

Inspired!

A FUTURE FOR HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

APRIL 2008

Following the announcement by the Government of English Heritage's funding for the next three years, we are now in a position to increase our support for places of worship by implementing some of the solutions put forward in the *Inspired!* campaign. In this edition of the *Inspired!* newsletter we set out our priorities for work with places of worship over the next three years as well as highlighting some of our recent work.

Inspired! solutions

The response of a wide range of organisations and individuals concerned with the future of historic places of worship has helped us to prioritise two of the solutions put forward in the *Inspired!* campaign.

The priorities on which we will be focusing are:

1. Capacity-building in the form of support officers who can advise congregations on the care of their buildings (Solution 2)

2. Maintenance schemes to make the upkeep of their buildings easier for congregations to arrange and more cost-effective (Solution 3)

A combined budget for these activities of £1.5million over the next three years will make a significant difference in the capacity of denominations and congregations to care for their buildings.

Places of worship at risk

While funds for the care of historic places of worship remain limited, it becomes ever more important to ensure that those funds are directed to the buildings that are most in need. The condition of the 14,500 listed places of worship in England varies widely and this project, part of the wider, forthcoming Heritage At Risk programme, is intended to help English Heritage and others identify the places where external support is most needed to safeguard the future of a building. By prioritising those buildings, we can act to help prevent them suffering significant damage from lack of repair and maintenance or from redundancy. Consultation with the denominations, faith groups and conservation bodies is ongoing.

Heritage Protection Reform

Earlier this month, the draft Heritage Protection Bill was published, paving the way for wide-ranging changes to the way heritage is designated, managed and protected. Secondary legislation will provide for the continuation of the 'Ecclesiastical Exemption' from secular listed building controls and will make it available to denominations currently outside the scope of the exemption, under certain, strict conditions. Places of worship may also be able to benefit in future from Heritage Partnership Agreements which will provide a simpler system of regulation for complex sites or groups of sites.

Repair grants

English Heritage's contribution to the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme will be kept at £10million per financial year until at least 2010/11. This will enable us to continue to support congregations that are unable to afford necessary and urgent repairs to their place of worship on their own.



All Saints Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Camden, London, which has received a grant offer of £114,000 towards urgent roof repairs

In the latest round of grants, announced in March, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund have jointly offered a total of £15million to 160 grade I and grade II* listed places of worship.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

New designations



Two of England's finest listed synagogues have been upgraded recently in recognition of both their architectural quality and their place in the history of Anglo-Jewry. Prince's Road Synagogue (above) and Greenbank Drive Synagogue, both in Liverpool, are now listed grade I and grade II* respectively. The latter sadly has closed for worship and a sympathetic new use is being sought. The upgrading of these two exceptional buildings reflects efforts by English Heritage to address the under-representation of non-Anglican places of worship in the statutory list.

Religion and Place

The importance of historic places of worship lies in more than just bricks and mortar. They are also part of the history of people and places and help to tell the stories of individuals and communities. English Heritage has been exploring this theme in a number of projects under the banner of 'Religion and Place'.



Religion and Place in Leeds by John Minnis with Trevor Mitchell, published by English Heritage

In November 2007 we published *Religion and Place in Leeds*, a new book that looks at the impact of multi-denominational, multi-faith communities on the character and appearance of the city over the past 100 years. A companion volume on Liverpool will appear later this year.

In Tower Hamlets, London, the 'Religion and Place' work done by English Heritage led on to an exhibition in February 2008 at the Whitechapel Ideas Store, organised by The Building Exploratory. It was created by six artists and 150 secondary school children, who made 'faith chests' representing their responses to religious buildings in the borough.

HELM training

A series of training seminars for local authority planning and conservation staff was held in the first quarter of 2008, on the theme of 'Changing Churches'.



A site visit to a church in Derby, part of a 'Changing Churches' training seminar

Presentations from English Heritage, the Council for the Care of Churches and professionals in the field of architecture and architectural history explored the issues around adapting churches for modern-day needs. Site visits to local churches provided insights into the challenges facing individual buildings. Over a hundred people have been trained so far and future sessions are planned. For details, see www.helm.org.uk.

Cathedral grants

In February, it was announced that funding of £2.1 million had been awarded for the repair of 28 cathedrals across England, under the joint English Heritage and Wolfson Foundation grants scheme.



Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, which has been awarded a grant of £250,000 for the repair of high-level stonework on the Choir South clerestory. The repairs are part of a multi-million pound programme of work to the structure and facilities of the cathedral.

Grants will be used for a range of projects from masonry repairs at Peterborough through re-roofing the south aisle at Ripon to work on Truro's Victoria tower and spire. For the smaller cathedrals in particular the grants scheme is a vital source of funding.

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