



Steam cleaning the War Memorial on Victoria Park

## Leicester Heritage Action Plan

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# Leicester Heritage Action Plan 20 18 – 2023



Leicester  
City Council

# The Heritage Partnership

The Heritage Partnership was established in 2011. It engages organisations and individuals from across Leicester to work with the Council in promoting the preservation, creative use and interpretation of the city's historic built environment.

## Members of the Partnership:

Chair Sir Peter Soulsby (City Mayor)

Leicester Civic Society

Stoneygate Conservation Area Society

Belgrave Hall Conservation Area Society

The Victorian Society (Leicester)

The Twentieth Century Society (East Midlands)

Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society

Leicestershire Industrial History Society

Heritage Lottery Fund (East Midlands)

Historic England (East Midlands)

Diocese of Leicester

Leicester Cathedral

University of Leicester

De Montfort University

Leicestershire & Rutland Society of Architects

Cllr Adam Clarke

Cllr Piara Singh Clair

Cllr Sue Barton

Conservation Team, LCC

Arts & Museums Service, LCC



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# The Year

2017 – 2018 has been another busy year, with increased interest in Leicester’s heritage and an upturn in heritage related regeneration activity. The year has been marked by a record number of planning applications involving heritage assets. This reflects both the more extensive coverage provided by the Council to the heritage value of buildings and structures in the city, as well as reflecting the continuing high level of investment in the historic built environment.

A key milestone was the completion of a Heritage at Risk Register for the city - the first of its kind in Leicester and one of the only documents of its type in the region. The Register provides a key resource for helping raise attention to heritage assets that are at risk and helps manage interventions to support them. Linked to this, there has been significant progress with a large number of buildings on the Register. Renovations have been completed on Winstanley House, 37-43 Rutland Street, the former Narborough Road Board School, 12 Talbot Lane, 2 St Peter’s Road, 21 St Martins and various buildings at the former Towers Hospital site. Targeted interventions on a number of other structures, such as the

commissioning of structural surveys on the former gates to Quenby Hall and Turret Gateway, as well as renovation works to various War Memorials also took place. There have been a number of planning enforcement cases progressed, including a thematic one on ‘to-let’ boards and other unauthorised signage affecting heritage assets.

The continued emphasis has been to work proactively and promote the historic built environment, guided by clear strategies and management. The action plan has played an important part in this, allowing us to identify key priorities, reflect on what’s been successful and where we can improve.

Further public realm schemes have seen a marked improvement to the historic core of the city. This provides more attractive routes in the historic streets, encouraging people to explore, whilst enhancing the setting of heritage assets. Further works took place on Market Place, while the extensive works to the western end of New Walk and King Street were completed. Enhancements have positively impacted on four

conservation areas, while further works to improve the landscaping at the Jewry Wall site and at Abbey Pumping Station were completed in 2018.

The Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative has made further progress as it gets closer to the end of the five year programme. Eighteen buildings have now been enhanced following the provision of grant funding, with a further five properties subject to developing projects. In addition, a further eighteen buildings have seen improvements to their external fabric in the last year, without direct grant funding. The public realm enhancement works are now complete and have had a transformative effect on the Conservation Area. Five well attended heritage skills training events have taken place in the last year, alongside a wide variety of other complementary projects involving the local community. These have included a community planting session, in collaboration with the Urban Buzz charity, various sold out walking tours and Professor Roey Sweet delivering the inaugural public lecture for the Georgian Interest Group to over 100 attendees.



Repair works to Turret Gateway

# The Year

The results arising from serving Article 4 Directions to protect heritage assets continues to be positive. The Council successfully won an appeal confirming that sound judgement was applied in protecting the former Black Boy Public House from demolition. Applications for demolishing Fleet House and 80 Wharf Street South have also been refused. The main chimney and water tower are currently being renovated as part of a residential scheme at the former Wolsey Works site on Abbey Meadows.

Following the adoption of a new character appraisal and management plan for the Churchgate Conservation Area, an application was made to Historic England in 2018 for funding through their Conservation Area Partnership Scheme initiative. This has recently been approved and will be developed in 2019.

The local Heritage Buildings Grants scheme was fully allocated in the last year and resulted in enhancements to a number of properties. In the 2017-18 financial year, over £25,000 of funding was allocated towards 10 grant-aided projects. These works ranged from emergency repairs to the roof of the Grade II\* listed ISKCON (former HSBC Bank) to the repair of the front entrance

railings at Crescent Cottages, 75-81 King Street. Over £6,500 was also allocated for repairs to original timber sash windows on houses within conservation areas.

More generally, a range of projects have led to greater engagement with the wider community on heritage. These have included a special ‘Faith in Maintenance’ day for those involved in managing historic places of worship, which was attended by over 100 delegates; another successful set of Heritage Open Days and further City Series public lectures.

This year’s Action Plan has a summary of our achievements over the last year, case studies and details of what is proposed for the year to come, as well as a brief exploration of what the next five years may hold for the historic environment.



## Case Studies Winstanley House

The Grade II listed Braunstone Hall was built for the Winstanley Family in 1776. Located to the west of the city centre in its 160 acre parkland setting, now Braunstone Park, the building had been vacant since the mid-1990s when it ceased use as a school.

Following its closure, the Grade II Listed hall suffered from a number of problems, including dry rot, wet rot, arson and unauthorised access.

Following lengthy negotiations between the Council and a local developer, plans were approved in June 2015 for the conversion of the site to a wedding and conference venue. Works began in late-2015, with the construction of two new ballrooms, a new glazed entrance area and the sympathetic conversion of the former hall and its former kitchen block into hotel accommodation, providing 19 luxury bedrooms and a ground floor restaurant.

The works sought extensive repairs to the damaged historic fabric within the original buildings, including the reinstatement of large areas of lime plasterwork, reinstatement of fire and rot damaged suspended timber floors and extensive repairs to the substantial external chimneystacks – now incorporated into a new fully-glazed entrance atrium.

Following two years of construction work, the fully refurbished hall was re-opened in October 2017, being rebranded as Winstanley House. The Grade II listed property is now in active use and has been removed from both the Council's and SAVE's heritage at risk registers.

The project won **Regeneration Project of the Year** at the PROCON Leicestershire Awards 2018, and was also shortlisted for the Building Conservation Award at the East Midlands RICS Awards 2018.



## War Memorial Restoration

The City Council worked with various partners to ensure all the war memorials in the city were restored in time for the centenary of the cessation of World War I in November 2018. Works have varied from the multi-million pound project to restore the various memorial structures at Victoria Park to more modest works to restore community War Memorials in Aylestone and Evington villages. External support from the War Memorials Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund and Commonwealth War Graves Commission has ensured that Council funding has gone further, leaving these key heritage assets in a condition that befits their significance.

The final phase of work in 2018 involved a collaboration with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to restore the two War Memorials at Gilroes and Welford Road Cemeteries. Elsewhere, the Council successfully applied to The War Memorials Trust for a grant covering 75% of the costs of restoration works to

the War Memorials in Aylestone, Town Hall Square, as well as Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College. These works included: stone cleaning and repointing; metal cleaning and application of wax coatings to protect them; repairs to the plinths and paving; re-painting of inscriptions in black paint and re-gilding of lettering where appropriate and other repairs to stonework.

The work was featured in 2018 on the regional BBC news programme and in the Leicester Mercury. Management plans have been agreed to ensure the good condition of the memorials is maintained and additional security measures are put in place. Details of the history and condition of the memorials are now accurately recorded locally and on national registers.



# Heritage at Risk Register

The Heritage at Risk Register was produced by the Conservation Team in October 2017. The Council had previously produced a regular 'Vacant Historic Buildings' report, but this was less expansive in scope.

The purpose of the register was to highlight the plight of all vulnerable heritage assets within the city, raising their profile and helping to identify in-house resources towards securing their long term preservation. This is more expansive in scope than the national risk registers that are produced annually by Historic England, as they are only concerned with higher grades of Nationally Listed Buildings and all grades of ecclesiastical ones.

Following a similar layout to Historic England's National Heritage at Risk Register, sites are subdivided into categories, with those sites at greatest risk being identified as Category A – Immediate Risk; no solution agreed. The format allows for structures to be moved across

categories as their condition improves or deteriorates and provides flexibility to accurately detail the various aspects that determine risk, such as vacancy rates, management and structural condition.

The register encompassed a total of 70 designated and non-designated heritage assets when first produced, of which six had been removed by March 2018, following successful works to secure their active use. The register consolidates Leicester City Council as a leading local authority for heritage management in the region. It will be updated every three years.



# Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative

The Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a £1.6million scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Leicester City Council. Over a five-year period, the project aims to help restore and regenerate at least twenty of the most historically important buildings in the area to the south of Leicester Cathedral. Now in its fourth year of delivery, we are seeing a big change in the Greyfriars Conservation Area. So far, eighteen buildings have benefitted from the scheme. A further five buildings are due to receive funding in the final year of the scheme.

- This year's completed projects include:**
- Public realm improvements throughout the area including Friar Lane and New Street;
  - New trees planted on Millstone Lane and Friar Lane;
  - Façade repair and restoration of 14 and 18 Friar Lane;
  - Façade repair and restoration of 9, 11 and 13 New Street;
  - Repairs to the gate at 9-11 Millstone Lane;

- Traditional heritage skills training;
  - Formation of Leicester Georgian Interest Group.
- Get involved!**
- This year we are inviting people to join us in Greyfriars on the last Sunday of each month between April and October 2019 for Open Streets! Open Streets will be a family friendly event encouraging people to learn about heritage, cycle, walk and play in the old town.

If you would like more information, please contact us at [greyfriarsthi@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:greyfriarsthi@leicester.gov.uk) or call 0116 454 1000 / [www.leicester.gov.uk/thi](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/thi)



## Archaeology

Archaeological excavations have continued in the historic city core concentrated on the Waterside and Bath Lane areas. Earlier excavations here revealed a sequence of well-preserved and complex archaeology spanning the Roman and Medieval periods. Evidence of buildings, floor surfaces and objects of everyday living has been found. At the former Merlin Works a number of walls and structures from the earliest Roman occupation of the area were unearthed and subsequent analysis of the data will help our understanding of Leicester's civic origins.

Investigations to the east of Bath Lane have also found the town ditch, town wall and a rampart. The town wall itself is now largely robbed-out, the stone used in the Medieval period for constructing Leicester's later buildings. During excavations here, a small cemetery was identified; one which is known to continue northwards under All Saints Road. This cemetery may relate to the lost parish church of St Clement's. Close to Jarvis Street Medieval

buildings and a drain were also found and which may relate to the Dominican Friary that once stood in this area; however, the church, cloister and other significant friary buildings have yet to be found.

Further evidence of Roman and Medieval houses has been found outside the town wall beside Northgate Street. This evidence bears witness to the importance of this route into and out of the town during these periods, and which continues to this day.

Surveys of the Magazine Gateway, Turret Gateway and Abbey Park wall have been completed or commissioned. These will inform a programme of repairs to these iconic historic sites, with those at Abbey Park and the Castle Turret already commenced. Similar works are also scheduled to begin at the Magazine Gateway in 2019-2020 and a review of how to bring this building and John of Gaunt's cellar back into use is underway.



### Grant funded works



## The Action Plan

The Action Plan is a long term rolling programme that is updated annually. It captures what has been achieved in the last year, what we hope to achieve in the next year and a longer term agenda to guide and inform discussion on the future direction. Divided into five key themes, it reflects and encompasses the various aspects of the Council's involvement in the historic environment:

### Heritage at Risk

Work on national and local Heritage at Risk, including both the national and local at risk registers.

### Heritage Protection

Work to designate and protect nationally and locally protected heritage assets, including Grade I, II\* and II listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens. This work also includes Conservation Areas, the Local Heritage Asset Register and policy development to protect the historic environment through the planning system.

### Proactive Projects

These are the key larger scale, long term and forward thinking projects that focus on works to and for the historic environment.

### Promotion and Participation

This involves engaging stakeholders, community groups and the wider public, through various methods and media, in understanding, enjoying and caring about the historic environment.

### Ongoing Conservation Work

This is the day to day work the Conservation team undertakes within the planning service.

## Progress 2017/18

**Heritage at Risk**

**National Heritage At Risk Register** Three additions made to Risk Register but progress made on all ten existing entries.

**Turret Gateway** Repair works nearing completion.

**The Castle:** Castle View properties renovated. Plans for works to John of Gaunt's Cellar being prepared.

**Former Bank, 31 Granby Street Project** and funding for next phase of roof works further developed.

**Magazine Gateway** Structural and condition survey has been completed and funding allocated for a programme of works to commence in 2019. A management plan will be drafted in collaboration with Historic England after completion of the works.

**Leicester Hebrew Congregation** HLF funded project progressing.

**Abbey Ruins, Abbey Park** Works have commenced on the restoration programme with trees causing direct damage to the Medieval wall removed. A condition survey has been commissioned and will be used to inform further works and as part of a wider HLF bid for restoration of the whole park.

**Places of Worship** Further engagement took place with the Diocese and their agents on the sale and reuse of a number of redundant churches across the city. New owner achieved for St Saviours Church. St Mary de Castro and St Peter's (Highfields) repair projects progressing. Further work on St Peter's (Belgrave) developed.

**Conservation Areas at Risk:** No new additions made to Risk Register and significant progress made on the four existing entries.

**Market Place Conservation Area** Works to Corn Exchange progressing. A shopfront grant scheme has continued targeting key properties to achieve repairs. Highway works progressing.

**Greyfriars Conservation Area** (see separate case study).

**Church Gate Conservation Area** Public realm works have been further developed. Application made to Historic England for a grant towards shopfront enhancements.

**All Saints Conservation Area** Conservation Area is part of the wider waterside regeneration area. Through the planning process, control the quality of new development, enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**Local Heritage at Risk Register** A new comprehensive City Heritage at Risk Register has been produced, including all heritage assets, with monitoring visits to all properties over the last 12 months.

**Braunstone Hall** Conversion to a wedding and conference venue is complete (see case study).

**Heritage Protection**

**National Heritage List** There are currently 399 national list entries. Various list descriptions have been updated, as well as revisions to the list.

**Conservation Areas** A draft Management Plan and revised Character Appraisal for New Walk Conservation Area have been produced.

**Local Heritage Asset Register** Further additions have been made to the Register.

**Article 4 Directions** Revised Directions have been drafted for New Walk Conservation Area.

**Planning Policy** Work with Planning Policy to help provide content in the emerging Local Plan.

**Enforcement action** Better proactive working with property owners and the Building Control team have helped reduce need for formal enforcement work. Various cases ongoing.

## The programme 2018/19

**National Heritage at Risk Register** Continue to work with owners and prospective owners of key buildings on the register and other significant stakeholders including funders to ensure building repairs are carried out and the buildings occupied and monuments stabilised with management plans to remove them from the Heritage at Risk Register.

**Conservation Areas** Adopt revised Character Appraisal and Management Plan for New Walk Conservation Area. Further progress THI projects in Greyfriars Conservation Area. Progress ongoing public realm works and building repairs in Market Place Conservation Area.

**Local Heritage at Risk Register** Continue to work with owners to remove sites from the list; key priorities are Western Park Open Air School and Depot, the Frisby Jarvis site, redundant churches, 3 Darker Street, CORAH site, Wycliffe Hall and Hunters Lodge.

**Monitoring and preventive action** Continue to build photo records of conservation areas and nationally listed buildings.

**National heritage list** Complete local guide to all entries on national list in Leicester. Continue to monitor the national list and update Historic England accordingly. Propose new listings as appropriate.

**Conservation Areas** Carry out public consultation on the draft New Walk Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan with the aim to adopt them in Summer 2019. Develop equivalent documents for the village conservation areas.

**Site guidance** Prepare site guidance as required.

**Archaeological sites** Support the preparation and development of conservation management plans for Abbey Park, Jewry Wall, Aylestone Packhorse Bridge and King William Bridge. Draft new archaeological advice and guidelines for developers and applicants. Support Parks and Gardens HLF funded community archaeological programme.

## An Agenda for the future 2019/23

**National Heritage at Risk Register** The addition of Grade II secular buildings to the national risk register, in addition to all existing Grade I/II\* and Grade II (ecclesiastical), is likely to take place gradually. We are in a good position to implement this, particularly considering the work being undertaken with our partners. It is hoped that the addition of all Grade II buildings will bring a similar level of support from Historic England.

**Conservation Areas** Removal of all conservation areas from risk register. Facilitate sensitive development proposals in All Saints Conservation Area as part of Waterside Regeneration and public realm enhancements/building repair works in Church Gate Conservation Area. Explore heritage grant funding for Granby Street/Belvoir Street.

**Abbey Park** As part of the commissioned condition survey a management plan for the historic Medieval fabric of the Abbey and Cavendish House will be produced. This plan will also identify the presence of historic fabric within the depot and recommend a programme of maintenance.

**Leicester Heritage at Risk Register** Review the existing local register and look to use it as a positive tool for de-risking key sites.

**Monitoring and preventive action** Continue to build photo records of all heritage assets and explore options for better joint working with local heritage and amenity societies.

**National heritage list** Continue to monitor the national list and update Historic England accordingly. Propose new listings as appropriate.

**Conservation Areas** Ensure that all conservation areas in Leicester have an up-to-date character appraisal and management plan.

**Local Heritage Asset Register** Review list every year and add/remove/amend entries as appropriate.

**Local Listed Building Consent Orders** Identify areas which may benefit from a local listed building consent order. Use these as an opportunity to promote good practice in recurring listed building alterations, such as replacement windows.

**Heritage Partnership Agreements** Work with partners to start to develop management plans for key groups of assets, where a significant property owner has recurring works that would benefit from such an arrangement (e.g. waterways).

## Progress 2017/18

### Proactive projects

**Connecting Leicester** Many of the Connecting Leicester projects are now complete, but further works are developing. Works were completed this year to upgrade the public realm in the Greyfriars area, King Street/New Walk and Market Place. Input from the Conservation Team has been ongoing throughout these projects to help ensure that the historic character of streets and spaces is fully considered and reflected in schemes of work.

**Townscape Heritage Initiative** (see case study)

**Historic Building Grants:** The small grants scheme administered by the Conservation Team for heritage assets had a budget for the financial year April 2017-March 2018 of £25,000. It was allocated towards 10 projects.

**War memorials** (see case study)

**Shopfront improvement grants** A programme of frontage improvements to shops and buildings in key city centre locations has continued in the last year. A number of properties in the city centre

have been repaired and redecorated by the Economic Regeneration Team.

**Vaughan College/Jewry Wall Museum** All external archaeological investigations and proposed landscaping have been completed. Further scheduled works include further landscaping and consolidation and remedial repairs to the Jewry Wall by English Heritage.

### Heritage Interpretation boards

The Conservation Team has been working with the Arts & Museums Service on delivering an additional board at the Central Fire Station and supported research on a further phase.

**Historic Environment Record** The city's HER has been internally updated and work is in progress to

ensure that new entries onto the records are uploaded to the Heritage Gateway.

**Events** Five well attended training events for the Greyfriars THI were organised in the last year. Members of the conservation team regularly approached to present at or provide support for conferences or seminars. Support for Heritage

Open Days. Four public lectures were arranged by the Conservation Team as part of the City Series programme.

**Heritage Partnership** The heritage partnership continues to meet once a quarter, discussing plans for heritage sites, options for enhancing heritage protection and joint working.

### Ongoing Conservation Work

**Planning applications** We have given advice on 760 conservation and archaeology planning consultations in the last 12 months. We have provided general advice on whether buildings are in conservation areas or whether they are listed. Also explaining to people what this means and

where they can find more information.

**Expert advice** We have provided expert advice protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

**Conservation Advisory Panel** New Terms of Reference written and membership list revised.

**Training** We have undertaken training through the

THI and delivered presentations through the Leicestershire Conservation Officers Forum, Heritage Partnership and Conservation Advisory Panel.

## The programme 2018/19

**Townscape Heritage Initiative** Deliver the fourth year of the Greyfriars THI.

**Historic Building Grants** Continue promoting and administering the scheme.

**Vaughan College/Jewry Wall Museum** Deliver next phase of enhancement plan for landscaping of site and works to wall remains.

**Working with HLF/EH facilitating grants for community groups** Continue to work with groups to help them access funding and advice. Progress partnership funding scheme with Historic England for city centre.

**Connecting Leicester** Continue to support programme.

**Public Engagement** Following a series of successful public engagement events in year three of the Greyfriars THI, deliver the programme of training events in year four. Exploration with internal and external partners to increase community engagement on archaeology. Generally explore ways of better engaging public through social media and Council website. Support Heritage Open Days.

**Heritage Partnership** Continue to arrange quarterly meetings, ensuring that high quality content is provided and attendance is maintained at a good level.

**Historic Environment Record** Explore how to use the online HER as a promotional tool.

**Leicester Urban Observatory** Continue to support public lecture programme.

**Planning applications** Continue to respond to consultations within required timescales.

**General Enquiries** Continue to answer internal and external enquires relating to the historic environment.

**Planning Policy and Enforcement** Continue to provide advice during policy development and enforcement cases.

**Conservation Advisory Panel** Continue to manage Conservation Advisory Panel. Training Undertake training for colleagues on building conservation and archaeological processes and facilitate training of local community in heritage management.

## Agenda for the future 2019/23

**Townscape Heritage Initiative** The Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative has a delivery stage of five years. The action plan stands us in good stead to get the most out of this funding scheme, achieving not only improvement to the historic building stock, but embedded within it engagement work with communities to increase knowledge and interest in the historic environment. It is important that this work is given equal priority to the physical improvement to ensure that the project achieves a long term sustainable use for our historic environment. The potential for a future THI, or equivalent, is currently being explored.

The momentum created by the events surrounding the reburial of Richard III in 2015 has been maintained with a greater interest in Leicester's past being shown. There is a need to build on the links established with research and academic institutions and professional heritage professionals to enhance our understanding of a shared past and to increase visitor numbers to the city. Preparatory work is underway to enhance and improve the city's scheduled monuments and students will be encouraged to use the Historic Environment Record and other resources offered by the Conservation Team to complete distinct small-scale projects. An ambitious plan for investment in the City's museums is currently being developed, with works projected to take place across the property portfolio.

**Emerging local policy** The local plan continues to progress and it is important that we continue to ensure that protection of the historic environment is embedded throughout local policy to explore new and innovative ways to protect/enhance the historic environment.

**New Legislation** Monitor emerging legislation to ensure the Local Plan provides sufficient protection to heritage assets and archaeological sites. We will scrutinise new strategic proposals to ensure that we have the resources in place to use them positively when protecting the historic environment.