unremarkable modern shop-front. There was no hint that behind it was Rotherham's last known surviving medieval timber-framed town house. It was very much at risk of being damaged and lost but Chris Hamby decided to buy and restore the building so that it could be appreciated by the town. Restoration work began in Winter 13/14 and was completed in March 2015.

What would have happened without this project/group?

The building is almost 550 years old and has a rich story to tell. Built around 1470, it was then altered and extended in the late sixteenth century or early seventeenth century. The timber-framed property was originally a town-house of some status, possibly the residence of a wealthy merchant. By the late eighteenth century, the rear of the building and neighbouring building had been converted into the Three Cranes Inn, accessed via an alley. The fronts of the buildings were used as shops. The buildings remained in retail use but like other parts of Rotherham High Street, fell vacant for prolonged periods. Thanks to funding from Heritage Lottery and Rotherham Council, the building has been repaired and restored and is now used as Hamby's Antique Centre.

How did the project achieve its objectives?

Mr Hamby consulted with Historic England and engaged an archaeological architect to advice on changes and works. He says that more valuable than the advice was the encouragement given throughout the process.

What difference has it made? Main outcomes and outputs.

As well as restoring the striking medieval frontage for shoppers to appreciate, the shop also incorporates a Heritage Centre. This space displays original features as well as exhibits

discovered during the restoration of 25 and 27 High Street and information about the history of the building and neighbouring properties.



Left: Three Cranes before the project - Hidden from public view behind this modern shop-front was Rotherham's last known surviving medieval timber-framed town house (Photo: Historic England).

Right: Three Cranes after the project - Chris Hamby, owner, who restored the property (Photo: Historic England).

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

The owner, Mr Hamby, has now taken on a new project to repair and restore the former George Wright Offices behind High Street. This Grade II listed building in a Tudor Revival style is planned to become apartments.

What is the future for the case study?

Hamby's Antique Centre is open six days a week helping to contribute to the local economy. The new frontage has helped to transform the image of the High Street making it a much more attractive place to visit. The store contributes perfectly to the town centre's drive to build its reputation for specialist and independent retailing.

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