



**TREASURE  
THE PAST.**

.....  
**ENRICH  
THE FUTURE.**

Heritage Delivers

Prosperity | Progress | Personality

## INTRODUCTION

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01. PROSPERITY  
SUPPORTING  
OUR PROSPERITY

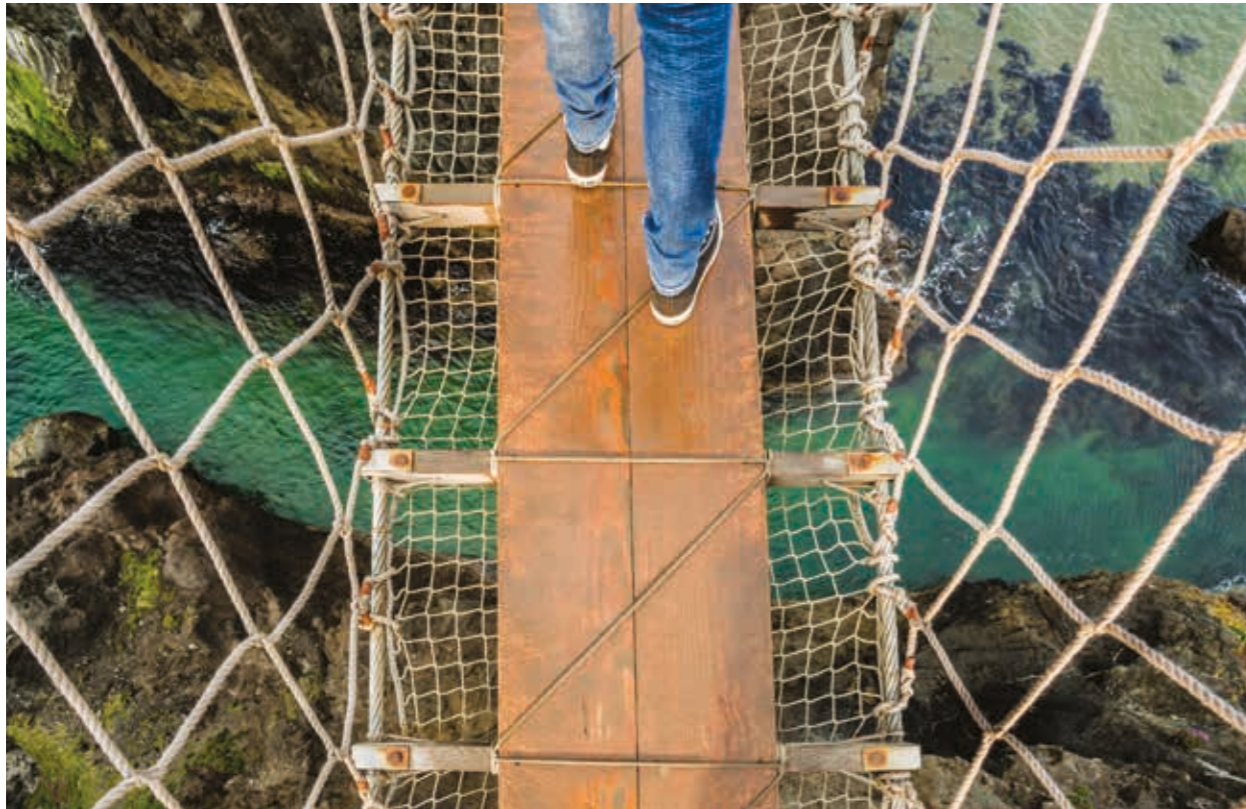
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02. PROGRESS  
STRENGTHENING  
OUR SOCIETY

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03. PERSONALITY  
SHAPING  
OUR CHARACTER





# INTRODUCTION



We are a product of our history. The hill forts, cairns, and passage tombs of prehistory; the ruins of ancient monasteries and early churches; the farm houses and low stone walls built into the landscape; the functional red brick terraces and mills; the Georgian spires and Victorian edifices presiding over our towns. Each tells a part of our story.

Our heritage is our authentic voice and distinctive character. It is the basis for our confidence, our prosperity, and our health. It binds us together, attracts investment, and improves our quality of life.

Nurturing a living past is essential to health and wellbeing, cultural and economic regeneration, and a shared sense of optimism.

Why are investors pouring money into new hotels near Portrush? Because the Causeway Coast is drawing crowds of tourists. Why are they coming? The area is not only beautiful, but has a rich and varied historic environment. Dunluce Castle, Carrick-a-Rede, Mussenden Temple, and Bushmills Distillery are only the brightest stars in the constellation of heritage sites on Northern Ireland's north coast. It would be diminished without these riches. They create a sense of place, a feeling of pride.

Heritage creates value through tourism, but that's only its most obvious benefit. Nurturing a living past is essential to health and wellbeing, cultural and economic regeneration, and a shared sense of optimism. History and place lie deep in our psyche. There is an outcry when old buildings are demolished to make way for new developments because we understand that when some things are gone, they are gone for good.

Sustaining our historic environment is a financial and logistical challenge. Investing in heritage today is a down payment on greater riches in the future — a vital ingredient in sustainable development. Northern Ireland's Programme for Government outlines high-level strategic outcomes - from rebalancing the economy, to creating a place where people want to live, work, travel and invest. Community Plans led by our local councils also capture and aim to deliver these ambitions. Investing in the historic environment furthers all of these goals.



This challenge is not unique to here. Communities across the world are attempting to balance their immediate economic health with their long-term prosperity. The most successful use their heritage to regenerate their cities, towns, and countryside. They reimagine their heritage assets to anchor them in a globalised world.

Failing to invest in our heritage carries great costs. We would not fulfil our economic potential. Our children would grow up with a diminished identity. The whole community would lose its pride and character. We would fall out of step with the rest of the world.

Investments in heritage offers great returns, both tangible and intangible. When we invest in heritage we learn to understand each other, and become the society we want to be. Our children learn the significance of their towns and villages. We live in places that exude atmosphere and character. We feel confident in our stories and enjoy the freedom to engage in and understand them. We become a beacon for skilled workers, and the businesses that need them.

We believe that protecting and investing in our heritage is essential to creating a better future, because it supports our prosperity, strengthens our society, and shapes our character. Treasuring our past enriches our future.



01. PROSPERITY  
**SUPPORTING  
OUR PROSPERITY**







**When we invest in heritage we support business growth, increase tourism, attract new business and create jobs.**

UK studies show that the historic environment offers a high return on investment. Each £1 invested generates up to £1.60 of extra economic activity over ten years.<sup>(1)</sup>

There were 7.3 million visits to heritage attractions in Northern Ireland in 2016, including historic properties, museums and art galleries, visitor and heritage centres, workplaces and places of worship. [Figures adapted by Creative Tourist Ltd based on information from NI Statistics and Research Agency.<sup>(2)</sup>]

A study by Deloitte in 2017 identified that Titanic Belfast has generated an additional £160 million spend in the local economy during its first five years of operations. Declared as the World's Leading Tourist Attraction in 2016, Titanic Belfast has welcomed over 4.5 million visitors. Owned by a charity focused on heritage preservation, but run commercially, Titanic Belfast's success has supported and continues to support the conservation and restoration of key heritage assets in Titanic Quarter.



# 01.1 PROMOTING TOURISM

Visitors to historic places spend more time and up to two-and-a-half times as much as visitors to other types of attraction.

**Heritage visitors stay longer, spend more per day and have a significantly greater economic impact.**



Case study:

## Mount Stewart, Strangford Lough

Mount Stewart was the home of the Londonderry family for more than 250 years. Today it reflects the era 1920–1950, when the 7th Marquess and his wife Edith made Mount Stewart their home.

By the turn of this century, Mount Stewart was suffering from serious structural defects and subsidence.

National Trust embarked on a three-year, £8 million restoration project. They returned the house to its former glory and secured its long-term future.

Local contractors H&J Martin delivered the project by engaging a team of conservation specialists.

Domestic and international visitor numbers have increased 25% to 195,000 in 2016 and to 217,200 in 2017.<sup>(3)</sup>







## 01.2 NEW LIFE FOR OLD BUILDINGS

Repurposing old buildings or structures is the cornerstone of sustainable development, creates more jobs and uses fewer resources than fresh construction. Reuse is one of the best ways to engage the private sector in heritage preservation. Companies recognise the benefits of regenerating local areas and consumers seek brands that have authentic roots.

Case study:

### The Merchant Hotel, Belfast

One of the best examples of adaptive reuse in Northern Ireland is the Merchant Hotel redevelopment.

Ulster Bank's old headquarters aspired to the heights of Victorian grandeur. Its sandstone facade boasts Doric and Corinthian columns, while cupids peek from the arabesques of its frieze. This edifice lay vacant for many years, until Bill Wolsey of the Beannchor Group realised its potential.

Beannchor bought the Ulster Bank offices and adjoining buildings. They were then converted into the new suites and bars of The Merchant Hotel complex. The building continues to win international hotel awards ten years after its completion.



## 01.3 VALUING AUTHENTICITY



We value authentic places because they remind us of how our world is shaped by history and people, giving us a sense of our roots and our place in the world.

They help us believe in our individuality and the importance of our culture. Authentic places are indispensable to a cohesive, prosperous and progressive society. Heritage buildings derive their authenticity from their intimate connection with a community's development. Old farmhouses tell the story of rural history. Old warehouses, factories, and terraced houses were essential to our industrial growth. These buildings tell the story of how we came to be who we are.



Case study:

### St George's Market, Belfast

St. George's Market isn't just a building. It embodies an enduring tradition that stretches back before its construction. Its site has hosted markets since 1604. Its red brick and sandstone are redolent of Belfast's history and tradition.

Despite the emergence of new retail environments across the city, St George's Market is more important to us than ever.

It plays host to three weekly markets. Its twilight markets attract some 17,000 people. Tourists flock to see it. Pop musicians hold concerts in it. Hundreds of local small businesses use it to sell their goods.

It continues to provide employment and income to the Market's community, where stallholders have family stretching back generations.

Conserving our historic environment helps us to remember our past and take pride in our identity.



Case study:

## Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh

Slieve Gullion rises to 573 metres above sea level in south Armagh. 5000 years ago, a passage tomb was built here to hold the cremated remains of select individuals. Their importance is highlighted by the fact that the tomb is aligned on the setting sun at the winter solstice. Stories and myths have been told to explain the site ever since.

Visitors to the site have increased in recent years and the tomb has suffered. The loose stones that once sat atop the cairn had been pushed down the slope and into the entrance, partially blocking it. Vandals had left their mark on many of the stones.

The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership, part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, and under the supervision of archaeologist Martin Keery from Historic Environment Division, organised restoration work in early 2015. A team of volunteers trekked to the summit and began removing graffiti and hauling the stones from the entrance back to their original position on top of the cairn. A maintenance team now monitors the tomb to protect it from further damage. The project helped the community to learn about the site and to feel involved in its protection.





## 01.4 ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

Exploiting a region's cultural cachet is essential to attracting outside investment. All else being equal, cities compete on culture. The historic environment plays a decisive role in drawing creative people and the firms that need them.

**Heritage buildings not only attract large businesses, but also start-ups for a variety of reasons.**

Case study:

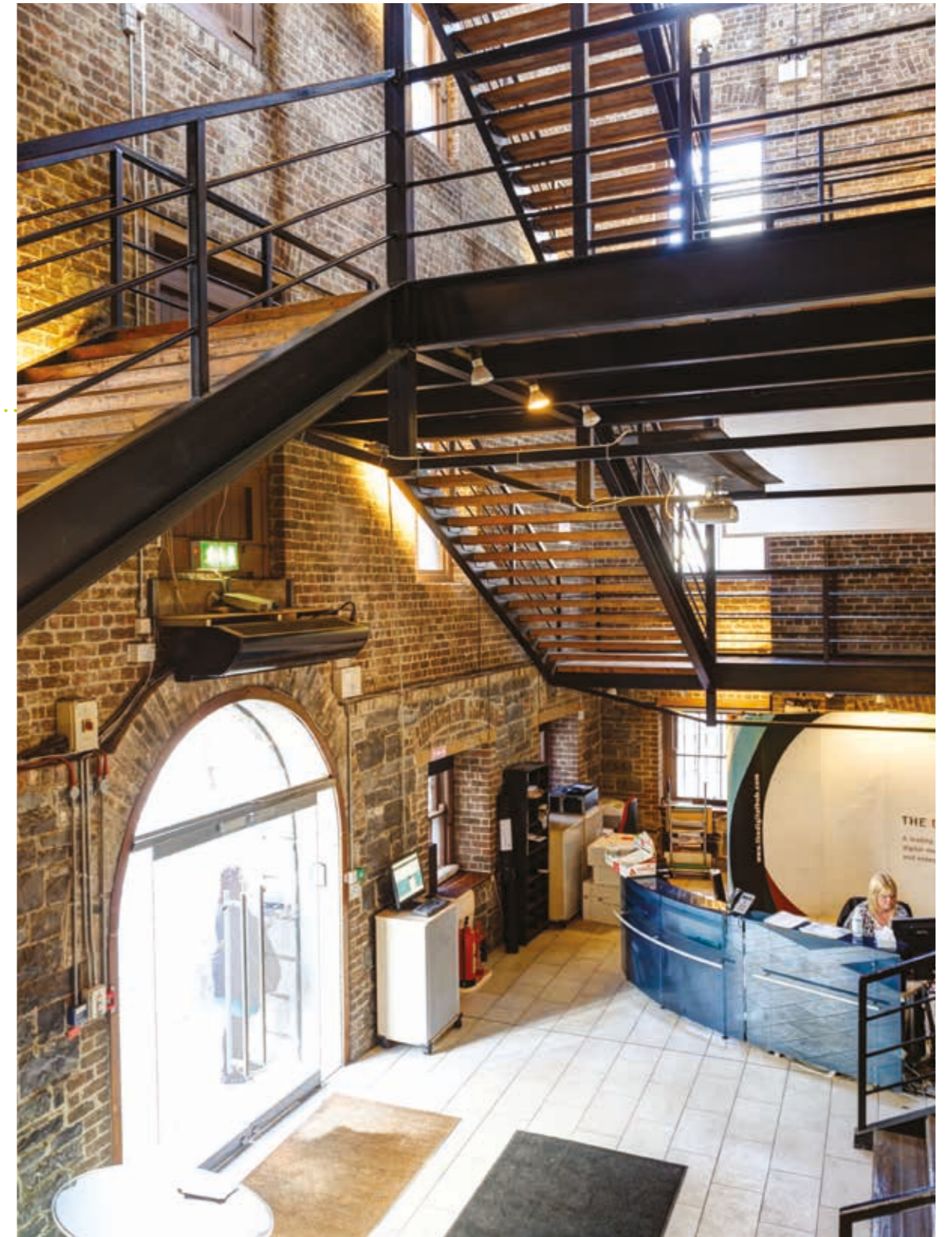
### Dublin's historic core<sup>(5)</sup>

Dublin used its cultural heritage to create a 'talent hub' and is now home to some of the world's leading companies. Google, Facebook, Amazon, eBay, Blizzard and Electronic Arts all have a presence there.

Attracting this investment depended on connectivity with the rest of the world, and on attracting and retaining talent. Dublin had to compete with other European cities in liveability and beauty, so conserving the historic environment has been of the utmost importance.

Dublin founded the Customs House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) in 1987 to promote investment through urban redevelopment. It was responsible for the transformation of the derelict, inner-city docks area. Today, financial services companies employ some 30,000 people in this district.

Today, the successor to the CHDDA — the Dublin Docks Development Authority — has attracted €3.35 billion of investment, and created 40,000 new jobs. The connections between conservation, investment, and business growth have become obvious, and similar initiatives have been rolled out in other areas of Dublin City.



The Digital Exchange building, one of nine buildings, home to tech, internet and digital media companies at The Digital Hub campus in Dublin 8.





Case study:

## Liverpool Docklands

Liverpool has been riven with debate in recent years over the value of its heritage buildings. The city's historic waterfront was inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004, but development proposals have lately threatened that status. UNESCO and Historic England are worried that an enormous development at Prince's Dock, near Liverpool's iconic Three Graces buildings, will destroy the city's character.

Yet a regeneration development on another site – the Stanley Dock Conservation Area – shows maintaining Liverpool's heritage need not come at the expense of development. The Titanic Hotel now occupies an 19th century tobacco warehouse – known as the North Warehouse – disused for the last thirty years. The development is considered an excellent example of adaptive reuse, and is bringing life back to a run-down part of town. It's just the first phase in a planned regeneration for the surrounding area. And it's worth noting that the same developer has been responsible for the transformation of the iconic Harland and Wolff drawing offices and headquarters into Belfast's Titanic Hotel.

The North Warehouse redevelopment has been a critical and commercial success. It has won plaudits from the RTPI, IHBC and the Civic Trust. The Titanic Hotel enjoys high occupancy rates and attracts prestigious events. As life returns to the Stanley Dock area, the Liverpool City Council is promoting the Ten Streets Initiative – a plan to encourage similar kinds of development in the city centre.

In the past, Liverpool has done much to ensure progress dove-tailed with heritage conservation. The City Council is returning to these principles. The council is re-engaging with UNESCO. Historic England is collaborating with the council to draft a new management plan. UNESCO has meanwhile used its learning from Liverpool and elsewhere to develop a Historic Urban Landscape Approach. This aims to guide places on how to holistically balance heritage with other demands.





**02. PROGRESS**  
**STRENGTHENING**  
**OUR SOCIETY**



When we invest in heritage we boost education, health, employment and wellbeing. Integrating heritage into policy-making will improve people's lives.

Heritage improves our society in many ways. For those who are actively engaged in heritage projects the rewards are obvious. In addition everybody stands to benefit enormously from investment in the historic environment that surrounds their community.

## 02.1 SOCIAL COHESION

Heritage plays an important role in creating cohesive and integrated communities.

Investment in heritage regenerates neglected areas, creates local jobs, and promotes a sense of community. It offers educational and volunteering opportunities, and promotes dialogue between different cultures and generations.<sup>(6)</sup>

Understanding our heritage helps us to understand each other. There is evidence to suggest that heritage can promote an understanding of the past that is not only better, but shared.





Case study:

## Battles, Bricks & Bridges, Co. Fermanagh

The actual site of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits (1594) in Fermanagh has long been a subject of debate. Academics had identified one bend in the river, but folk memory suggested another.

In 2014, Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Division funded a project to discover the truth. It also sought to learn more about the local brick-making industry and the National School that once stood by the Arney Bridge.(7)

The local community, like many others, was to a degree disparate with neighbours of differing faiths not mixing and interacting as much as they could. The search for this history drew people from all communities in Killesher and Cleenish into an examination of their shared local heritage.

The project verified the actual site of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits, just where local people said it should be. Volunteers excavated The National School, highlighting a time when children of all denominations learned together and a series of community workshops brought the brick-making industry back into memory. Finally, workers restored the bridge over the Arney.



Case study:

## Revitalise our Heritage, Belfast

This is a regeneration project for South Belfast's Sandy Row. It seeks to foreground heritage and culture in its work.

Sandy Row suffered during the Troubles as one of the most deprived areas in Belfast. Economic renewal passed it by.

The Sandy Row Community Forum developed a plan to work with long-term unemployed Loyalist bandmen. These men would research local history and become tour guides.

Two years later, all the participants are working as tour guides either in the area or in the city.

Significant benefits have flowed from the project to the wider community. Sandy Row holds an important place in Belfast's development. A new appreciation for this role has built local confidence and pride.





## 02.2 HEALTH BENEFITS

Heritage benefits our health and enhances our wellbeing. Recent research found that people who participate in heritage activities have higher life satisfaction and improved physical and mental health.

Researchers at the London School of Economics and Simetrica, a social impact consultancy, found the wellbeing value of visiting heritage sites is equal to £1,646 per person per year.

Another study, on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund, discovered that volunteers in the heritage sector had higher levels of life satisfaction than did the general population, or other volunteers.

The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce found a positive correlation between areas with high levels of heritage activity and those with high wellbeing among residents.<sup>(9)</sup>

Case study:

### The Mall, Armagh

The Mall has been central to life in Armagh for over 200 years. Several churches, Charlemont Place, the Savings Bank, and Armagh County Museum look over it. Armagh's courthouse stands at the northern end and the gaol at the southern. However, by the turn of this century, the shine had come off the Mall, despite its grandeur.

Concerned locals won support from the Heritage Lottery Fund to give it a facelift including better disabled access, ground drainage, park furniture and a new surface for the promenade. The Mall's trees received long-needed surgery and the park's security improved.

Now the Mall attracts early morning joggers, office workers on their lunch breaks, and families in the evenings. The Armagh Cricket Club hosts games on the pitch, and the Heart Foundation uses the space for their walking programmes.

In 2005, The Mall won both the Civic Trust Award and the Irish Architecture Award.





## 02.3 HOUSING

Northern Ireland, like much of the UK, is suffering from a housing crisis. We need more houses than we build. The answer has often been to clear land for cheap, high-density housing, such as the tower blocks of the post-war period. These projects tend to clear poorer people out of older areas — usually closer to the city.

**Some of our grandest heritage houses may still be standing, but so many others are being torn down. In 2001, Northern Ireland had 116,400 homes that had been built before 1919. Now, only 87,700 remain standing. We lost a quarter of these buildings in the space of a decade.<sup>(9)</sup>**

By partnering with local lenders and community development organisations, we can ensure the continued use and rehabilitation of historic buildings while encouraging economic growth in urban neighbourhoods.

Such partnerships can instigate rehabilitation projects involving older commercial buildings and homes while providing residents with affordable housing and jobs.

Most people live in towns and cities, so it's easy to think of housing issues as an urban phenomenon. However we can also revitalise rural homes of heritage value to provide housing, maintaining a physical connection to a region's past.







Case study:

## Joy, Hamilton & McMaster Streets, Belfast

Joy Street and Hamilton Street in the Markets area of Belfast epitomise the late Georgian housing of the city, as does McMaster Street the working class housing of the late Victorian era. Today, they are valued for their historic character, weathered brickwork and convenience for living near the city centre.

Each of these terraces would have fallen to the developers' wrecking ball if it wasn't for the intervention of Hearth, a building preservation trust that was formed in the 1970s to provide housing in historic but under-appreciated buildings.

Hearth brought terraces back into use by drawing on a range of funds from social housing to renovation for sale, offering a discount for local people to ensure that they would retain ownership in their area and its heritage.

Today, Hearth's projects in inner-city Belfast provide more than housing. These buildings are a touchstone for local identity, and provide a real-life connection for visitors interested in the history and heritage of Belfast and its industrial past.



Case study:

## Mourne Homesteads Scheme, Co. Down

Traditional buildings dot the Mourne Mountains landscape. They are often of modest construction and sited into the natural undulations of the fields. These buildings conform to certain traditional standards, but have individual characters and quirks.

They represent a link to our collective history, echoing with folklore and lost ways of life bound up in the stone and mortar. Yet these buildings are often derelict or demolished. Some believe that old rural dwellings can't provide for modern family living.

The Mourne Homesteads Scheme, established by the Mourne Heritage Trust, set out to prove otherwise. These dwellings are prime candidates for adaptive reuse, endearing characteristics and all. The Scheme creates modern homes, while preserving the folk memory bound up in their walls.

These renovations inspired others, and adaptive reuse is now common in the Mourne region.

In 2007 the scheme received a diploma from Europa Nostra (the European Union's Cultural Heritage Award) in the presence of the King and Queen of Sweden — exalted company for humble dwellings.





03. PERSONALITY  
SHAPING  
OUR CHARACTER



When we invest in heritage we are protecting and celebrating the character of our region and its people. This is essential to a peaceful, prosperous and progressive future.

It is often difficult to say exactly what it is that we value about who we are and where we live. People agree about iconic buildings, places or things but are often less sure about vernacular or industrial architecture.

But understanding, protecting, celebrating and re-using the buildings and places that make us who we are builds confidence, improves our quality of life and encourages economic growth.





## 03.1 RECOGNISING VALUE

Globalisation tends to make everything seem the same. Places that accentuate what makes them distinctive are in the best position to stand out, attract people, and prosper. They make the most of their cultural capital.

For economists, the term cultural capital describes how a city, region, or nation carves out a niche in the global market. It is a kind of branding, what students of international relations might call 'soft power'. It is the *je ne sais quoi* that makes Paris, Paris, the grit and class that makes New York, New York.

Nurturing cultural capital can be tricky for government. Unlike a new bridge, education initiative or nature reserve it cannot be created by decree. It is a sense of style and belonging created by people in everyday interactions over many years.



Case study:

### The Walled City, Derry-Londonderry

Merchants from the City of London built Derry's walls between 1613 and 1619. They were low and wide, built to endure cannon fire, and withstood two sieges in the 17th century. Inside, the streets were laid out to an ideal plan, focused on a market square.

Derry's suburbs have long since spilt out across the countryside, but its walls and historic district remain its most distinctive features. Nevertheless, they were long neglected. The construction of a shopping mall in the mid-1990s drew foot traffic away and tourist numbers declined.

At the end of the decade two key projects were initiated to reverse this trend. The Walled City Partnership was formed to revitalise historic buildings in a focused area using HLF, Planning and other grants. From 2004 the Walled City Signature Project complemented this by investing Tourism NI and other government funds in: tourism training and offerings, the repair and presentation of key historic buildings, signage, lighting, and in conservation management.

Tourism has risen two-fold in the ensuing years, and Derry's citizens are proud of their city. The revitalisation helped the city to win the UK City of Culture in 2013. Shoppers still flock to the shopping centres, but the historic city centre is now a major tourist draw.



## 03.2 RETAINING CHARACTER

Our landscapes would cease to be distinct if they were stripped of their heritage buildings or monuments. What would Belfast be without its linen mills? Derry without its walls? Enniskillen its castle or South Armagh its megalithic tombs?

Older buildings provide the character of a town or city by embodying the will and aspirations of the people who live there. Their design draws on local tastes. They have stood long enough for people to build memories around them, turning them into landmarks not only in space, but in the personal universe of all who know them.

The old bank buildings of our principal towns, the low-ceilinged pubs of the inner city and the country crossroads, the terraced houses and lime kilns of coastal villages, the church walls draped in ivy and moss— all are reminders of what it means to come from here.

Case study:

### Ballycastle, Co. Antrim

Ballycastle is a market town in Co Antrim with a population of around 5000 people. It boasts a long history—almost as long as the history of human habitation in Ireland.

The town has many beautiful buildings of historical significance. Holy Trinity, the parish church that dominates the main square, is only the most obvious. Terraced shops and houses from the late 18th century line the town's streets.

Ballycastle's town core gained Conservation Area status in 1990. This stimulated government support for repair work, and increased local pride. Increased planning controls and peer pressure have ensured that these gains have been retained.

Today, Ballycastle is a vibrant, healthy town. Its population is rising, independent retailers are prospering, and it is a thriving tourist destination.





# TREASURE THE PAST. ENRICH THE FUTURE.

Northern Ireland's Programme for Government calls for a range of outcomes—a balanced economy, more equality, healthier lives, a confident society. Community plans focus on the same outcomes. Cherishing and investing in our heritage contributes to achieving all of them.

Heritage is as much about the future as the past. By making the most of it, by using it as the foundation of our development, we unlock its potential for the future. It's an opportunity that we cannot afford to waste.

Heritage supports our prosperity; it promotes tourism; it facilitates new uses; it is authentic in an increasingly homogenised world; it can attract investment; it strengthens society by helping social cohesion and public health; it can help solve housing problems; it can shape our character and help us stand out as a good place to invest in.

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