

# Heritage at Risk



Historic England

East Midlands Summary 2017



**A** notable theme for our work in tackling heritage at risk this year has been regeneration and the economic and social benefits it brings. We are excited about the potential heritage has to improve our lives as demonstrated at **Derby** and now in **Nottingham**. And having taken North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire back into the East Midlands last year, I have been delighted that we were able to assist in funding repairs to **Victoria Mill, Grimsby**.

The East Midlands has the highest proportion of highly graded buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register of any region. This means we will need to continue to make good use of our own grant aid, working in partnership with others in finding solutions. There are some hard nuts to crack remaining on the Register, but this year's success stories demonstrate the wholly positive impact regenerated heritage has for us all.

**Louise Brennan** Planning Director, East Midlands

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We believe that heritage at risk work is about much more than repairing individual buildings and monuments. Conservation is at its most successful when it makes a real difference to regeneration, economic success, and community well-being.

We never forget that our historic built environment was constructed by people for people, and that it should continue to work for society today and in the future.

The success of our partnership project in **Derby** (see case study) is an exemplar of this approach. In the highly competitive world of retail and leisure visitors must be coaxed from armchair shopping and virtual gratification. They have to be encouraged to engage with a place, and to spend their precious time and money. It is the quality of the experience, the character and distinctiveness of a place that attracts people and investment, creating uplift and vibrancy.

We are therefore delighted that an area-based strategy is being applied to another great English Midlands city. **Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)** work in **Nottingham** is now underway. City centre conservation areas at risk will be addressed and we are very pleased to have awarded the first HAZ Repair Grant to **Bromley House Library** (see cover).

We have not neglected the region's rural heritage. Long term heritage at risk has been resolved with Historic England Repair Grants at the **Tower on the Moor** and at **Barholm Dovecote** (see case study), and we have grant-aided urgent repairs at **Lumsdale Mills** in the **Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site**. Our work in support of **Natural England** stewardship schemes has led to **Fawsley Dower House** and **Haverholme Priory** coming off the Heritage at Risk Register this year.

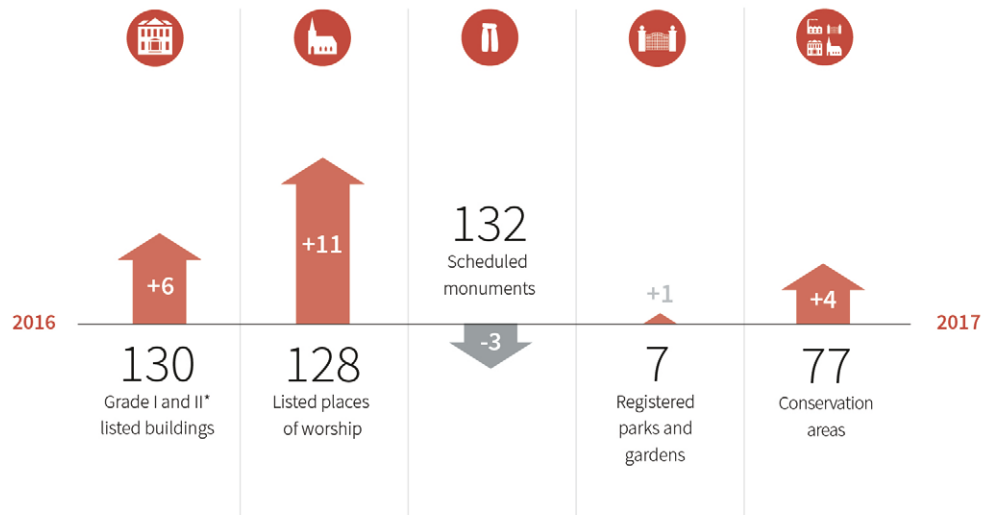
**Places of worship** figure prominently in the Heritage at Risk Register and more buildings in distress are identified each year. **The Heritage Lottery Fund** has now ended its grant scheme that was specifically dedicated to repairs and enhancements for places of worship. Congregations have been encouraged to apply for grants within other schemes. We will monitor the effects of this change and its consequences for the conservation of these special places.

Much responsibility rests with Local Planning Authorities to deal with buildings at risk. We know how difficult this can be, so applaud **North East Lincolnshire Council** for their acquisition and repair of **Victoria Mill** silo in **Grimsby**. We were very pleased to provide some assistance. This landmark building will now feature in ambitious and exciting regeneration plans. Conservation can be transformational.

**Ben Robinson** Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

**Cover image: Bromley House Library** is one of Nottingham's hidden treasures. Built in 1752 as a smart town house, it became a subscription library nearly 200 years ago and is one of the few still in existence. An unexpected oasis in the bustling heart of the city, the library is cherished by its membership and never fails to impress visitors. However, ancient roofs are failing, guttering is insufficient, and downpours threaten the valuable book collections. A Historic England Repair Grant, one of our commitments to the Nottingham Heritage Action Zone, will ensure that Bromley House thrives for years to come.

## Designated assets on the 2017 **East Midlands Register**



There are **474** assets on the **East Midlands Register**, **19** more than in 2016

## City Centre Conservation Area **City of Derby**



Derby City Centre Conservation Area is finally off the Heritage at Risk Register this year, following an eight-year programme of Historic England grant aid partnered by Derby City Council and business owners.

But the project achieved much more than simply improving the condition of individual historic buildings. It reversed the decline of traditional retail areas, increased footfall and business occupancy, encouraged new investment, and restored pride and confidence in Derby's historic core as a hub of economic success and well-being.

The challenges faced by British high streets are well known. In Derby, the development of monolithic shopping precincts at one end of the city centre exacerbated severe decline at the other. By 2009 Derby had the highest proportion

of vacant shops of any city in the UK. A fatal downward spiral of dwindling confidence and investment was rapidly undermining Derby's special character and economic performance. The City Centre Conservation Area was declared 'at risk' and it was realised that a major intervention would be required to stop the rot.

Historic England's Derby PSiCA (Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas) complemented other initiatives by seeking to restore the identity and attractiveness of key streets such as The Strand, Sadler Gate and Wardwick. The scheme targeted the repair and reinstatement of historic shop fronts, removing the clutter of unsympathetic signage, and highlighting characterful historic architectural details and materials.

At the conclusion of the PSiCA over £2.5 million had been invested by the project partners, 97 properties had received grant aid, 2757m<sup>3</sup> of commercial floor space had been brought back into use, 42 new jobs had been created, and a further 166 jobs safeguarded. The statistics, however, tell only part of the story of the regeneration and revitalisation of this superb place.

# Dovecote at Barholm Old Hall **Lincolnshire**

Historic England grant-aided repair of the dovecote at Barholm Old Hall rescued a special piece of Lincolnshire heritage and helped re-discover lost craft skills.

The building is believed to date from the 17th century and unlike many dovecotes, it had survived into the 21st century in a remarkably complete and unaltered form. However, its stone slate roof covering was failing and penetrating rainwater had weakened its walls. The problem had become so severe that stone-filled gabions had to be installed temporarily to prevent collapse.

The repair of the dovecote benefitted from a new supply of Collyweston roof slates. Mined Collyweston stone historically required exposure to winter freezes in order to split to the correct thickness. The slating industry had all but died out as modern winters failed to deliver sufficiently cold conditions. Now the distinctive Collyweston slates, so important to the region's character, are available in quantity again thanks to



the commercial application of an artificial freeze-thaw process developed in partnership with Historic England.

The repair project provided an opportunity to revive another traditional skill almost lost from the East Midlands. Training sessions by an earth construction specialist ensured sympathetic repairs at Barholm and will help to ensure successful future conservation of earth mortared buildings across the region.

## Caring for Conservation Areas

This year we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of conservation areas. These come in all forms, from the quintessential English village to the urban heartland. They are united by a common theme – they are special places full of character and history, much loved by those who live and work in them. Because of their unique character they are also engines for economic regeneration and this is the key to tackling risk in many conservation areas.

This year we have added more conservation areas to the Register than have been removed. But it's also the year we launched Heritage Action Zones, many of which include conservation areas at risk where we will unlock economic potential with our partners over the coming years.

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