



Evaluation of Conservation Outcomes from HLF Funded Projects

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Final Report

for

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the assessment

The HLF invests in a wide range of conservation activities, involving landscapes, biodiversity, collections, archives, and historic buildings and structures. This research programme investigated the conservation outcomes of the HLF's investment in all these heritage areas (or assets). The commissioning brief is provided at Annex I.

The aim of the study was to give the HLF a better understanding of two aspects of conservation:

- The conservation outcomes of HLF funding, and
- The effectiveness of HLF systems for the assessment of these conservation outcomes.

The study looked at the conservation quality that was achieved by completed projects and the HLF's assessment and monitoring procedures.

The scope of the investigation focused on conservation, as distinct from the economic, social or other aspects of projects. For the purposes of this research project, conservation includes:

- Physical works of repair, restoration, protection and enhancement, and,
- Management planning and actions put in place to maintain the physical condition and significance of those assets in the long term (and thus to safeguard and sustain the HLF's investment).

The primary research objectives were to:

- Establish whether conservation management issues and risks have been effectively and appropriately identified and costed in applications to HLF;
- Review the quality of conservation advice and appraisal that was applied to each project, including expert advice, assessment by staff, and whether it was successful in identifying or reducing any conservation risks;
- Determine how many of the sample projects incurred conservation problems either during project development or whilst works were underway. Such problems might include unbudgeted costs, problems with craftsmanship, delays, unforeseen issues such as archaeological remains or biodiversity; the commencement of works without necessary statutory consents, and public concerns over conservation actions.
- Assess the quality of HLF monitoring of conservation issues and – where necessary – HLF intervention into the project;

- Determine whether the conservation benefits of HLF funding have been or will be sustained once funded works are complete through appropriate management and maintenance planning;
- Assess whether information about the conservation work undertaken as part of the HLF funded project has been captured and appropriately archived, and whether the documents that set out the grantee's commitment to maintenance and management are available and in use;

Based on the above objectives, this final report covers:

- The conservation outcomes from a sample of projects;
- The effectiveness of HLF procedures (including guidance, assessment and monitoring) and whether any improvements are needed;
- How well conservation issues are being identified and costed;
- Any risks to HLF's investment in these projects;
- Whether there is any need for additional support or advice for applicants who meet HLF criteria but may lack specialist knowledge of conservation or site/building maintenance and management.

1.2 Methodology

The research programme concentrated on twenty case studies of HLF funded projects that were completed in 2007. Our evaluation used a variety of research methods including:

- Review of internal documents related to HLF procedures for assessing conservation issues of projects seeking funding;
- Review of application documents for each of the projects in order to identify the conservation objectives of the project and how they were to be met;
- Review of the HLF's project files;
- Review of any advice provided by the HLF's appointed expert advisors;
- Review of project monitors' reports;
- A site visit to review the physical condition and management of the site in order to establish whether there is evidence that the conservation benefits of the project have been delivered and whether long term site management and maintenance objectives set out in any maintenance or conservation plans or other site documents are being delivered;
- Interviews with project staff to establish how conservation issues were identified and addressed; what advice was taken and from whom; whether issues emerged during the project that were not foreseen at the outset; whether costing was robust; what lessons

were learnt during the project; whether there have been long term changes in the organisation's awareness of conservation issues as a result of the project.

- Discussions with HLF Grants Officers and Regional Managers.

There were therefore three key sources of information for this project: the HLF's project files, discussions with those involved in the projects, and our technical assessment of conservation outcomes based on available evidence including observations made during our site visits.

Individual reports have been prepared on each of the twenty case studies. This final report brings together the principal findings from this process. A brief overview of each case study is provided before a synthesis of findings is provided. The report concludes by setting out key recommendations.

2 The case studies

2.1 Case studies and their selection

An evaluation of twenty case studies was undertaken. The case study sample was selected from a group of 203 projects that contained a substantive conservation component, were completed for administrative purposes during 2007, and had received a grant in excess of £100,000.

The sample was chosen randomly, but so as to include conservation across the whole range of HLF activities – including the conservation of natural heritage, built heritage, and collections. Diversity of project, applicant and asset types, grant award amounts, regional distribution, and availability of information on HLF’s project files was also a factor in selection of the final sample. Appropriate conservation specialists were involved in the evaluation process for this research project to ensure that the full range of attributes and assets types received proper consideration in every case.

The projects selected were:

Project reference	Applicant	Project Title	Grant Award	Region	Heritage Area
HF-99-00465	Liverpool City Council/St Georges Charitable Trust	St George's Hall, Liverpool - Development	£14,598,000	North West	HB+M
PK-96-00485	Glasgow City Council	Glasgow Green	£8,821,000	Scotland	L+BioD
HF-02-00932	National Maritime Museum	Time and Space - Developing the Royal Observatory Greenwich	£7,151,400	London	MLA+C
HF-01-00844	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	Restoration of Fulham Palace	£3,271,000	London	HB+M
HF-98-01597	Devon County Council	New Devon Record Office	£3,246,000	South West	MLA+C
PK-98-00580	Lincoln City Council	Lincoln, Arboretum & Temple Gardens	£2,568,000	East Midlands	L+BioD
HF-96-02297	Larne Borough Council	Glenarm Harbour - Restoration	£2,400,000	Northern Ireland	IM+T
HF-00-00365	The Wordsworth Trust	Wordsworth Trust Collections Centre	£2,250,000	North West	MLA+C
DG-95-01413	Belfast City Council	St George's Market, Belfast	£2,045,000	Northern Ireland	HB+M
PK-02-00400	London Borough of Hackney	Restoration of St John at Hackney	£1,790,000	London	L+BioD

Project reference	Applicant	Project Title	Grant Award	Region	Heritage Area
		Churchyard Gardens			
HF-01-00595	Chichester Harbour Conservancy	Rhythms of the Tide - Area Partnership Scheme	£1,346,000	South East	L+BioD
HF-97-02058	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Community Lifeline Canal Project	£1,287,000	West Midlands	IM+T
HF-01-00259	The National Trust for Scotland	Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbrightshire	£1,090,000	Scotland	HB+M
HG-01-00452	National Trust	Gibson Mill, Hardcastle Crags - Restoration & Development Project	£967,000	Yorkshire and The Humber	HB+M
HF-99-00495	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	Glass Quarter Project, Stourbridge	£357,000	West Midlands	IM+T
HF-99-00994	Duxford Aviation Society	Duxford Civil Airliners, Restoration and Preservation	£314,500	Eastern	MLA+C
HG-03-00116	Oadby and Wigston Preservation Trust	Purchase and repair of Wigston Framework Knitters Museum	£182,500	East Midlands	HB+M
HF-96-02128	Glasgow Museums	Ingram Street Tea Rooms Restoration	£171,200	Scotland	HB+M
HF-02-00012	The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough	Extension of Woodland & Grassland Habitats at Gamlingay Wood, Waresley & Gransden Woods SSSI	£166,000	Eastern	L+BioD
HG-03-00242	Cheshire Museums Service	Saving the Nantwich Salt 'Ship'	£104,000	North West	IM+T

[KEY: *HB+M* – Historic Buildings and Monuments; *MLA+C* – Museums, Libraries, Archives and Collections; *IM+T* – Industrial, Maritime and Transport; *L+BioD* – Land and Biodiversity]

The applicants represented ten local authorities (50%) and two Museum services operated by local authorities (10%), four local or specialised charitable trusts (20%), two national heritage management organisations (10%), one Museum trust (5%) and one statutory Harbour authority (5%).

Seven projects (35%) involved museums of which three related to parts of our industrial heritage and one historic technology; five projects (25%) involved land and biodiversity; four (20%) were 'pure' historic buildings projects, two dealt with archive buildings (10%); and a further two conserved or restored industrial assets. Of course, this breakdown is by no means straightforward, as for example museum projects involved industrial heritage but also works to historic buildings.

One of the original grant applications was made in 1995 (12 years' project duration) (5%), three in 1996 (11 years' project duration) (15%), one in 1997 (10 years' duration) (5%), two in 1998 (9 years' duration) (10%), three in 1999 (8 years' duration) (15%), one in 2000 (7 years' duration) (5%), four in 2001 (6 years' duration) (20%), three in 2002 (5 years' duration) (15%), and two – the most recent – in 2003 (4 years' project duration) (10%). Thus, the average project duration for the sample was in excess of 7.5 years from application to administrative completion, compared to an average of a little over 6 years for the equivalent sample in last year's evaluation.

All twenty projects were completed (in administrative terms) in 2007. However, taken at face value, this masks the fact that the 'average' project in this sample was physically completed (and, where relevant, opened to the public) some 2.3 years before it was formally signed off as complete administratively. The earliest physical completion of the twenty projects occurred in 2000, 7 years before it was signed off in HLF's terms; six of the projects had been finished by 2003 or before.

With HLF's strategic planning cycles running from 1999-2002 (SP1) and 2002-07 (SP2), more than three quarters of the projects spanned over the period of changing strategic objectives for the organisation (including the pre-May 1999 period, SP0, during which time HLF's strategic objectives were not embedded within a formalised plan that had been laid before Parliament). Indeed, further refocusing of objectives can be detected in substantive revisions to application procedures, which occurred in 1997, 1998 and 2003 (in each case, in April). Almost inevitably, the long duration of most projects meant that personnel changes occurred in many – by far the greatest number of these involved the HLF's own case officer. Several of the longer running projects had three or more case officers assigned to them over the years.

HLF grant funds totalling £54,125,600 were awarded to the twenty projects – an average of £2,706,280 per project (compared to £1,036,878 for the equivalent sample in last year's evaluation). The highest grant award was £14,598,000 and the lowest £104,000 (£2,482,665 and £156,000 respectively last year). Nine projects (45%) received grants in excess of £2,000,000 (19% last year), four (20%) were awarded between £1,000,000 and £2,000,000 (19% last year); and seven (35%) received grants of less than £1,000,000 (62% last year). Two projects (10%) had applications for grant increases approved during their lifespan (31.25% last year). For a variety of reasons, only twelve (60%) of the twenty projects claimed and/or received the full amount of grant originally awarded (or within 2% thereof). The average reduction in grant paid against awarded amount was 2.6%, with the highest reduction being in excess of 30%.

HLF sought external expert advice on all projects (100%); project monitor appointments were made in fifteen projects (75%). Twelve projects (60%) were assigned to monitoring regime A at some time during their life (44% last year), with four (20%) being rated at C for their entire duration (12% last year).

2.2 Overview of case studies

In summary, the projects comprised:

St George's Hall, Liverpool – Development (Grant Award: £14,598,000)

St George's Hall is a Grade I listed building situated within the William Brown Street Conservation Area in the Cultural Quarter of Liverpool. It is regarded as one of the finest neo-classical buildings in the world, and is arguably the most important building in Liverpool's architectural, social and cultural history. The proposals for St George's Hall aimed to bring its original spaces (mostly disused at the time of application) back into operation, in sound decorative order, and with the provision of an infrastructure that would allow unused sections of the building to be returned to beneficial use over time. The intended culmination of these objectives was the rehabilitation of the Hall as a public centre and restoration of its historic fabric.

Glasgow Green (Grant Award: £8,821,000)

Glasgow Green is said to be the oldest public park in the United Kingdom and 'unique in the contribution it has made to the lives of the people of Glasgow, Scotland, the United Kingdom, Europe and the World'. It is the place where James Watt conceived the idea of the steam condenser, which launched the Industrial Revolution. It was also the birthplace of the Trade Union Movement, the European Temperance Movement and it is firmly associated with the birth of both Celtic and Rangers Football Clubs, and the site of the city's first golf course. It is regarded as one of the great social battlefields of Europe through its association with corporal punishment, religious, political, suffrage and other momentous demonstrations. The project sought to restore Glasgow Green to its former status as the premier parkland of Glasgow by conserving and reviving heritage features, encouraging environmental and educational opportunities, active and passive recreation, and an excellence in development, management and maintenance.

Time and Space - Developing the Royal Observatory Greenwich (Grant Award: £7,151,400)

The Royal Observatory Greenwich lies in a Grade I Registered Park and Garden and forms part of the Greenwich World Heritage Site. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The South Building, which formed the core of the Time and Space project, is Grade II listed, primarily for its group value, whilst the second building included within the project, the Altazimuth pavilion, is unlisted. The Trustees of the National Maritime Museum regarded the development of the Royal Observatory Greenwich site as being the final phase of its strategy to improve the estate. Prior to the Space and Time project, the southern half of site was not on the main visitor route. The South Building, a major element of the existing infrastructure, had recently become empty. As part of a larger scheme, the HLF project comprised essential conservation works to the South Building and Altazimuth Pavilion as part of their reuse and, less directly, landscaping the site so that its north and south parts would become better linked, thus encouraging visitors to use whole complex rather than being concentrated around the meridian line in its northern half.

Restoration of Fulham Palace (Grant Award: £3,271,000)

The moated Fulham Palace site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Palace is listed Grade I, and its grounds are Grade II* on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. It is seen as the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's most important heritage asset. The HLF project constituted the first part of a multi-phase development of site, intended to comprehensively restore, revitalise and re-use the Palace and its grounds and outbuildings. This project was intended to make only limited contributions towards this vision, principally through restoration of Bishop Sherlock's room within the main Palace, refurbishment of a single upper suite of rooms on the East Quadrangle, renewal of services throughout the East Quadrangle, and the creation of new controlled vehicular access to the Palace's Stable Yard.

New Devon Record Office (Grant Award: £3,246,000)

The Devon Record Office holds judicial administrative and ecclesiastical records from the 11th to the 20th centuries. The collection comprises archives of the County of Devon, the City of Exeter, Diocese of Exeter, local authorities, churches, businesses, families, individuals and organisations. The Record Office contains 700 collections that are considered to be of national, regional and local importance, and is the 8th largest archival collection in the country. Before the HLF project, the existing Devon Record Office was located at the Westcountry Studies Library in the City Centre, although only 25% of the collection was actually kept there. The remaining 75% (the highest percentage in the country) was stored remotely, three miles distant, in a warehouse shared with the County's conservation section. The project aimed to create a new Record Office facility, located within a former industrial warehouse on the edge of the city and close to a motorway junction. The new facility would hold the entire archival collection, affording improved public access to the documents and other material.

Lincoln, Arboretum & Temple Gardens (Grant Award: £2,568,000)

Lincoln Arboretum is a Grade II registered park and garden, comprising 8.8 ha of parkland close to the City centre, with two lakes and varied tree cover. Of particular note are the lime avenues along the formal terrace. The Arboretum was laid out by Edward Milner in 1872 and was extended by Milner's son in 1895. The site has high heritage merit through its association with the Milners and from the remarkable degree to which the original design is intact and largely unspoilt. Temple Gardens provide a direct physical link with Lincoln Cathedral and from the gardens there are unobstructed views of it. Whilst not registered, they provide the setting for the Usher Gallery, Temple and Pavilion, all of which are listed Grade II. The project's objectives were to restore the Arboretum and Temple Gardens, and to improve the link between the two.

Glenarm Harbour - Restoration (Grant Award: £2,400,000)

Glenarm is a village at the end of one of the Antrim glens, in a stunning location in a bay of its own. It is approached either by the coast road running north from the small ferry port of Larne, or down the glen from Ballymena. In common with other glens, Glenarm owes much of its development to trading links with the west of Scotland. Such coastal villages were separated from the rest of Ulster by the surrounding hills, making their economies dependent upon sea links for the trading of natural resources such as limestone, timber and fish. The harbour was thus of vital importance to the village until the opening up of the Glens by the construction of the Coast Road in the mid 19th century. No longer in working use by the latter half of the 20th century, the harbour had declined and fallen into a state of disrepair. The end

of the pier had collapsed, and the harbour basin had silted up. The project aimed to preserve and reinstate the original historic structures, while also providing the conditions within which a working harbour could be created for the future. This included dredging to create a new harbour basin, lined with revetments and the construction of a new breakwater to create calm conditions for boats moored in the harbour. It was intended that this project would form part of a larger scheme to regenerate Glenarm village through substantial new development in the hope that the restored Harbour would be beneficial in attracting tourists to secure a new source of income.

Wordsworth Trust Collections Centre (Grant Award: £2,250,000)

The Wordsworth Trust was founded in 1891 to secure William Wordsworth's home, Dove Cottage. The Trust is based in the hamlet of Town End, a conservation area, situated close to Grasmere within the Lake District National Park. It owns 21 of the 26 properties in Town End – several of these are listed. The site is now internationally renowned as a centre for the study and enjoyment of the life and works of Wordsworth and British Romanticism. At the time of the Trust's application to HLF, its collections comprised about 50,000 items, including 90% of the known letters and working papers of Wordsworth, books and works of other romantic poets/writers, and fine art items. These were housed in several buildings around the site in unsuitable environmental conditions. The project sought to construct a new, accessible to all, building adjacent to the Wordsworth Museum to house the collections in a single location, providing storage to national standards, conservation, research facilities and improved facilities for cataloguing, micro-filming and transcription.

St George's Hall, Belfast (Grant Award: £2,045,000)

St George's Market is a Market Hall constructed during 1890-96 to the design of J C Bretland, the City Surveyor. It is Grade A listed and is both the only surviving original market building in Belfast and the only significant 19th century building in the immediate area. The HLF project sought to conserve and restore the historic structure, securing its future as a live market, developing a flexible open space that could be used for a wide variety of functions, and improving its facilities.

Restoration of St John at Hackney Churchyard Gardens (Grant Award: £1,790,000)

The churchyard of St John at Hackney dates to the 12th century and includes the 13th century Grade I listed church tower of St Augustines. The churchyard gardens were laid out by Henry Sedgwick in 1797, at the same that the church of St John at Hackney was rebuilt. The gardens are considered to be of local significance, and they lie within the Clapton Square and Clapton Square Extension Conservation Areas. They include surviving features belonging to Sedgwick's design, including a large number of mature planes and limes laid out in avenues. The gardens contain a number of tombs and monuments which are unlisted. The project sought to restore these tombs and monuments and to restore/recreate, as far as practical, Sedgwick's 1797 garden design, supported by the installation of appropriate planting, furniture, paving materials and railings.

Rhythms of the Tide - Area Partnership Scheme (Grant Award: £1,346,000)

Chichester Harbour is known primarily for sailing, yet it remains largely undeveloped. The natural heritage has been preserved in a landscape of open water surrounded by dunes, mud flats and saltmarsh, with some oak and hawthorn woodland. The landscape and its habitats provide refuge for thousands of wintering birds. The Harbour and its surrounding land were designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1964; much of the site is also a SSSI, with nationally significant estuarine and coastal habitats and species and areas of geological interest. The project was aimed at conserving and enhancing habitats, landscape and the cultural heritage of Chichester Harbour AONB. Additionally, it sought to provide improved access to the area and to make use of educational opportunities, with the objective of increasing enjoyment and awareness of the special qualities of the Harbour.

Sandwell Community Lifeline Canal Project (Grant Award: £1,287,000)

The historic canal infrastructure between Birmingham and Wolverhampton was designed by two of Britain's most prominent and influential engineers. The Old Main Line was designed and constructed by James Brindley between 1769 and 1772. It is of national significance as the first canal in the area, crossing the Black Country plateau and linking important river basins. The line was superseded by Thomas Telford's New Main Line which opened in 1829. For over a mile, the two canals lie side by side in the Galton Valley, illustrating the technical development of canal construction from the contour line to the direct line. This section of the canal is rich in industrial archaeology. The project aimed to repair 12 Grade II listed structures, 3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 7 locally listed structures, and various other unprotected buildings. Together, these included locks, a cast iron aqueduct, a number of cast iron and brick towpath bridges, and a pumping station. Additionally, the project involved significant improvements to canal side access, the introduction of signage, landscaping and dredging and community involvement through the deployment of three community conservation officers.

Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbrightshire (Grant Award: £1,090,000)

Broughton House in Kirkcudbright is a Grade A listed amalgamation of two early 18th century houses, with later additions. It was the home of the artist, E A Hornel – a man of eclectic tastes. It contains a nationally significant library and art archive – Hornel's collection – along with his studio and gallery. The Broughton House project sought to ensure the long term preservation of the collections by repairing and refurbishing the building fabric, providing an appropriate environment, stabilising fragile items, and improving access to the collections.

Gibson Mill, Hardcastle Crag - Restoration & Development Project (Grant Award: £967,000)

Gibson Mill is a Grade II listed water-powered cotton mill, located in a wooded river valley setting, at Hardcastle Crag, a geologically and ecologically important landscape. The original mill was constructed circa 1803, and added to subsequently. The mill and its location (a 400 acre National Trust estate) are considered to be a combined heritage asset, whose significance arises from encompassing several historic phases, and the presence of a variety of different categories of heritage interest, ranging from industrialisation and early cotton milling, to the emergence of tourism in the area, and the enjoyment of leisure time. Sited roughly 1 mile from the car park along the wooded river valley, prior to the project, the

mill complex had no main services and its structures were in deteriorating condition. The project was targeted at conserving the buildings and bringing them into public (and related) use, but this was to be achieved in a way that left the complex autonomous of all main services, including electricity, gas and water, relying instead on the natural resources found on site, including renewable energy for power, reliance on spring water, and with wastes being treated naturally on site.

Glass Quarter Project, Stourbridge (Grant Award: £357,000)

The Glass Quarter Project centred on the Red House Cone, a grade II* listed building and part of the Red House glassworks Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Cone, built by Richard Bradley between 1788 and 1794, is a central part of an historic site in Wordsley (now called the Red House Glass Works Museum), itself at the heart of the West Midlands glass-making industry. The Cone, formally called the Red House Glass Cone, is 88 feet high and 59 feet in diameter. Glass cones were originally built to increase the draught through furnaces, and this one was in use until 1936, first for the manufacture of broad or sheet glass for windows and later for bottles. The application concentrated on the repair of the Cone and other former factory buildings on the site, in addition to providing better access and interpretation for visitors. It included the leasing of the site from Stuart Crystal to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council on a 99 year agreement.

Duxford Civil Airliners, Restoration and Preservation (Grant Award: £314,500)

The Duxford Aviation Society's collection of aircraft is the most comprehensive in the country. Together, the aircraft kept at Duxford Airfield reflect the story of British civil aircraft production and related technical developments, and illustrate the development of fast affordable air travel and its effects on society. Over a period of five years, the project aimed to restore five civil airliners to a fully preserved standard to ensure their permanent survival. These were a Handley Page Hermes, an Avro York, an Airspeed Ambassador (known as the 'Elizabethan'), a de Havilland Comet 4, and Concorde. These aircraft are all listed on the British Aircraft Preservation Council National Heritage Register. Of the five, two (the Hermes and the Elizabethan) are unique survivals.

Purchase and repair of Wigston Framework Knitters Museum (Grant Award: £182,500)

The Framework Knitters Cottage and Workshop is a Grade II* listed building in a conservation area in Wigston, Leicestershire. It is a registered museum, providing a unique example of domestic architecture with an original collection of furniture and a preserved framework knitters' workshop, with original fixtures, fittings and knitting frames in situ. The cottage and workshop were constructed in 1695 and were in use until 1952, when the workshop was locked and left with its contents - eight hand frames, needle moulds and tools - intact and in situ. While knitting frames can be found in a number of East Midland's museums, and workshops have been preserved elsewhere, there are few examples of preserved domestic-scale sites. The exceptional interest of Wigston was that indigenous equipment, furnishings and other chattels had been retained on site, representing a unique survival in the East Midlands. The project concentrated on the repair of the fabric of the buildings, the construction of a small visitor centre, and improved interpretation.

Ingram Street Tea Rooms Restoration (Grant Award: £171,200)

Thirteen interiors were designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Miss Catherine Cranston at her tearooms at 205-17 Ingram Street in Glasgow City Centre between 1900 and 1912. The tearooms were in use from 1886 to 1950, first being run by Miss Cranston and subsequently from 1930 by Coopers & Co. Glasgow Corporation bought the hotel building in 1950 and the rooms were used initially for storage and then as part of a souvenir shop. The rooms were dismantled in 1971, when the building was demolished and the site redeveloped for hotel use. The salvaged material was put into storage. The material from Ingram Street represents the only surviving examples of Mackintosh's tea room interiors. They tell a fascinating story about his changing ideas on interior design over a pivotal twelve year period in his career. They are also an important part of Glasgow's social history. Six of the Ingram Street tearoom interiors were the focus of this project, which sought to clean, stabilise, repair and restore them and to reconstruct them for public display.

Extension of Woodland & Grassland Habitats at Gamlingay Wood, Waresley & Gransden Woods SSSI (Grant Award: £166,000)

The project was intimately linked to an earlier fast tracked application to HLF, which had enabled the purchase by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough of 30 hectares of land adjoining Gamlingay and Waresley and Gransden Woods. Gamlingay and Waresley and Gransden Woods are SSSI sites, containing locally and internationally important species. The project was intended to allow woodland and grassland to re-establish themselves naturally on the previously purchased arable land in order to link, with wildlife friendly habitats, these SSSI ancient semi-natural woodland nature reserves. This would create a continuous area of forest in Cambridgeshire and allow cross-pollination of species, making a significant contribution to local biodiversity.

Saving the Nantwich Salt 'Ship' (Grant Award: £104,000)

The Nantwich salt 'ship' is a unique survivor of the town's salt heritage and was revealed in archaeological excavations in 2003 undertaken in advance of residential development of land in the town. Made in the medieval period, the salt ship is actually a hollowed and squared tree trunk, some eight metres long, in which local brine would have been stored for boiling and evaporating into salt. The intended objectives of the project were to excavate and conserve the medieval salt ship and to display it to the public in Nantwich Museum. This would add to the understanding of medieval salt making and enhance Nantwich Museum's educational potential.

3 Evaluating the case studies

3.1 Conservation outcomes overall

Conservation outcomes emanating from the projects were varied and wide ranging in their nature. In addition to the more obvious physical improvement of an asset (be it a park or garden, a landscape, historic technology, archives, a museum and its collection, or a historic building), outcomes also included *inter alia* training initiatives, educational benefits, and habitat enhancement.

The evaluation of the twenty case study projects concluded that, recognising this breadth of potential benefits, the conservation outcomes delivered with the help of HLF investment could be ranked (with some subjectivity) as:

Highly satisfactory – 3 projects (15%) (37.5% in last year's sample)

Satisfactory – 14 projects (70%) (37.5% last year)

Moderately unsatisfactory – 2 projects (10%) (12.5% last year)

Unsatisfactory – 1 project (5%) (12.5% last year)

Separated between HLF strategic plans, this ranking breaks down as follows:

Strategic plan	SP0 (7)	SP1 (9)	SP2 (4)
Conservation outcome			
Highly satisfactory (3)	1	1	1
Satisfactory (14)	4	8	2
Moderately unsatisfactory (2)	1	0	1
Unsatisfactory (1)	1	0	0

It is difficult to establish from these findings whether changed procedures between SP1 and SP2 had a beneficial effect, although it is believed this is the case. The appearance of one *moderately unsatisfactory* outcome from just 4 projects in the sample commenced under SP2 is disappointing.

Although the foregoing cannot be taken as a statistically significant result, from the sample, 85% of the projects can be considered overall to have had a genuinely positive benefit

(delivering at least satisfactory conservation outcomes), whilst 15% had not proven to be a good investment due to their failure to generate satisfactory conservation outcomes.

Two of the three projects that overall failed to deliver satisfactory conservation outcomes involved Museums' services run by local authorities, but this is not regarded as being significant, for the root causes of the shortcomings were markedly different. The third project also involved a local authority. One of these projects was blighted by seriously inadequate early planning and a failure to set realistic and affordable goals; another was fast tracked and suffered from inadequate consideration of issues and risks as a result; the effectiveness of the third has been compromised by the grantee's inability to stimulate linked regeneration of the wider area, which had been a key objective of investment in the project.

The number of projects that delivered at least satisfactory conservation outcomes is encouraging, although it is disappointing that this year's sample yielded considerably less highly satisfactory outcomes than last year's. Of the three projects with highly satisfactory outcomes, two involved local authorities and one a statutory authority. Success in these cases can undoubtedly be linked amongst other things to:

- institutional capacity;
- a balanced and appropriately skilled project team;
- coherent and logical project planning (including the establishment of priorities and realistic objectives) based on a wide understanding of the significance and vulnerability of the asset;
- proactive project management;
- strong interaction, co-operation and communication throughout the team over the life of the project.

3.2 Improving the condition of the heritage asset

In eighteen of the twenty case studies (90%), it was possible to say that the condition of the grant aided asset had undoubtedly been improved by the project works. In the remaining two, some improvements in condition had certainly been achieved, but aspects of these projects had led to worrying damage or continued vulnerability to deterioration.

In the best instances, the improvement in condition was of high quality and likely to be sustained for many years. To give but two examples, at Gamlingay, Waresley & Gransden Woods, the grantee had in a short time been extremely successful in transforming the condition of the heritage asset, although the full benefits of the project would not be delivered for many more years as the project involved long term natural reversion of formerly arable land to a wooded state. Yet, it is estimated that 10,000 seedling/sapling trees have germinated naturally since the project commenced and a number of woodland plants and birds have become established already along the very edge of the land. In the Broughton House museum project in Kirkcudbright, the National Trust for Scotland has ensured the long term preservation of the eclectic collections of the artist, E A Hornel with its nationally significant library and art archive and his studio and gallery, by repairing and refurbishing the

building fabric, providing an appropriate environment, stabilising fragile items, and improving access to the collections.

Despite a number of observations and concerns expressed in the following synthesis about aspects of the twenty projects making up this year's sample, it must be borne in mind throughout that HLF's investment of in excess of £54 million in these Heritage Grants has significantly improved their condition and long term sustainability. That contribution should never be undervalued.

3.3 Compliance with relevant standards and best practice

In general terms, the majority of projects produced conservation work varying between reasonable and high quality, and which could be regarded as complying with best practice and relevant standards. However, two projects (10%) fell far short of delivering best practice conservation and another six (30%) were particularly mixed in terms of their output in this respect, with some satisfactory components and some exhibiting marked shortcomings.

One significant problem affected three projects; the same nationally renowned consultant was involved in each case. These projects (one from each of SP0, SP1 and SP2) all experienced disputes and delays in the implementation of major M&E installations, with consequential impacts on other project works. In each instance, it seems that the problems arose from a lack of satisfactory and clear demarcation of responsibilities between the M&E consultant (in theory, the designer) and the M&E subcontractor (the installer). One site manager interviewed during the visit to the project explained that they had suffered from '*A total disconnect between the M&E trade subcontractor and consultant. There was no clear demarcation of responsibility between them. The contractor had a large amount of involvement in designing the installations as [the consultant] only provided a strategic design and performance specification that the installation had to be designed to meet*'. In one instance, the grantee organisation has had to commission extensive and costly alterations to M&E installations once the HLF project had been completed to overcome this legacy, whilst in the other two the problems still continue, affecting building management and use. In one of these two, this has directly compromised delivery of the Approved Purposes of the grant, since the facility has failed to attain the standards of environmental control that are necessarily to receive approval from the overseeing national body. In both cases where these M&E problems continue, it was reported that the consultant has shown little interest in helping to resolve the matter since practical completion of the contract works was achieved and has been increasingly reluctant to respond to letters seeking action. In addition to the inadequate demarcation of responsibilities between the consultant and contractor, it is clear that this iterative problem also involves projects being commenced before design solutions have been properly thought through and developed.

HLF has made a number of important changes to its procedures under SP3, but it is not thought likely that any of these will directly reduce the risk of this problem occurring again. This must be a matter of raising awareness of the potential risk amongst HLF's officers, expert advisors and project monitors. Appropriate internal guidance needs to be developed with perhaps some form of informal feedback and/or post-project evaluation being put in place to keep the matter under observation. In the end, the ultimate control must remain the threat that grant payments will not be signed off. It is of concern that, for varied reasons, these three projects were eventually all signed off as being complete in terms of delivery of

Approved Purposes whilst still being fundamentally compromised by significant building services defects.

A second shortcoming was evident in three of the six projects where performance against best practice was mixed. In these (again, one from each of SP0, SP1 and SP2), significant snagging items were left unaddressed for two years or more after project completion, degrading the appearance of the project works and/or impacting detrimentally on the functionality of the building or element concerned. In one of these, one building was left shut on completion for many months due to the failure to complete the works adequately during the contract period.

During the course of this study, it has been argued that failure to attend to snagging defects is not directly within HLF's sphere of influence and there is nothing in SP3 procedural changes that will impact upon it. Nonetheless, this problem reflects a weakness of one kind or another in the grantee's post-project management of the asset and is therefore symptomatic of a shortcoming that HLF must view with concern. The best method of curtailing the matter would seem to be strengthening of guidance on what HLF expects from grantees in their management of grant aided heritage assets after completion of their project.

Key recommendation 1: Appropriate internal guidance needs to be developed with some form of informal feedback and/or post-project evaluation being put in place to prevent further problems with the design of major M&E installations on HLF projects. This particularly affects large scale museum and archival projects.

3.4 Maintenance and management of the asset after project completion

In fourteen of the twenty case studies (70%), the heritage asset was found to be well maintained and with some form of appropriate management regime in place to ensure its future care. This evaluation needs to be treated with some caution, however, as in at least two instances insufficient time has elapsed since completion for potential failings in maintenance to be revealed. Whilst management practices at these fourteen sites appeared effective, it is a matter of concern that only five demonstrated unequivocally their daily management regime was based on a cohesive management plan. SP3 changes requiring submission and approval of maintenance and management plans for all project grants over £200,000 should be of considerable benefit, but HLF needs to improve on its assessment and approval procedures. A consistent comment from project staff was that they received little or no feedback of value on plans they had submitted, either as part of their application or in compliance with a special condition of grant. Feedback should always be provided on plans submitted by applicants/grantees. HLF cannot convince grantees that it takes post-project management seriously unless it demonstrates that it examines plans carefully and understands management issues by commenting and requiring amendments where shortcomings are identified. Lack of feedback leaves applicants in a position of uncertainty, even where their management proposals are strong, and it reflects badly on HLF's interest in sustainable management of its investment. This is more than a nicety, in fact as in last year's study, the quality and usefulness of long term management plans retained on HLF's project files is patchy, with few, if any, management plans qualifying as 'best practice'.

This year's sample contained a greater number of local authority grantees than had been the case in previous years. This has highlighted an important though delicate issue, which was detectable and referred to in passing in previous years' case studies as well. Put simply, HLF sometimes faces a cultural problem in dealing with local authorities, and officers and monitors need to keep this in mind at all times. On occasion, it seems that political interests lead some local authorities to take action that is contrary to HLF's procedures and requirements. It is clearly important that commitments made to HLF by any applicant are realistic and not subject to changing political or budgetary circumstance. In the St John at Hackney Churchyard Gardens project, successful delivery was achieved after a long development process, resulting from HLF's concerns over the capability of the applicant to secure conservation outcomes and subsequently to manage the heritage asset effectively. Both the quality of conservation outcomes and their long term sustainability through good management practice have benefited from HLF's persistence and focus on these risks throughout the life of the project. This is a valuable demonstration of what can be achieved in such circumstances.

As many as two thirds of the twelve local authority-led projects in the sample illustrated in one way or another that Councils can find it extremely hard to make long term commitments to maintenance and sustainable heritage management, since they feel that this is likely to compromise their future capability to improve or maintain other assets under their control. At times, such commitments simply become forgotten in subsequent annual budgetary rounds and maintenance management. This needs to be recognised when applications and their supporting documentation are assessed. Part of the problem may also be ascribed to an imbalance between reactive and planned maintenance expenditure and activities in some authorities. None of the recent SP3 procedural changes are likely to impact significantly upon this situation, since it is doubtful that sufficient detail will be provided in the newly instituted 1, 5 and 10 year post-completion reports from grantees to expose gradual shifting of management attention and funding away from care of the grant aided asset without conducting site visits and interviews with managers. In making their assessments of these feedback reports, HLF officers will need to recognise the political risks that may sometimes be inherent with grantees, whatever the nature of the management organisation.

HLF has acknowledged with its SP3 changes that there is a need to achieve better oversight and control of post-project management planning and expenditure to protect long term sustainability of the benefits of its investment. Guidance to applicants might beneficially be reviewed to ensure that it gives a thorough explanation to applicants of what HLF requires in terms of the sustainability of conservation outcomes from post-project site/asset management by the grantee. At present, most site managers interviewed seem hazy about HLF's objectives in this respect.

There is an increasing emphasis on long term benefits embedded in HLF's SP3. This is to be applauded, but efforts must be taken to ensure that appropriate evaluation is conducted of the delivery of these long term outcomes. This was highly relevant to one case study in particular, where HLF's investment will only deliver mature changes to a landscape and habitats over 15 years or more. Whilst the project – physically completed less than 2 years ago – appears today to be successful, its long term conservation outcomes and their sustainability are entirely unknown. There are risks in funding projects with outcomes that will only be delivered in the very long term. It is recognised that there is a balance to be struck between the level of grants and their associated administration costs, but it is important that HLF finds ways to assure itself about the effectiveness of delivery of long term

conservation outcomes, where these predominate. Clearly, the effectiveness and accuracy of formal feedback from grantees is key, but other mechanisms for monitoring performance, including the "mystery shopper" initiative, might be targeted in part at re-examining outcomes well after completion, so that relevant lessons are learnt.

Finally, the lessons on risks posed to the sustainability of outcomes need to be considered from one admittedly unusual and otherwise very successful HLF project investment. In this case, HLF took the rare step of dividing its grant between project works and an endowment fund, which was intended to safeguard the long term stability of the grantee as a management organisation. The project has delivered very successful conservation outcomes, but the critical investment in the endowment fund appears to have been of very limited benefit, potentially undermining the sustainability of the outcomes. This may appear to be of restricted value as a finding from a study on conservation outcomes of Heritage Grants, but it has a wider relevance. As will be seen later, there are concerns over the performance of a number of case studies in terms of visitor numbers and this impacts directly in almost all heritage management organisations on the availability of funds for post-project maintenance and other essential management tasks. The issue of 'over inflated' visitor number projections has been raised in other outcome research. It is useful to re-iterate that the context established for post-project management activity matters critically; HLF needs to ensure that its SP3-based assessment of applications takes this into consideration fully.

Key recommendation 2: HLF needs to improve on its assessment and approval procedures for maintenance and management plans submitted by grantees. Feedback should always be provided as grantees will not be convinced that HLF takes post-project management seriously unless it demonstrates that it examines plans carefully and understands management issues by commenting and requiring amendments where shortcomings are identified. Lack of feedback leaves applicants in a position of uncertainty, even where their management proposals are strong. Guidance to applicants should also be reviewed to ensure that it gives a thorough explanation to applicants of what HLF requires in terms of the sustainability of conservation outcomes from post-project site/asset management by the grantee.

Key recommendation 3: HLF must ensure that, in every case, commitments made by local authority applicants, including in respect to post-project management and maintenance, are realistic and not subject to changing political circumstance.

3.5 Making our heritage more accessible

Many HLF projects are built around the desire to make particular heritage assets more accessible, whether by repairing and bringing into reuse a historic building, by providing better access to collections, or, as in the case of the Duxford Civil Airliners project, restoring and providing public access to five nationally important historic British aircraft.

Elsewhere from this year's sample, the Sandwell Community Lifeline Canal Project made dramatic improvements to public access to the Borough's network of canals, many sections of which previously were considered 'no go' areas for safety reasons, and created an accessible canal path linking Birmingham city centre and Wolverhampton. The Rhythms of the Tide project at Chichester Harbour conserved and enhanced habitats, landscape and the cultural heritage of the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with

enormous success and, in so doing, provided access for those of all abilities to enjoy the area. Amongst other initiatives, it created an additional three kilometres of wheelchair paths and funded two all terrain wheelchairs, established a 16 kilometre long cycle and wheelchair path, linking Chichester and the coast at West Wittering, built a new pontoon, and purchased a solar powered boat, the Solar Heritage, to provide educational trips around the Harbour, with easy access arrangements for less able passengers. Many projects dealing with large geographical areas end up delivering somewhat limited conservation outcomes, with the investment being spread too thinly to maximise benefits. These two case studies, being focused heavily on improving accessibility, are excellent reminders that this does not always have to be the case. When vision and strong management are combined successfully with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, area wide projects can develop a critical mass of their own, leading to increased confidence, ownership and new ideas. This is an important positive lesson.

However, in at least six of the twenty projects (30%), predicted increases in visitor numbers or usage at heritage venues, museums or archives failed to materialise on project completion. In two of these instances, HLF did not commission expert advice to examine this aspect of the applications. In the others, it did, with the advisor either failing to foresee the risk of underperformance or correctly raising concerns that were in the event not felt by HLF to be of pivotal importance to the success of its investment. This issue needs to be considered more fully. HLF should always ensure that predictions on visitor numbers are evaluated very carefully, as in many cases, underperformance puts long term sustainability of HLF's investment and the project's conservation outcomes at risk. This is especially true when annual visits to a paid attraction are so low that its viability must be considered at best to be marginal, with or without the benefits the project would bring. This was the position at one museum in the sample, where a local charitable trust was the grantee.

Accessibility is not just about increased visitor numbers - learning and interpretation are integral to making our heritage more accessible. HLF's SP3 changes will allow its officers to take a proportionate view on learning through the development at Second Round of activity plans. The sample of case studies highlighted that, in the past, a large number of applicants have not considered learning and improved interpretation to be a significant priority for their project. Generally, HLF officers appear to have been vigilant and aware of this shortcoming, allowing them to request improvements to be made in the project proposals. However, substandard interpretation was found to have reduced the benefits accruing from investment in five of the twenty projects (25%); in one, wholesale replacement of interpretative material provided as part of the HLF project was taking place at the time the site visit was undertaken. In another case, HLF's failure to detect and address the shortcomings in interpretation proposals appeared to arise because expert advice was not updated once the original scheme had been revised due to changing circumstances. This emphasises the need to ensure that expert advice is always reviewed once substantive change has occurred in an application.

It is considered that HLF guidance to applicants might beneficially be strengthened, making the point that, in practice, there should nearly always be a presumption that enhanced interpretation is required, for otherwise the improved understanding of the heritage asset derived from investment in the project is unlikely to be passed on to the visitor.

A disproportionately high number of the case studies (40%) placed little or no focus on making the most of learning and heritage training opportunities that the project might present.

In a number more, the extent of learning benefit derived from the project was restricted. This probably reflects the absolute concentration of most applicants on delivering physical improvements to their heritage asset, but means that a potentially significant outcome of investment is being under-utilised. It is expected that SP3 changes will improve this situation, but applicants will need to be persuaded of the advantages to be gained from pre-planning learning outcomes.

Key recommendation 4: Predictions on visitor numbers should always be evaluated very carefully as underperformance could put long term sustainability of HLF's investment and the project's conservation outcomes at risk.

3.6 Effective identification of conservation management issues and risks

As with both previous years' studies of conservation outcomes, evaluation of the twenty projects highlighted that eventual success (or failure) to deliver sustainable conservation outcomes was fundamentally influenced by the degree to which the heritage assets had been fully understood and the extent to which that understanding had permeated the project planning and design processes. There are a number of ways that a thorough understanding of a heritage asset might be attained. For larger and more complex projects involving built or natural heritage assets, the preparation of a conservation management plan or statement is increasingly regarded as being an essential step in the process. Depending upon the type of asset, the project team's understanding might also beneficially have involved studies such as condition surveys, biological surveys, heritage or environmental impact assessments, and landscape evaluations.

Conservation management plans were first required by HLF for some projects as part of the April 1998 grant application pack. At the time, the format of a conservation management plan was defined for applicants and required for some projects (at the determination of HLF) with a value in excess of £500,000 or in exceptional circumstances for smaller projects where the particular nature of the proposal would make it beneficial to HLF's assessment. This requirement remained in force until the April 2003 application pack changed the rules at which time it was stated that *'If you plan to use all or part of your grant for building conservation or other work, you must support your application with a conservation statement. If your project involves semi-natural habitats, designed landscapes or historic parks or gardens, or if you are applying for a grant of £1m or over, you will also need a conservation management plan'*.

Under these changing criteria, conservation management plans were required in support of applications in nine of the twenty case studies (45%). As far as can be ascertained from available documentation on the HLF's project files, full conservation management plans - covering the entirety of the heritage assets concerned - were only prepared in five of these nine cases. In one of the other four projects, the project monitor successfully persuaded HLF to downgrade its requirement as a special condition of the grant award from a conservation management plan to a reduced (and, in this case, very sketchy) conservation statement.

Again, as with last year's sample, the quality of the conservation management plans seen on project files was disappointing. None could be considered to represent best practice and, as ongoing management tools, most were flawed. HLF feedback to applicants on the content of

conservation management plans was in all cases inadequate and often, as some project staff commented, entirely absent. Despite HLF's excellent guidance on conservation management plans, there remains much uncertainty, even amongst experts, as to what constitutes a good plan. This is often because too little thought is given to what is required for management purposes. In one case in the sample, expert advice provided to HLF on a conservation management plan extolled its virtues, yet it failed to meet with current HLF guidance on the subject and was found by post-project site staff to be so inadequate that they commissioned a new more detailed plan for site management purposes. In such circumstances, it is inevitable that conservation management issues are not being identified effectively during project planning and development. HLF has recently published revised and improved guidance on conservation management plans which should have a beneficial impact, but these gains will only be secured once HLF and its advisors play their own part fully by making thorough assessments on the quality of content of submitted plans and their adequacy as management tools, and by providing detailed feedback to applicants on this basis. It is crucial that expert advisors commissioned to comment on conservation matters have extensive experience of conservation plan preparation and also understand the issues pertaining to both strategic and day to day management of heritage assets of the kind involved in the particular project.

In eleven of the twenty projects (55%), one or more serious failings were found in the identification of key conservation management issues confronting the project, leading to delays and/or cost increases during implementation or to comprise/reduction in scope of intended conservation outcomes. This mirrors closely last year's finding that, whilst in many instances, project design was undertaken well, resulting in good (and occasionally, excellent) conservation, 'seemingly unnecessary planning and design oversights' led to delays and/or cost increases during implementation affecting 56% of that sample.

In this year's case studies, part of the problem arose from ill-definition of objectives, with project teams 'feeling their way' towards project goals and content in a very unsatisfactory way. However, almost an equal number of projects arrived at HLF having been developed to an advanced level of detail. This enabled applicants to behave robustly, often delivering sound conservation outcomes, but limiting the opportunity for active peer review and improvement. SP3 changes to the application and assessment process should have a significant impact on this latter problem. The sample gives some confidence that the setting of conservation objectives has already been significantly improved from the standard achieved in the early years under SP0 arrangements. However, there are still lessons to be learnt. In one fast tracked application dating from 2003, an HLF officer expressed concern to colleagues about the depth of consideration of important issues that could be achieved in the available timescale before a decision had to be made on the grant award. He was subsequently proven right when it was found that crucial logistical matters had not been taken into account, leading to some permanent damage to the heritage asset and to compromise both in the Approved Purposes of the grant and in the level of interpretation that was afforded for the public.

It has already been noted that failings in M&E design and procurement have affected three projects in this year's sample badly. This occurred despite the presence of a highly experienced consultant M&E engineer in each case on the project team. Across the sample, project teams varied from being well- to seriously imbalanced in terms of necessary competences. In one unfortunate case – an early application and grant award – the project was developed to a large and unsafe extent by a single craftsman with little experience of

major project work and cost estimation. When it came to implementation, the growing internal project team lacked anyone with project management skills. The end result was a project that, having confused and ill-defined objectives and being severely under-resourced in every sense, was undeliverable in its intended form. This has placed the long term future of the heritage asset in considerable doubt.

Last year's final report, as with the first year's study, underlined that the optimum project outcomes nearly always occur when a highly experienced project manager/contract administrator is involved throughout; the corollary being equally true that projects with a less experienced individual in this role are frequently exposed to poor delivery, delay and cost overruns. Once again, it must be stressed that, for HLF's purposes, successful outcomes to its investment are highly dependent upon the experience and skill of the grantee's project manager/contract administrator. The importance of this point is highlighted by several projects delivering sound conservation outcomes this year, including St John at Hackney Churchyard Gardens, where focused project development and management was provided by a strong external project manager acting on behalf of the local authority grantee, and Rhythms of the Tide at Chichester Harbour, where a competent and professionally managed organisation developed an exciting and successful project on behalf of a consortium on the back of careful planning, conservation management risk assessment, and wide ranging stakeholder engagement and consultation. Interestingly, on both projects, the HLF grant award required creation of dedicated project officer posts that paid dividends in terms of co-ordination and ongoing management. This is a positive lesson.

In last year's study, it was found that, in a surprising and worrying number of projects, grantees had omitted to obtain all necessary statutory consents before commencing work. In this year's sample, the percentage of projects where this could be seen to have occurred was lower (although the majority of project files regrettably retained no mention at all of statutory consents), with two projects (10%) being identified with certainty where the grant award was made before all necessary approvals had been obtained. In one, the failure to consider whether planning permission would be granted for a controversial element of the proposals before the award was made has resulted in significant compromise to public accessibility to one part of the historic building. It would be beneficial to highlight to project monitors the need to be vigilant in ensuring all necessary consents have been obtained before recommending HLF gives its approval for site work to commence.

In one further parallel with last year's evaluation, it was again surprising to find that only one of the project files for the twenty case studies referred to the commissioning, preparation or submission of detailed heritage or environmental impact assessments. As was noted last year, the mapping and mitigation of possibly damaging impacts arising from project proposals is an important step in the effective identification of conservation management issues and risk and in planning sustainable conservation schemes. It is critical that HLF should promote the use of impact assessments. Arguably, SP3 procedural and guidance changes have not addressed this fully. The guidance document 'Thinking About Conservation' only recommends that applicants should ask their professional advisor to prepare a heritage impact assessment if they intend to do any new capital work at the heritage site. Quite erroneously, this will suggest to most non-specialist applicants that repairs and conservation work do not risk causing damage to heritage assets. Moreover, the manner in which the guidance is set out - coming immediately after a paragraph on creating a new building on a heritage site - may give the impression that improvements are similarly risk free and that impact assessments have no value when dealing with anything other than

the built heritage. This is not what HLF intends, but it is felt that, as it stands, the guidance may be misunderstood. This should be corrected at the first opportunity and, at the same time, the advice on the applicability of heritage impact assessments should be strengthened.

Key recommendation 5: Further improvements are required in conservation management planning guidance to encourage effective identification of conservation risks. HLF must always provide feedback on the quality and content of submitted conservation management plans. Heritage impact assessments should be required for all major projects.

3.7 Successful identification of issues and reduction of risks through HLF's conservation advice and assessment

This section looks at various issues pertaining to HLF's side of the application process up to and including the making of grant awards on the projects and the issue of grant contracts.

Changing procedures

The earliest grant applications amongst our twenty case study projects were submitted to HLF in June 1995. The first HLF Strategic Plan (SP1) was not laid before Parliament until May 1999; the second (SP2) in May 2002. SP3 was adopted in 2008. As has been noted in Section 2.3 of this report, the case studies integrated with the HLF's strategic plan timeline as follows:

SP0 (pre-May 1999) – 7 projects (35%)

SP1 (1999-2002) – 9 projects (45%)

SP2 (2002-2008) – 4 projects (20%)

Between 1995 and 2007 (the year in which all twenty projects were formally completed), the HLF also adapted its application procedures and requirements on a number of occasions. New application packs were launched, interfacing with grant applications for the projects, as follows:

1994/95 Application Pack – 3 projects

April 1997 Application Pack – 1 project

April 1998 Application Pack – 10 projects

April 2003 Application Pack – 2 projects

A summary of the key requirements of each application pack is provided at Annex II.

As was noted in last year's report, once a grant contract has been signed by the HLF and the applicant/grantee, both parties are bound legally by its terms. In reality, once HLF's written grant offer has been formally accepted by the applicant, HLF cannot amend its requirements and objectives for a project, irrespective of any fundamental organisational refocusing that it undergoes as a result of adoption of a new strategic plan. In view of the long duration of

projects, this can be potentially confusing for HLF grant officers and project monitors, who may be involved in several projects which, legally, must be administered to differing criteria to reflect the pertinent strategic plan that was in force at the time of grant award. In practical terms, this can sometimes be hard to manage. Staff members change – as previously noted, some projects will have been administered by three case officers. New officers join the organisation and will have little ownership of or experience of working to superseded earlier strategic objectives. As last year, generally, HLF staff seem to deal with this complicated issue remarkably well. However, from this year's sample, four grantees said they felt over the life of their project that HLF's objectives and approach to issues had changed perceptibly – 'like trying to stand on shifting sands' was how one interviewee described it. Although it is difficult to substantiate such claims from the relevant project files, HLF needs to be sure that it is maintaining a consistent approach at all times on individual long running projects when new strategic plans come into force and every time personnel changes occur. No documentation was found on project files to indicate that this matter has been grasped in a coherent and failsafe way. No changes put in place under SP3 address this issue satisfactorily.

Expert advice

Both previous years' evaluation of conservation outcomes of Heritage Grants revealed there was a very noticeable skill gap in the fit between project content and the apparent professional background/competence of the expert advisor(s) appointed by HLF, potentially leaving it exposed in certain key aspects. Related to this, last year it was found that, where more than one expert advisor had been employed, the advice received by HLF often overlapped, providing officers overall with a block of somewhat repetitious coverage, limited uniquely-focused 'nuggets' of expert advice from each individual and, by implication, voids where important specialist issues were left unexamined. This year's study has highlighted more strongly these voids and some shortcomings in the advice provided by expert advisors.

In this year's sample, HLF employed one or more expert advisors on each of the twenty projects. It is of concern that significant flaws, shortcomings or miscalculations were evident in the advice provided to HLF on nine of these projects (45%). These failings in advice covered a diverse range of topic areas, including serious inadequacies in estimated construction costs, simple logistics (such as the impossibility of transporting a large archaeological/museum artefact and relocating it in one piece in its intended new home), weaknesses in a project's design development leading to over optimistic expectations about its capacity to delivery conservation outcomes on time and to budget, poor conservation strategies and conservation management plans, significant shortcomings in a business plan and, on several occasions, inappropriate estimates of future visitor numbers which impacted detrimentally upon vital income.

In five of the projects (25%), HLF's selection of expert advisor(s) left key areas of risk unaddressed. Again, the range of issues involved was wide, but included conservation of built heritage, predictions on increased visitor numbers, interpretation (where this was a critical failing of the asset pre-project), and in the specialist field of M&E environmental controls (when this was a fundamental component of the Approved Purposes of the grant and the largest single cost element in the project budget).

HLF has recently made changes to its arrangement for appointing expert advisors and has created a new system of mentoring. There will now be more emphasis on influencing the

development of projects by providing a mentoring service during the development stage between application rounds one and two. This is intended to help applicants develop their projects appropriately rather than simply undertaking a critique of their proposals at the submission stage. Expert advisors will usually only be appointed to inform Second Round decision making with customised advice that is appropriate and proportionate to the specific circumstances of the project. The logic behind these changes, which have been put in place as part of the solution to shortcomings in past expert advice, is sound, although success will depend upon grant officers appreciating the specific risks that are implied by every project. The sample demonstrates the importance to HLF of targeted expert advice. When advisors mis-advise, the ramifications for HLF's investment can be significant. On one project in this year's sample, one expert advisor was from a highly respected project management organisation with its own in house cost consultancy expertise, whilst another was an economic and financial analyst. However, neither one identified major shortcomings in the application's cost estimates, which proved so deficient that the project had to be suspended part way through implementation (although they did raise many concerns about other aspects of the project's development). In the end, HLF increased its grant on this project by more than 45% and it was completed more than two years late.

One final concern needs to be raised regarding the selection of expert advisors, which arose in one particular project amongst the sample. This involved an application made by one organisation on behalf of a consortium. HLF appointed an expert advisor who was a staff member of one of the consortium partners. In the event, the advice given was sound and appeared scrupulously fair. It is acknowledged that practices for commissioning expert advice have changed considerably since HLF's early days and procedures are now much more transparent. However, HLF should always ensure that the expert advice it receives is incontestably impartial.

In summary, the outcome of changes to commissioning arrangements for expert advisors needs to be monitored to ensure they rectify the shortcomings in the quality and coverage of advice that has been evident in a significant percentage of this sample of projects. HLF should also ensure that sufficient guidance is given to grant officers to ensure that appointed expert advisors are always indisputably independent of the application and its proposals. This mirrors the findings of last year's study where it was found on one project that the same English Heritage officer acted as the HLF's expert advisor, as an informal project champion, and had a close interest in the outcome of the project for Buildings At Risk reasons, creating a significant potential conflict of interest between the objectives and responsibilities of each role.

Assessment of applications and recommendations to Trustees and Regional Committees

The case studies indicate that, in making assessments of applications, HLF can sometimes be exposed to differing risks according to applicant types.

It has already been noted that, due to the political nature of local authorities, they may occasionally exhibit a tendency to develop projects in ways that are contrary to HLF's procedures, requirements and interests. They can also be circumspect about making long term management commitments, and, where this occurs, the long term sustainability of HLF's investment can become vulnerable. In one case study, the Council grantee clearly regarded the HLF project as a little more than a stepping stone to tackling other more

pressing objectives in the immediate locality of the heritage asset that were not necessarily entirely compatible with the sustainability of the conservation outcomes in which HLF was making its investment. However, as has already been seen, one project from this year's sample demonstrated well that, by focusing with persistence on such risks, HLF can overcome the problem, ensuring that sustainable conservation outcomes are achieved from local authority-led projects.

In the past, HLF has also occasionally entertained risk of a very different kind when dealing with seasoned professional heritage management organisations as applicants. This was observed in last year's sample, where national heritage organisations could be seen to be putting a 'spin' on their project's intended conservation objectives which was designed to draw HLF into wanting to invest. This year's sample, backed by discussion with some grant officers and Regional Managers, has reinforced the impression that, in its earlier years, HLF was at times perhaps overly deferential in challenging project content, objectives, statements and intent when such organisations are involved as applicants. This is hardly surprising, in that case officers are under considerable continual pressure from their volume of work and they have to prioritise and target their inputs. It is also reasonable to expect that larger national organisations have the appropriate skills and competencies. However, it can be an issue and HLF officers need to be aware of the inherent risks in this approach. Two projects amongst the case studies illustrated this. In one, the organisation's project manager stated openly that it had been '*left to its own devices*' in developing the scheme. The lack of questioning and challenge seems in this instance to have resulted in poor and inadequate interpretation being delivered as a project outcome. In the other case - a project whose primary objective was to ensure the long term care and security of a collection - the files suggest that no consideration was given by either of two expert advisors, HLF staff or the Regional Committee to the importance of requiring cataloguing of the collection as an integral part of the project. In hindsight, it is difficult to see how it was hoped that the collection could be properly secured and cared for, if - as is still the case - its contents were not fully appreciated.

Analysis of this year's sample has repeated findings from previous years that, in writing recommendation papers on the approval (or otherwise) of grants, grant officers generally summarise the key issues from expert advisors' reports accurately and with balance. These papers - prepared for Committee and Trustee meetings where decisions on grants are to be made - follow a long established format. They are usually written in a way that sets out exhaustively the potential conservation, access and additional public benefits that it is hoped investment in a project will help to secure. Generally, no prioritisation in these desired outcomes can be detected - benefits and outcomes are in effect 'bundled up' together. On occasions, this results in a lack of clarity about the driving purpose behind HLF's investment in the project. In one project this year, this was of some import to the evaluation of conservation outcomes and the success of the investment. Nowhere in HLF's record of its assessment and decision making processes was it apparent whether, by making an investment in grant, it was seeking to secure local conservation outcomes, wider (regional) educational outcomes, or both. Yet markedly different design and interpretation decisions would have been required to extract these divergent benefits. In such circumstances, unless HLF informs the grantee of the driving interest behind its investment, the conservation outcomes are left exposed to chance. SP3 procedural changes will not affect this situation. It is recommended that grant officers are asked to set out clearly in their reports the intended prioritisation that is attributed to anticipated outcomes. This will provide a record for

subsequent evaluation of the outcomes of its investment in the project. Grantees should also be made aware of HLF's priorities, where relevant.

Decisions on grant awards

In the great majority of cases, HLF took heed of its expert advisors' counsel, but quite appropriately on occasions Trustees or Regional Committees reach decisions on grant awards that are contrary to the advice that has been given. In two case study projects, Trustees decided to award grants despite considerable concerns which had been expressed by expert advisors and, in one case, representations made by academics and high profile heritage practitioners over a contentious component of the proposals. Whilst such decisions are never taken lightly and often prove sound, in both instances, the projects ran into severe difficulties as a direct result. In one, not insubstantial damage has been caused to the asset's sense of place, whilst the long term future of the other remains in doubt. Trustees and Committee members need to appreciate that sometimes this does occur as a result of their decisions. When Trustees' and Committees decide to intervene to steer or change an application in this way in the face of strong concerns being expressed in expert advice, appropriate records should always be made and archived to substantiate the reasons for that decision. This was not the case with these two projects.

It has been reiterated above that the sample indicates that there is a continuing problem in a small percentage of projects with grant awards being made and even contract works being commenced before all requisite statutory consents have been received. In one of the case studies, the grantee's project manager commented upon the high level of trust shown by HLF in accepting verbal assurances that all consents had been obtained before the HLF application had been submitted, without asking for documentary proof. As he noted, it accepted on trust that the conservation solutions that had been given consent were appropriate for an HLF grant aided project and, indeed, that the consented scheme was the same one for which grant was being sought. This is potentially a dangerous situation for HLF. It is a criminal offence to commence works without appropriate consents being in place. HLF needs to tighten up its procedures to ensure that documentary proof of statutory consents is always obtained and checked. In the project referred to above, where Trustees decided to award a grant despite considerable concerns expressed by expert advisors and representations made by others over a contentious aspect of the proposals, the grant award was made before permission had been granted for the controversial work. It was subsequently refused, as noted leading to significant compromise in this element of the large scheme. This risk would be eliminated if no grant award could be made to a project where one or more consents is outstanding.

In general, the special conditions applied by HLF to grant awards seem appropriate and beneficial in protecting its interests. However, two projects from the sample highlighted the importance of always ensuring that these are framed in ways that allow them to be enforced. In one case, HLF found itself unable to use the leverage it believed it had established in order to ensure that the asset was not placed at risk by wider development plans in the vicinity, and this rendered two of the special conditions of grant largely superfluous. On the other project, as a result of deteriorating relationships, repeated miscommunication and disagreement between the local authority grantee and a crucially important second landowner/stakeholder led to a substantial delay in its administrative completion. In such circumstances, HLF might consider using targeted special conditions to establish a stronger

structure or protocol for overseeing projects which are effectively co-run, as a means to avoid disagreements of this kind.

Key recommendation 6: Internal guidance for staff should be provided to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained at all times to the application of procedures on individual long running projects when new strategic plans and arrangements come into force and every time personnel changes occur.

Key recommendation 7: The outcome of recent changes to commissioning arrangements for expert advisors should be monitored closely. HLF should ensure that sufficient guidance is given to grant officers to enable them to identify the full range of key risks present on each project, so that appropriate expert advisors can be appointed. Expert advisors must always be indisputably independent of the application and its proposals. Shortcomings in the advice provided to HLF on every project should be monitored and action taken to protect HLF's interests, where necessary.

Key recommendation 8: Feedback should be provided to Trustees and Committee members on the impact of their decision making where they have decided to award a grant despite significant concerns being expressed about the application by expert advisors and/or HLF officers. Appropriate records should always be made and archived to substantiate the reasons for such decisions.

Key recommendation 9: Procedures should be put in place to ensure that documentary proof of statutory consents is always obtained and checked. Guidance needs to be provided to officers and monitors to remind them of the wide range of consents that may be required on heritage projects. No grant award should be made to a project where consents are outstanding.

3.8 The impact on outcomes from HLF's monitoring and interventions

This section looks at HLF's monitoring of projects and the interventions that it makes during project implementation and thereafter. It was found last year that, generally, project files retain insufficient documentation on the appointment of project monitors and on each individual's specific terms of reference to enable conclusions to be reached on the selection process itself. The same was true with this year's sample. Project monitoring arrangements have now been changed and the new Register of Support Services should ensure that better choices are made about selection of monitors.

As has been noted in Section 2.1, a project monitor was appointed in fifteen of the twenty case study projects (75%). On the longer running projects, as many as four monitors were employed across the life of the project, throwing up significant differences in approach and value. On several such projects, grantees described the frustration they had felt at this changing level of attention and involvement. Smaller grantee organisations, such as charitable trusts, found it particularly disconcerting, leading one to comment that '*achievement of objectives [in the circumstances] is not for the faint hearted*'. In common with previous findings, the sample indicated strongly that the most effective project monitors were able to bring wide skills to bear, especially keeping a watchful eye on the achievement

of conservation standards and developing conservation outcomes. Early warnings of incipient problems in these areas helped safeguard the HLF's long term investment. On one long running project, managers within the grantees organisation were clear that the best project monitor was one that acted as a 'critical friend' and a 'priest', supporting the grantee's case whilst keeping HLF's case officer informed. They saw 'continuity and expertise' as prerequisites. In their opinion, only one of the four monitors on their project lived up to this standard.

Project monitors possess a mix of skills and, although in each case they are carefully appointed for the particular characteristics they can bring to the project, it is inevitable that individuals will have their strengths and weaknesses. In six of the twenty projects (30%), there were failings in the protection provided by and advice given to HLF by project monitors. This included a failure to question and advise on the unacceptably low number of tenders received for works contracts, lack of comment on inconsistencies in statutory consents, the absence of any follow up on several grantee's compliance with special conditions of grant and subsequent failure to check submitted plans properly, lack of independent reporting (for instance, submission of a project monitor's report that word for word was a copy of a progress report already submitted by the grantee), and failure to identify developing problems with belated detailed design and implementation of M&E service installations on two schemes. On one project, the lead monitor repeatedly asserted that delays in the contract works were 'not fully explicable' - although establishing precisely why delays in the construction process are occurring must surely be one of the principal tasks of monitoring. On two others, when asked to comment upon the performance of the monitor on their project, grantees could say little more than that, in each case, he had been 'notable by his absence'.

One final example needs to be cited, for it illustrates an important point. On this project, HLF appointed an associate monitor, but no lead monitor. Once work had commenced, the files suggest that the project was run by the grantee's conservator and HLF's associate monitor with very little reference back to the principal parties, the grantee and HLF. There are no reports or indeed any correspondence on file from the monitor, keeping HLF up to speed on progress. Reports from the grantee all feel very 'second hand' and lacking in ownership. Although, in the event, this was most probably not detrimental to the project's outcome, it was not a desirable situation. Projects should always have 'hands on' commitment from the grantee and in the absence of appointment of a lead monitor, HLF needs to ensure an appropriate, near real time, flow of information from the project to protect its interests and be certain that the Approved Purposes of the grant will be met.

Of the five projects where HLF decided not to employ a monitor, two suffered some detrimental effects as a result. On one, the project file suggests that the works were commenced long before HLF became aware of the situation – indeed, they had almost been completed by the time the grant contract was formalised and HLF's permission to start was only issued three years after physical completion of the project works. On the other, one promised interpretative element was the creation of a website dedicated to explaining the sustainable benefits of the project to a wider audience. In the absence of a project monitor, this element of the Approved Purpose of the grant was never implemented. Finally, in another project, despite being identified as high risk and irrespective of concerns expressed by expert advisors over the management capability of the applicant, HLF decided not to employ a project monitor until matters had started to go very wrong. By this time, the project had again been commenced without HLF's authorisation and the special conditions of the

grant award had been ignored. A project monitoring contract was briefly put in place, but seems to have been discontinued before the end of the project, leaving HLF exposed when fundamental revisions to the Approved Purposes were being developed and discussed.

The key lesson from the foregoing would appear to be that ensuring the right monitor is appointed on the right project is critical. When the system works, it is extremely valuable to HLF and grantees alike. The case studies indicate that so far the system has not been working often or well enough. The recent SP3 changes will ensure that more advice and support is given to applicants during the project development stage. For this to be effective, project monitors and mentors will need to possess experience, skills and competencies appropriate to the project content. It is considered that the new arrangements for monitor and mentors will be of major benefit, but it is possible that some revision will be required in due course to take account of ongoing problems of the kind reflected in this year's sample.

One of the positive lessons gained from evaluation of the sample has been that, in many difficult cases, the intervention of HLF grant officers and monitors is often pivotal in recovering the situation and eventually in delivering sound conservation objectives. Whilst one unfortunate project went badly and permanently wrong, in others which were genuinely difficult for HLF's officers to handle and where they were under frequent pressure to intervene in sometimes highly political contexts, their interventions made a significant difference to the outcome. This is extremely reassuring.

It is mentioned in passing in Section 2.1 that the 'average' project in this year's sample was physically completed some 2.3 years before it was formally signed off as complete administratively, whilst 30% of the projects had been finished by 2003 or before (thus, at least four years before administrative completion). This is an unacceptable situation. Letters seen on two project files seem to indicate that, in 2006, HLF took action to bring to a close long outstanding projects on its list. It is important that this initiative is continued to ensure that projects are not allowed to drag on without formal completion, whatever the reasons.

Although it cannot be verified from documentation seen on file, it seems possible that the desire to sign off long outstanding projects led to at least two of three instances where projects have reached the point of closure without absolute and proper delivery of all of their Approved Purposes of grant. Of these three, in one instance, failure of the project works to achieve essential environmental conditions meant that the facility did not receive the requisite approval from the relevant national authority, whilst it also failed to deliver a working online catalogue. In a second, to which mention has already been made, an important interpretative website was not produced, whilst, in the third project, even after the Approved Purposes for the grant had been reduced on two occasions, the end product failed to deliver the fundamental public access to the collection that had been agreed. In each case, sign off of the project as complete removed any chance of applying leverage on the grantee to complete the outstanding objective(s).

Key recommendation 10: Projects should always have 'hands on' commitment from the principal parties, including HLF. In the absence of appointment of a lead monitor, HLF needs to ensure that this is provided and that an appropriate, near real time, flow of information from the project to the grant officer is available to protect its interests and be certain that the Approved Purposes of the grant will be met.

Key recommendation 11: HLF must maintain pressure internally and on grantees to reduce and keep the post-practical completion closure period to an acceptable minimum, whilst ensuring that projects are not closed before it can be demonstrated with certainty that every aspect of the Approved Purposes has been delivered.

3.9 Project records

Project records take two forms: those kept and/or created by grantees and made available to disseminate information about the asset and learning from the project experience, and those retained by HLF as its project files.

Interviews with grantees revealed that disappointingly few were making use of the opportunity as an ongoing learning experience. However, where effort had been put into the development and use of post-project archives, some excellent results were being achieved. To cite just two examples, the Rhythms of the Tide project at Chichester Harbour had generated a range of publications, along with an educationally focused website. An accessible project archive had been created and a two day conference had been hosted, focusing on dissemination of project achievements, information and experiences. The local authority grantee on the Glasgow Green project had also produced attractive and informative publications about the Green as a result of the project and its learning experience. It too has maintained thorough archival records of the project and the establishment of a permanent Projects Team in its Land Services department is intended to ensure that such records and experiences are made accessible for future projects.

The benefits of using project experiences for learning are potentially so great that, through conditions of grant, HLF should insist that grantees create widely accessible project archives. However, before doing that, as last year's final report recommended, it needs to significantly improve its own record keeping performance. Inadequate retention of appropriate documentation on archived files affected satisfactory evaluation of almost every project in this year's sample. It is vitally important that a satisfactory trail of information and decision making is retained on HLF files to allow post project evaluation and audit. In cases where retrospective procedural administration on projects has taken place, satisfactory explanations of actions and delays should be placed on file for auditing purposes, whilst as noted previously adequate records need to be retained of instances where Trustees or Committees have taken decisions that are not supported by expert advice that has been received.

It is understood that HLF is in the process of establishing record keeping and archival arrangements of this kind. Until this is implemented, HLF remains open to criticism in ensuring demonstrable probity in all its operations.

Key recommendation 12: The level of documentation retained on HLF's archived project files should be improved without delay to ensure that a sound information trail and project record are maintained in all cases. Definition of an appropriate policy, a guidance note to officers, and archival procedures are fundamental requirements to this end. Once this improvement is effected, HLF should seek to tackle the continuing poor quality of grantees' project archives by using special conditions of grant to secure project records/archives and to encourage positive dissemination by grantees of the results of projects as learning experience.

4 Twelve key recommendations

The following key recommendations are made in this report:

1: Appropriate internal guidance needs to be developed with some form of informal feedback and/or post-project evaluation being put in place to prevent further problems with the design of major M&E installations on HLF projects. This particularly affects large scale museum and archival projects.

2: HLF needs to improve on its assessment and approval procedures for maintenance and management plans submitted by grantees. Feedback should always be provided as grantees will not be convinced that HLF takes post-project management seriously unless it demonstrates that it examines plans carefully and understands management issues by commenting and requiring amendments where shortcomings are identified. Lack of feedback leaves applicants in a position of uncertainty, even where their management proposals are strong. Guidance to applicants should also be reviewed to ensure that it gives a thorough explanation to applicants of what HLF requires in terms of the sustainability of conservation outcomes from post-project site/asset management by the grantee.

3: HLF must ensure that, in every case, commitments made by local authority applicants, including in respect to post-project management and maintenance, are realistic and not subject to changing political circumstance.

4: Predictions on visitor numbers should always be evaluated very carefully, as in many cases, underperformance puts long term sustainability of HLF's investment and the project's conservation outcomes at risk.

5: Further improvements are required in conservation management planning guidance to encourage effective identification of conservation risks. HLF must always provide feedback on the quality and content of submitted conservation management plans. Heritage impact assessments should be required for all major projects.

6: Internal guidance for staff should be provided to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained at all times to the application of procedures on individual long running projects when new strategic plans and arrangements come into force and every time personnel changes occur.

7: The outcome of recent changes to commissioning arrangements for expert advisors should be monitored closely. HLF should ensure that sufficient guidance is given to grant officers to enable them to identify the full range of key risks present on each project, so that appropriate expert advisors can be appointed. Expert advisors must always be indisputably independent of the application and its proposals. Shortcomings in the advice provided to HLF on every project should be monitored and action taken to protect HLF's interests, where necessary.

8: Feedback should be provided to Trustees and Committee members on the impact of their decision making where they have decided to award a grant despite significant concerns being expressed about the application by expert advisors and/or HLF

officers. Appropriate records should always be made and archived to substantiate the reasons for such decisions.

9: Procedures should be put in place to ensure that documentary proof of statutory consents is always obtained and checked. Guidance needs to be provided to officers and monitors to remind them of the wide range of consents that may be required on heritage projects. No grant award should be made to a project where consents are outstanding.

10: Projects should always have 'hands on' commitment from the principal parties, including HLF. In the absence of appointment of a lead monitor, HLF needs to ensure that this is provided and that an appropriate, near real time, flow of information from the project to the grant officer is available to protect its interests and be certain that the Approved Purposes of the grant will be met.

11: HLF must maintain pressure internally and on grantees to reduce and keep the post-practical completion closure period to an acceptable minimum, whilst ensuring that projects are not closed before it can be demonstrated with certainty that every aspect of the Approved Purposes has been delivered.

12: The level of documentation retained on HLF's archived project files should be improved without delay to ensure that a sound information trail and project record are maintained in all cases. Definition of an appropriate policy, a guidance note to officers, and archival procedures are fundamental requirements to this end. Once this improvement is effected, HLF should seek to tackle the continuing poor quality of grantees' project archives by using special conditions of grant to secure project records/archives and to encourage positive dissemination by grantees of the results of projects as learning experience.

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Appendix I: Study Brief

Assessment of the conservation outcomes of HLF funded Heritage Grants projects YEAR 3

1. Overview

- 1.1 HLF has a broad-based evaluation and research programme underway to demonstrate the impacts of our funding programmes and learn from the experience of completed projects. As part of this programme we are now inviting proposals for an evaluation of the conservation outcomes of projects that we have funded. The research we fund over the next year is intended to become the first in a rolling programme of year-on-year evaluation studies. The study will sit alongside other research projects we already have running, that concentrate on the social and economic benefits of funded projects.
- 1.2 One of our three aims under our current Strategic Plan is 'to conserve and enhance the UK's diverse heritage'. To help us assess how we are performing against this aim we would like to commission consultants to review and assess the conservation outcomes of projects funded under our Heritage Grants programme (grants over £50,000). This will be done by looking at a sample of the projects completed in 2007 that involved a substantial element of physical conservation work to buildings, landscapes or their associated collections. This research project will investigate a sample of 17 of the Heritage Grants projects that completed in 2007 and involved conservation.
- 1.3 The aim of the research is to give HLF a better understanding of two things
 - the conservation outcomes of HLF funding, and
 - how well our systems for assessing the conservation outcomes of projects are working, and whether any improvements might need to be made to those systems.

This will be done by looking at both our assessment and monitoring procedures, and by looking at conservation quality on completed projects (including meeting relevant conservation standards).

- 1.4 For the purposes of this research project, conservation includes:
 - physical works to repair or restore a historic building, monument, landscape or collection
 - the actions taken to manage and maintain the physical condition and significance those assets in the long term (and thus safeguard HLF's investment).
- 1.5 The results of the research work will be used in two ways: -
 - to help inform guidance notes, applications procedures, assessment and monitoring procedure and training for staff and others;
 - as part of our ongoing programme of evaluating and reporting on the outcomes of our funding against our strategic aims.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The research objectives are: -
 - To establish whether conservation management issues and risks are being effectively and appropriately identified and costed in applications to HLF;

- To review the quality of conservation advice and appraisal that was applied to each project, including expert advice, assessment by staff, and whether it was successful in identifying or reducing any conservation risks;
- To determine how many of the sample projects incurred conservation problems either during project development or whilst works were underway. Problems may include unforeseen costs, problems with craftsmanship, timetabling problems, unforeseen issues such as archaeological remains or biodiversity; problems with statutory consents; public concerns over conservation actions.
- To assess the quality of HLF monitoring of conservation issues and – where necessary – HLF intervention into the project;
- To determine whether the conservation benefits of HLF funding are being sustained once funded works are complete through appropriate management and maintenance;
- To assess whether information about the conservation work undertaken during the HLF funded project has been captured and appropriately archived, and whether the documents that set out the applicants commitment to maintenance and management are available and in use;

2.2 Based on the above, the consultant will report on:

- the conservation outcomes from a sample of projects;
- the effectiveness of HLF procedures (including guidance, assessment and monitoring) and whether any improvements are needed;
- how well conservation issues are being identified and costed;
- any risks to HLF's investment in these projects;
- whether there is any need for additional support or advice for applicants who meet our criteria but may lack specialist knowledge of conservation or site/building maintenance and management.

3 Methodology

3.1 The methodology for the research project can be discussed but is expected to be based on the 2007/08 Conservation Outcomes research for HLF and will involve: -

- Review of internal documents related to HLF procedures for assessing conservation issues of projects seeking funding
- Review the internal application documents for each of the projects included in the study in order to identify the conservation objectives of the project and how they were to be met, including the conservation aims in any capital works project and long term management and maintenance commitments (including conservation management plans; other surveys or impact assessments; specifications for capital works; reference to conservation standards and proposals for identifying specialist contractors)
- Review of case papers
- Review of any advice provided by expert advisors (expert advisors are external to HLF and are appointed to assist in making an application decision).
- Review of monitors reports (project monitors are appointed after a project has secured funding and stay with it during the implementation stage, reporting back to HLF at regular intervals)
- Interviews with project case officers and other HLF staff, expert advisors and monitors as necessary
- A site visit to review the physical condition and management of the site in order to establish whether there is evidence that the conservation benefits of the project have been delivered and whether long term site management and maintenance objectives

set out in any maintenance or conservation plans or other site documents are being delivered.

- Interviews with project staff and contractors to establish:
 - how conservation issues were identified and addressed
 - what advice was taken and from whom
 - whether issues emerged during the project that were not foreseen at the outset
 - whether costs were robust
 - what lessons were learnt during the project
 - whether there have been long term changes in the organisation's awareness of conservation issues as a result of the project.

3.2 The consultant will be expected to use a robust methodology for defining and assessing conservation quality including indicators or outcomes, based on the previous year of Conservation Outcomes research and using existing standards and guidelines.

3.3 The sample will consist of 17 Heritage Grants projects completed in 2007 that involved a significant element of physical conservation of a historic building or structure; or landscape, or collections. A holistic approach to assessing the conservation outcomes of a project will be required. Whilst a project may have a particular conservation focus, associated conservation work should also be considered. For example, a project focussing on building conservation may also have an impact on associated landscapes, biodiversity or collections. The project will exclude Public Parks, activity projects, acquisitions, extensions to museums, the restoration of movable transport items and projects that mainly involve new construction. That sample will include:

- projects with specialist advisers and or monitors and those without (but which could have)
- projects that do and do not have a conservation management plan
- a range of different project sizes.

3.4 HLF will provide the contractor with a spreadsheet detailing eligible projects, and a suggested sample of projects including contact details. HLF will alert grant recipients to the survey, but the contractor will need to make individual arrangements with grant recipients and also select the final sample of case studies. Studies carried out by or on behalf of HLF will be made available to the contractor wherever possible. HLF will supply all appropriate contact lists, databases and survey information that already exists, in confidence.

3.5 The research must explicitly report on conservation across the whole range of what HLF funds, including:

- habitats and species
- archives and collections
- buildings sites and monuments
- designed landscapes
- industrial, maritime and transport heritage (including large movable transport items)

Appendix II: Summary of Key Requirements of HLF Application Packs

1. 1994/95 Application Pack

Applications concerning repair of historic buildings should normally be supported by a schedule of works and other specifications and any other relevant study intended to establish reliability or viability of repair proposals. Those concerning historic parks and gardens should normally be supported by a landscape restoration and management plan

Museums and Galleries

"You will be required to show that an item or collection, once acquired, will be kept in suitable conditions of storage, appropriately conserved and catalogued within a reasonable period of time which should be specified in the application. The item or collection should be made available for public study or display under conditions of adequate care and security."

Printed Books, Manuscripts, Archives and Other Records

"Applicants should be able to show that an item or collection, once acquired, will be kept in suitable conditions of storage, appropriately conserved and catalogued within a reasonable period of time, which should be specified in the application. The item or collection should be made available for public study or display under conditions of adequate care and security."

+ Check-list for new buildings, extensions, conversions and refurbishments

"You should provide an outline or detailed design report and reference to how you have addressed

the following points, as appropriate:

- justification for a new buildings
- For buildings housing collections and archives - sources of conservation advice and impact of building on environment for collections
- Production of design brief: sources of advice used
- How architect/ designer was/ will be selected
- Methods of procurement followed or to be followed
- public consultation
- Quality of construction and materials
- cost-in-use, including energy efficiency
- Access for people with disabilities
- How project will be managed.

1996 Major Museums and Library Archive Projects

Checklist – brief description of the project, include any official designation, where relevant indicate whether the asset concerned is under threat, for building repair and other conservation projects – photos of repair problems.

Conservation issues – for projects relating to housing or care of collections and archives, reference should be made to institutions acquisitions and disposals policy and conservation, documentation and storage policies and information whether research is to be undertaken as part of long term museums strategy.

Also – condition report for all projects involving the acquisition, conservation, cataloguing or digitisation of objects, manuscripts, books, archives and collections.

Also, for projects involving the conservation of listed buildings, or similar heritage assets, details of conservation and related issues which affect the works provided. Building condition/ fabric survey should be carried out by professional with specific expertise. For projects relating to landscape restoration, a restoration management plan should be included.

Account of planning status – includes, relevant planning permission/ LBC issues need to be considered and evidence of consultation with relevant bodies – inc archive bodies, national library, historic building agencies etc.

Environmental conditions – eg, environmental impact assessment where appropriate.

For collections, a description of the current environmental conditions of the collection and proposals for improving them.

Involvement of artists and craftsmen – provide details where relevant.

2. April 1997 Application Pack

Listed buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- A condition survey, with measured drawings if available.
- Repairs specification.

Museums and Collections need:

- Details of condition of collection and how housed.
- Collection care plan if available.
- Environmental monitoring and control.

3. April 1998 Application Pack

Included in check list (all projects): Need to provide proof of statutory status or other designation

“ A conservation plan explains why an historic site or asset is significant or has heritage merit and how that significance is vulnerable or sensitive to change. It should set out the policies to be adopted for retaining that significance in any future use or development. It should be founded on an examination of all relevant data and should be developed and amended as further evidence comes to light or circumstances change.”

All projects under £500,000

There is no need for every applicant to provide a full Conservation Plan. If your project costs are below £500,000, we will not normally require a full Conservation Plan, unless the particular nature of the proposal would make it beneficial in assessing your application.”

Building projects under £500,000

Need– measured survey drawings, including elevations, showing existing building and proposed additions, alterations or changes of use. Details of the engineering services, structural design and energy plans. Details of the finishes, external materials and landscape plans. If your building is listed, provide an impact assessment, showing how your proposals will affect the special architectural historic interest of the building and how you will retain its importance.

All projects over £500,000

We will need to decide whether or not a Conservation Plan will help us to make a decision on the proposal. When we make a decision on this – we need to take account the nature of the heritage asset concerned and the nature of the proposals.

The Nature of the heritage asset concerned:

- relevant factors are the sensitivity to change, its complexity and whether or not it has multiple heritage assets, such as historic buildings, collections, designed landscape etc, which could potentially lead to differing objectives. For example, a Conservation Plan may be useful for the following types of historic asset:
- Places of exceptional heritage merit
- Major monuments and their settings
- Places in split ownership
- Places with more than one type of statutory designation or heritage asset, including collections
- Large complex objects such as shops.

The Nature of the Proposals

- Relevant considerations include the extent of physical intervention that the proposals entail or the impact of the proposals on the wider context of the site or asset. For example a conservation plan may be useful where proposals include
- - new buildings or other developments, including visitor facilities
- Major landscape change (eg roads and parking, ground disturbance)
- New uses of major new requirements in listed buildings
- Major restoration/ conservation work to an asset.

We consider supporting the costs of preparing a Conservation Plan provided that the heritage asset is of sufficient importance and that the plan is vital to the conservation of the asset. Such applications will normally be considered under the two stage application process. Where we request a Conservation Plan following a positive stage one decision, we will expect it to be completed and submitted to us before your project is worked up any further, as the plan should be used to inform the development of your project.

Building projects over £500,000

Conservation statement (not defined) required, including:

- description of the asset – brief description of what survives today and how it has changed through time, Use pictures plans and drawings.

- significance of the asset – state why the asset is of heritage importance. Include the different ways in which the asset is important (eg, landscape, ecology, archaeology, architecture, collections) Identify the statutory status of your site and any other designations.
- how organisation cares for heritage – explain your conservation policies and principles which will ensure that the heritage significance of the asset will be preserved or enhanced.
- impact of project – state the conservation benefits of your project; identify any possible adverse impact, explain what steps you have taken to reduce this impact.
- next steps – ie, state what you need to do to progress your project if your application is successful, eg, commission conservation plan or land management plan, commission further investigation or specialist study.

Museums and Collections

“You should provide summary details and a copy of your collections care or management plan, if available.”

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Urban Parks and Designed Landscapes

Restoration plan required and a design brief for a restoration plan.

Archaeology:

“We expect appropriate archaeological investigation, recording, conservation and presentation to be included within projects which address other aims, eg building restoration or land management.”

4. April 2003 Heritage Grants Application Pack

“If you plan to use all or part of your grant for building conservation or other work, you must support your application with a conservation statement. If your project involves semi-natural habitats, designed landscapes or historic parks or gardens, or if you are applying for a grant of £1m or over, you will also need a conservation management plan.” (Conservation management plans are also strongly recommended for projects involving large structures and where many different types of heritage are involved whatever the grant.)

Conservation statement should include:

- measured survey drawings proposed and where appropriate, showing existing and proposed additions, alterations or changes of use, including elevations and sketch map.
- statement of why of heritage importance and the different ways in which it is important (for example, landscape, ecology, archaeology, architecture and collections.)
- impact assessment showing how your proposals will affect the special historic interest of the item. You should show that you have identified any possible harmful effects and explain what steps you have taken to reduce them.

- list of your conservation policies and principles and an explanation of how these will make sure that the heritage importance of the property will be maintained.
- details of engineering services, structural designs and energy plans where appropriate
- details of finishes, external materials and landscaping plans where appropriate

Relevant to: (under £1m therefore didn't need conservation plans)