

**HERITAGE CAPITAL STRATEGY FOR THE
BOROUGH OF WIGAN**

2009 – 2013

CONTENTS

Preface

Introduction

Consultation

Wigan's Heritage

The local context

Key Objective and Project Assessment Criteria

Indicative Projects – exemplar list

APPENDICES

- 1. Heritage Lottery Fund priorities**
- 2. Heritage Lottery Fund programmes**
- 3. Heritage Capital Strategy – analysis of consultation**

PREFACE

In 2003 Wigan Council drew up its first capital strategy for Wigan's heritage assets – with a primary purpose of providing a prioritisation of projects from a host of potential large-scale (£50,000+) capital applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The success of that strategy – which had a life from 2003 to 2007 – is outlined in the introduction.

During 2008 Wigan received Priority Area Status from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Heritage Lottery Fund are now working with partners from Wigan Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust to support the generation of more successful applications for small-scale grants through their “Your Heritage” programme. However it was recognised that Wigan still needed to be able to respond to the Heritage Lottery Fund in terms of a prioritisation of larger scale projects.

In the spring of 2008 a group of officers from relevant Council departments, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust and Wigan and Leigh CVS met to prepare the ground for the HLF Priority Area work commencing in early 2009, and that group has steered the development of this strategy. The group undertook consultation in the summer / autumn of 2008 with local stakeholders and the outcome of that consultation is presented in this strategy document.

Accordingly, to reiterate, the objective of this strategy is to support the prioritisation of large-scale applications (£100,000) to the various strands of the Heritage Lottery Fund. The strategy is written with a recognition of the more limited resources available to the Heritage Lottery Fund over the next four years, as well as the rapidly changing economic climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

In developing the Council's "New Vision for Heritage Services"¹ Wigan Council recognised four key objectives in relation to Heritage Services:

- ***To promote local Identity and pride through community activity and involvement***
- ***To increased use and awareness of heritage resources***
- ***To improved understanding and learning***
- ***To manage relevant archives, collections and resources***

The development of a Capital Strategy for heritage within the Borough seeks to add value to these objectives through a prioritisation of capital projects in relation to Heritage.

Heritage includes many different things from the past that we value and want to pass on to future generations. Heritage projects might include:

- people's memories and experiences
- histories of people, communities, places and events
- cultural traditions
- historic buildings and townscapes
- archaeological sites
- collections of items, archives or other materials
- natural and designed landscapes
- habitats and species
- sites and collections links to our industrial, maritime and transport history.²

The Strategy builds on the foundations established in the document "Wigan's Heritage – A Strategy for Wigan 2003 – 2007". The list of indicative projects in that strategy included the following:

- Mesnes Park, Wigan
- Trencherfield Mill

¹ Wigan Council 25 April 2007

² <http://www.hlf.org.uk/English/AboutUs/OurBackground/Whatdowedo.htm>

- The History Shop
- Wigan Pier Quarter
- Leigh Mills
- Wigan Flashes
- Leigh Parish Church
- Atherton
- Astley Green Colliery
- Haigh Hall
- SELNEC Preservation Trust
- Hindley Museum
- Dam House

There has been some considerable success in developing these projects and securing capital funding:

- Mesnes Park – This project successfully secured £1.856 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a total project cost of £3.1 million. An application for Phase 2, has, at the time of writing, achieved a Stage One pass, with funding of £1.972 million earmarked subject to further satisfactory development of the project.
- Trencherfield Mill – This project successfully secured £292,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the restoration of the Mill Engine, which has now been restored to full working order and is regularly in steam.
- The History Shop – This project successfully secured £500,500 and at the time of writing the project is tendering to secure a suitable contractor to improve both physical and intellectual access to the History Shop, as well as securing the fabric of the building.
- Wigan Pier Quarter – This project was the subject of an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative which, along with other regeneration funding, has enabled improvements to this historic part of the Borough over the last six years.

Other projects still need to be brought forward from this prioritisation six years ago and have been the subject of consideration in the development of this strategy.

There have been a number of other significant developments since the first strategy which have a bearing on this strategy. These include:

- Award of priority area status to Wigan by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- The development of the Local Development Framework
- The development of the Sustainable Communities Strategy

2. CONSULTATION

A process of consultation has been key to developing this strategy. There have been two strands to this:

- Consultation with a group of Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust officers established to support the promotion of Wigan's status as a Heritage Lottery Fund Priority Area
- Consultation with interested parties in the community through the Heritage Network and the Heritage sub-group of the Cultural Partnership. This consultation was undertaken by officers from the Council's Economic Regeneration Office, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust and Wigan and Leigh Council for Voluntary Service.

3. WIGAN'S HERITAGE

Wigan contains a wide range of conventional heritage in the form of attractive and valuable historic buildings and historic landscapes but the real value of the local heritage lies within the strong tradition of local identity, particularly around traditional industries, and the rich ecological value of the unique habitats created by the former industrial activities.

The dominant factor in the Borough's heritage is the dramatic industrialisation of the 18th and 19th centuries, but this belies two other significant factors:

- The natural man-made remains of ancient and medieval periods; and
- The extensive 20th century development and recovery from industrial decline

Think of Wigan and many think of coal, Orwell and poverty. These are all aspects of the transformation of a collection of small market towns and villages in rural surroundings into a sprawling industrial conurbation. Coal undoubtedly shaped the Borough of today, but the railways, canals, cotton mills, heavy engineering and immigration, which accompanied it, have all played their part in the physical make-up of the Borough.

Nor is the Borough homogeneous. Industrialisation built on and blurred the underlying ancient and medieval settlement pattern but it did not obliterate it. Each township retains its character and fierce local pride.

The origins of Wigan as a town go back to Roman and Viking times – indeed, in recent years exciting evidence of Roman occupation has emerged from archaeological excavations in the town centre. In 1246 the town received a Market Charter from Henry III. There are some reminders of the pre-industrial period in the street pattern and around the Parish Church. However, many of the Borough's pre-industrial remains are in rural areas.

Two thirds of the Borough's land area is open land, of which most must be classed as urban fringe but a significant proportion is rural in character. The 'peat lands' of Astley and Bedford Mosses contain areas of special conservation value and there are remnant remains of ancient woodlands in some parts of the Borough.

There are several large country houses and a number of more modest manor and farm houses of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (often with later additions) in both rural and urban parts of the Borough. There have been significant examples of successful conservation of early urban buildings such as the Grade 1 listed St Wilfred's Church in Standish, Dam House in Astley and Alder House in Atherton. There are also a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, such as moated sites and medieval crosses. The largest estate, Haigh Hall, once the home of

Lord Crawford who owned much of Wigan's coalfield, has, since the middle of the last century been a much-loved public facility in the ownership of the Council.

However, it is the towns and the industrial legacy between towns that characterises the Borough's heritage. Much of this development has disappeared in the last few decades, much through large-scale clearance and reclamation.

Much of the best of the remaining mills, model housing and canals are now protected by listing or within Conservation Areas. The Leeds-Liverpool Canal, with its Leigh branch connecting with the Bridgewater Canal, forms a thread across the Borough, linking urban and rural elements. Apart from its intrinsic interest, the canal has several interesting urban sections at Wigan Pier, the Wigan flight of locks (at Ince) and Leigh. The Wigan Pier and Leigh sections are comprehensive industrial complexes including listed mill buildings, and at Trencherfield Mill, a large working steam-powered beam engine.

Notable rural sections of the canal include the 'Heybrook Corridor' running through the centre of the Borough, with its flashes – created through mining subsidence and now recognised as significant, species rich wetland areas some of which are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Hey Brook corridor and the related Flashes lie at the heart of the Greenheart Regional Park, and the canals have been identified as the key artery of Greenheart linking many of the key Gateway sites.

Following the canal to the south-east corner of the Borough one further important industrial complex survives at Astley Green Colliery which includes the last surviving pit-head gear in the Lancashire Coalfield.

The Borough's towns contain the largest numbers and most varied examples of our local physical heritage. The centres of all the larger townships are designated as Conservation Areas and contain concentrations of historic buildings, particularly Victorian churches, public buildings and commercial property. The surrounding neighbourhoods are of variable quality, with some areas of well built Victorian housing and some outstanding Victorian urban parks e.g. Mesnes Park in Wigan. Overall the Borough has 23 Conservation Areas and over 600 listed buildings, 13 archaeology and ancient monuments, 1 historic park and 13 other gardens of more local interest. The Council is also working with the local community to identify buildings of local interest and the Buildings of Local Architectural or Historical Interest Supplementary Planning Document will be published later this year.

4. The Local Context

To understand the local context for this strategy two key documents are critical. These are the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Local Development Framework. Neither of these are complete at the time of writing but their direction is sufficiently well-established to be useful.

The third key document is the Vision for Heritage Services approved by the Council in 2007.

Sustainable Communities Strategy

Each local authority has been charged with developing a Sustainable Communities Strategy and a Local Area Agreement to focus on the delivery of priorities under that strategy.

In Wigan four priority outcomes have been identified:

Outcome 1: An ambitious community: strong skills that meet business needs and supports sustainable local economywhere people can get round more easily (and more sustainably) – and live in affordable homes

Outcome 2: A strong community that provides positive activities for all with improved community confidence, participation and cohesions, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods

Outcome 3: Living longer with a better quality of life: addressing inequality

Outcome 4: Improved aspirations, attainment and life chances for children and young people (especially those in most disadvantaged communities)

Links can be made between these outcomes and two of the outcomes determined by the Council for its Heritage Services:

- Local Identity and Pride (Outcome 2)
- Improved Understanding and Learning (Outcomes 2 and 4)

Local Development Framework

The main document in the Local Development Framework will be the Core Strategy. It will set out the spatial vision and strategic objectives and will contain the spatial strategy for the borough, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework.

Consultations on the Issues and Options for the Core Strategy have been completed. Public participation on the preferred options for the spatial policy and policy principles will take place in 2009, working towards adoption of the Core Strategy in 2010.

While work is ongoing on the Local Development Framework, two key Appraisal and Topic papers of particular relevance to this strategy are available:

- Built Environment and Landscape
- Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Each of these identifies a number of main spatial planning issues that are relevant to this strategy and these are outlined below.

Built Environment and Landscape

Issue BEL 8

Town centres are under performing in terms of townscape, heritage and design / architectural quality.

The townships of Wigan North and Leigh have the Borough's largest towns and the highest concentration of listed buildings and conservation areas. However these assets do not maximise the contribution to the townscape that they should. For example, Wigan Pier is a key historic and regeneration area in close proximity to Wigan Town however presently there is a lack of linkages to the town centre which undermines the potential of the area.

Issue BEL 11

There is a lack of clearly visual readable gateways or distinctive patterns of development across the Borough, creating confusing town centres – in particular Wigan town centre – which are losing their character.....these assets are under performing as key gateways and are detrimental to the image of the town. Wallgate is a clear historic gateway but is performing merely as a secondary shopping street rather than a key gateway and transport hub.

Two key Sustainability Objectives have been established for the Local Development Framework relevant to this Appraisal:

- To preserve and enhance the Boroughs landscapes, countryside, green and open spaces
- To ensure high quality design, whilst respecting, enhancing and capitalising on the Borough's historic environment

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Issue BNC 4

Need to enhance the quality and diversity of the natural environment and create more habitats for wildlife

Issue BNC 5

Need to protect and enhance the Borough's wildlife areas, particularly key habitats, such as regionally important woodlands, wetlands and mosslands.

Issue BNC 6

Need to take advantage of the opportunity for a regional park in the heart of the Borough to improve the integrity of the natural environment for wildlife and nature conservation

One key Sustainability Objective has been established for the Local Development Framework relevant to this Appraisal:

- To protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats

Vision for Heritage Services

The vision for Heritage Services approved by the Council in 2007 outlined a vision statement and four key objectives to achieve.

The vision statement is as follows:

“To engage people in their own and Wigan's heritage through the creative management and use of archives, collections and heritage resources”.

The four key objectives are:

- Local Identity and Pride
- Increased Use and Awareness#
- Improved Understanding and Learning
- Relevant archives, collections and resources

5. Key Objectives and Project Assessment Criteria

The foregoing analysis along with the results of consultation suggests the following three objectives for the strategy:

- Preserve, enhance and make accessible Wigan's biodiversity and historic landscapes
- Making Wigan's heritage accessible
- Preserving Wigan's Urban Fabric

These are in line with the 2003 – 2007 strategy.

In order to prioritise potential projects and programmes against these objectives the following criteria have also been agreed:

- Links to the Heritage Lottery Fund eligibility criteria
 - Conserving heritage
 - Enable more people to participate
 - Enable more people to learn
- Links with regeneration strategies and the Local Development Framework
- Readiness of projects and programmes to move forward, including the identification of partnership funding
- Clear need and interest including community buy-in and support

6. Indicative Projects – exemplar list

Through the application of the objectives and project assessment criteria the following prioritisation of capital projects and programmes has been agreed:

Priority One

The following projects and programmes are proposed as having top priority in terms of supporting submissions to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other capital funding:

Greenheart programme

Greenheart is a major programme for the Borough that seeks to develop and enhance the key natural resources at the heart of the Borough. These include Wigan Flashes – with the potential development of a visitor centre to maximise opportunities for volunteering, access and learning and the Bickershaw Colliery site. The canals are also a key element of Greenheart, linking many of the Greenheart sites and being an attraction in their own right. The boundaries of the Greenheart programme also include the historic Haigh estate – although the development of a masterplan for the site is key to unlocking this potential. Funding is already on-stream for a number of projects within Greenheart. A Your Heritage application (i.e. under £50,000) to the Heritage Lottery Fund is under development for the historic windmill at Haigh and the Economic Regeneration Office and Groundwork are working with Leigh Sports Village to develop a Heritage Lottery Fund application to preserve and enhance the medieval moat on the Leigh Sports Village site.

Mesnes Park Phase 2

An application for a second phase of funding for Mesnes Park has recently been successful in securing a Stage One Heritage Lottery Fund pass.

Wigan Town Centre Townscape

An application for Heritage Lottery Fund support is currently being developed for a further Townscape Heritage Initiative encompassing the historic core of Wigan town centre. A Stage 1 Bid was formally submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in November 2008.

Priority Two

Astley Green Colliery

The Red Rose Society are currently developing an application for Your Heritage funding for this historic site which will focus on both learning and capacity development. The key to bringing this project to a higher priority status for major capital funding is the identification of partnership funding for a major scheme to develop the site, and the building of capacity within the partners to manage, develop and sustain a larger scheme.

Dam House

This historic asset at the east of the Borough has already received substantial heritage lottery support. A project is currently being developed to renovate the top floor of Dam House for use as an education centre

Parks Strategy

The Parks Strategy recently adopted by the Council identified a number of parks as core to the strategy. These include Pennington Hall Park, an historic park in Leigh where an active Friends group is in existence that is keen to develop both community facilities and the historic fabric of the park. A key issue which needs to be addressed in order for a project to have a higher priority is partnership funding.

Leigh and Ashton-in-Makerfield town centres

The Council has recently engaged consultants to develop masterplans for both Leigh town centre and Ashton town centre. Both town centres include a variety of historic assets and these may be highlighted in the master planning exercise. Any projects that are highlighted within the masterplans and have access to partnership funding would command a higher priority within this strategy. One building of particular recent historic interest is the Turnpike Centre.

Tyldesley town centre

The historic core of Tyldesley town centre – around the Market Square - has been identified by the Township Forum as a priority for improvement.

Other projects considered

SELNEC Preservation Trust

This project to house the collection of historic buses is at a very early stage of development. Given the context of other transport collections in the sub-region this is unlikely to be given priority by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and no partnership funding has been identified.

Historic Churches

Consultation suggested a number of churches that might be brought forward as candidates for Heritage Lottery funding. However detailed information received from a number of churches, including St Andrew Springfield, St Barnabas Marsh Green, St Mark, Newtown and All Saints, Wigan indicates that it is likely that the individual projects are likely to each be under the £100,000 that this strategy relates to.

APPENDIX ONE

Heritage Lottery Fund priorities

We fund heritage projects of all sizes, with grants from under £5,000 to over £5 million. We want to support innovative as well as tried-and-tested approaches, and welcome proposals that are pioneering in concept or delivery.

Our focus is on conserving, sustaining and sharing heritage.

Through our grant making we aim to:

- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;
- help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about their heritage;
- help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage.

We want to protect and hand on what people value most, open up more of our heritage for everyone to enjoy, and regenerate and enrich our historic cities, towns and countryside.

We believe that everybody should have the opportunity to identify, care for and enjoy heritage, and want to help new people and groups to take an active part. We are committed to supporting, recognising and valuing the contribution of volunteers.

Providing opportunities to learn about heritage, and helping people develop the skills to care for the culture, places and knowledge we have inherited, is at the heart of what we do. Young people, in particular, are the future advocates for heritage, and we are keen to encourage projects that enable them to gain new insights, skills and experience.

APPENDIX TWO

Heritage Lottery Fund programmes

Awards For All (£300 - £10,000 in England, £500 - £10,000 in Scotland)

If you are a local group and you need a small grant (£300 - £10,000 in England / £500 - 10,000 in Scotland) then Awards for All may be able to help you.

Your Heritage (£3,000 to £50,000)

Your Heritage provides grants of between £3,000 and £50,000 to support projects that relate to the local, regional or national heritage of the UK.

Heritage Grants (grants of more than £50,000)

This programme offers grants of £50,000 or more. Projects should look after and enhance the UK's heritage; to increase involvement in heritage activities; and to improve access to and enjoyment of heritage.

Repair Grants for Places of Worship: £10,000 to £250,000 in England and Scotland £10,000 to £100,000 in Northern Ireland and Wales

This programme is designed to help conserve and sustain heritage at risk, through urgent repairs to places of worship. The UK-wide scheme is delivered through four programmes in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (£500,000 - £2,000,000)

Through our Townscape Heritage Initiative, we make grants that help communities to regenerate the historic parts of their towns and cities.

Landscape Partnerships (£250,000 to £2 million)

Landscape Partnerships (LP) is our grant programme to support schemes of between £250,000 and £2million led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the United Kingdom.

Young Roots (£3,000 to £25,000)

Providing grants of between £3,000 and £25,000, the Young Roots Programme aims to involve 13-25 year-olds in finding out about their heritage, developing skills, building confidence and promoting community involvement. Young Roots projects stem directly from young peoples' interests and ideas, harnessing their creativity and energy and helping them work with others in their local community.

Parks for People (£250,000 to £5million)

Parks for People offers grants for projects involving urban or rural green spaces designed for informal recreation and enjoyment.

APPENDIX THREE

Heritage Capital Strategy – analysis of consultation

NOTES FROM CONSULTATION SESSIONS

Consultation sessions

16th July 2008

21st July 2008

26th August 2008

Section 1.

Outcomes from suggested activity 2003 – 07

Project	Funding source	Outcome
Mesnes Park	HLF bid	Project underway
Trencherfield Mill	HLF bid – restore steam engine	Project complete
History Shop	HLF bid access and refurbishment	Project underway
Pier Quarter	Major A&HLC project – funds secured	Project underway
Leigh Mills	Mills strategy and listed buildings in conservation area	Not taken forward. No current project
Wigan Flashes	Partnership scheme	Not taken forward. No current HLF plans
Leigh Parish Church	HLF bid - Renovation	Project completed
Atherton	Town centre conservation	Project completed
Astley Green Colliery	Headgear and site buildings	Not taken forward. Plans for new HLF bid & project planning grant
Haigh Hall	HLF repairs to carriage bridge	Project complete?
SELNEC Preservation Trust	Project for building to store historic buses	Not taken forward
Hindley Museum	Restoration of museum room – local group	Project complete – non HLF?
Dam House	HLF bid to renovate top floor for education centre	Project initiation underway – Ian Cowan project manager

Section 2.

Ideas for new projects / areas for activity – from consultation groups

Suggested Heritage Priorities	Comments
Greenheart Regional Park	To encourage more community involvement and ownership
Bickershaw Colliery Site	Heritage and environment networks. Project commenced to landscape the site and develop for leisure, culture and housing
Astley Green Colliery	Pre-Application form submitted to HLF
Leigh Town Centre Leigh Girl's Grammar School	More research needed Planning permission now passed for demolition
Leigh Town Centre master plan	Economic Regeneration Office - Heritage elements to feed in
Wigan Cenotaph – partnership approach required THI Wigan South Central – town centre master plan – might be the answer	Conditions of buildings surrounding/back of shops/maintenance of grounds/lighting & security/respect
Eckersley Memorial renovation	WLCT – Parks trying to raise scheme
Lilford Park in Leigh	Heritage based renovation of built features
Pennington Hall Park	WLCT and Friends group pushing for community resource
Dam House	Development complete? Further work?
Parish Church Gardens	WLCT/Wigan Rotary/Wigan Parish Church – partnership formed
Haigh Hall – Bridge and Wooden mining head gear	
Heritage mapping of venues and heritage sites / conservation areas	Completed during visioning – may be useful for strategy
'Hidden' Treasures' in Borough/Church or History Trail	All areas possibly involved
Street and Public Art	Internal and external to be recorded – art trail?
Churches	Artwork/wooden carvings restoration project – Wigan Parish Church Make churches and their artifacts more accessible
Canals	As a tourist attraction – interpretation, trails
Flashes	Link to Greenheart

Section 3.

Recommendations/Requests - from consultation groups

- The Heritage Network to be involved at all levels with Heritage-related matters within the Borough – their aspiration. Have been fully consulted so far in this process
 - They agreed there is need for the Borough's Heritage Vision to be revisited
 - John O'Neill will approach the concerned agencies and request a coordinated strategy to be developed via the Heritage Sub-Group
 - The LAA Summary Brief (issued by Simon Dale) to be posted onto the Heritage Network web- site;
- Strong agreement that there is a need to increase partnership projects, volunteer involvement
- Strong agreement that the heritage/faith and environmental networks should get more involved
- Strong message from the Townships that their forums want to get more involved

Section 4.

Townships feedback – from discussions with Township managers

Project	Area	Involvement
Lilford Park	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Pennington Hall Park	Partnership with Friends group	Possible community facilities – HLF bid
Westleigh Park	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Leigh Heritage Weekend	Partnership with WLCT Township & community	Possible small bid to fund event
Leigh Cenotaph	Improvements to cenotaph and surround	Possible HLF bid
Private Wilkinson	Memorial to Private Wilkinson	Possible small bid
Hindley Town Centre	Work on town centre conservation area	THI
Borsdane Wood	No details	
All Saints Church	Restoration of building and grounds	Possible HLF bid
St John's Church Abram	Restoration of building and grounds	Possible HLF bid
Leyland Park	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Hindley Town Hall & surrounds	Restoration of building and grounds	Possible HLF bid
Dover Lock and the Maypole, Abram	No details	
Abram Park	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Ashton Heath, Ashton	No Details	
St Thomas's Church	Restoration of Church and adjacent properties	Possible HLF bid
Ashton Town centre	Work on town centre conservation area	
Jubilee Parks, Ashton	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Ashton Library	Restoration of building?	
Astley Street Park, Tyldesley	Development plan to green flag status	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid
Tyldesley Town Centre	Partnership plan for Market Square	Possible HLF bid
Morley Street Park Atherton	Development plan	Possible heritage elements – HLF bid

Atherton Cenotaph	Renovation of cenotaph and site	Possible HLF bid
Atherton Town Hall	Improvements to building	