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The Conservation of English Cultural Built Heritage: A Force for Social Inclusion?

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Abstract

Debates about the socially inclusionary potential of heritage have to date principally focused on heritage sites and museums. Relatively little attention has been paid to the wider Cultural Built Heritage (CBH) that surrounds us in our everyday lives. This paper starts with a brief theoretical exploration of the social role of heritage and the key policy background. Then, based on an understanding of policy and action in England, this paper sets out a framework for considering how this wider CBH *might* contribute to social inclusion. A fundamental binary divide made is between the role of CBH as *historic places* and *opportunity spaces* in which regeneration may occur. However, in neither case is action necessarily socially inclusive. The paper concludes that a greater clarity of objectives and definitions is necessary if CBH is to meet its potential to be socially inclusionary.

Key Words

Social inclusion, Cultural Built Heritage, historic environment

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1. Introduction

There is currently a strong impetus to demonstrate the socially progressive potential of heritage. This is particularly true in the United Kingdom where the broader social policy mission of a modernising National Government is strongly focused on a social inclusion agenda. Given this context the heritage sector is anxious to demonstrate its non-elitist, progressive nature. We do not argue against the desirability of the heritage sector, and in our case specifically the cultural built heritage, re-positioning itself in response to this agenda. However, it is our contention that this has been underpinned by confusion over direction and possible beneficiaries.

Strategic shifts have taken place as part of a search for legitimacy for heritage that has been evident at least since the 1970s. This has involved ascribing values and benefits to the cultural built heritage (CBH)¹ that sometimes derive from the specific qualities of CBH as *historic places*, but sometimes as *opportunity spaces* within which to achieve economic and social regeneration. This is a key binary distinction which we adopt in this paper. It is not intended as a qualitative distinction between places visited as heritage sites and the wider CBH. Rather, the distinction is in the way that places are conceptualised. When viewed as historic places, the benefits CBH may bring are specifically derived from their historic status. Alternatively, CBH may bring a physical quality to regeneration that is not easily reproducible, but where the emphasis is not upon intrinsic historic nature, rather CBH is an opportunity space in which regeneration may occur.

Thus, a key distinction we explore here is between the benefits that may arise from an engagement with the historic environment per se and the other benefits that might stem from conservation activity as part of regenerative processes. With the latter, the emphasis is upon achieving regeneration and the contribution of heritage is essentially

as a space within which regeneration can take place. With the first the benefits might apply to all sorts of groups in society who find themselves marginalised from mainstream heritage but who would not be considered socially excluded, given that the term is most often used as a synonym for poverty brought about by worklessness². This might include the Black and Asian middle class, for example. A further aim of the paper is to make conceptual distinctions between some of the key terms that are used in debates and policy on the social role of conservation activity. So, for example, the terms social exclusion and social inclusion are often used as interchangeable antonyms. We have summarised how some of these terms are used in table 1 and we discuss these further in sections 4, 5 and 6 of the paper.

First, however, in section 2 we briefly look theoretically at the social role of CBH, reminding the reader that heritage can be argued to be a socially regressive and distinctly non-inclusionary phenomenon. Conservationists have sought to legitimise their activity in a range of ways that link attitudes and policy to urban areas more generally. In section 3 we briefly review this relationship up to the current focus on issues of social exclusion/inclusion. CBH has been attributed with an association of quality regarded as helpful in achieving physical regeneration.

Section 4 considers issues of terminology and in sections 5 and 6 we return to the binary divide of CBH as historic place and opportunity space. We use this to construct a framework of sub categories or initiatives, shown in table 2. This uses a ladder form derived from Arnstein's famous ladder of participation³. These sub-categories can be seen to represent a progressive stepping up in terms of empowerment of groups currently outside the mainstream. At the top of both ladders is combating social

¹ CBH is a term widely used in continental Europe. In the context of this paper, except where otherwise indicated, CBH refers to officially acknowledged heritage, recognised through such designations as listed buildings or conservation areas.

² See, for example, Levitas, R (1996) The concept of social exclusion and the new Durkheimian hegemony. *Critical Social Policy* 46 (16), 5-20

³ Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Institute of Planners* (July), 216-224. Arnstein developed this ladder to show the very different forms that citizen engagement can take, and the very different power relations that lie implicit with each of these. She represented this as a ladder with the most empowering processes at the top. Though developed for a very specific set of circumstances, urban regeneration in 1960s USA, her ladder has been widely used since. This widespread adoption has been criticised, but though we recognise its limitations, we have

exclusion though the impacts of each strand are different: one may be measured as outputs (more jobs, improved environment etc.) while the other may produce more intangible change in reinforcing identity, developing community confidence, or through new thinking within institutions. We do not claim that the framework that we propose is a simple means to classify any initiative in the heritage arena. Indeed, some of the best practice we discuss cuts across a number of categories. The examples we use are drawn from the literature of conservation agencies and our own personal experience. In doing so we have not critically examined projects but have accepted benefits claimed. What we seek to do is categorise those asserted benefits.

Throughout this paper our principal concern is with the cultural built heritage that surrounds us every day, and the paper is to degree a companion to Newman & McLean⁴ who focused on heritage sites and museums. Thus we focus on the means by which the cultural built heritage is protected and managed through the conservation planning system (through such designations as listed buildings and conservation areas) and grant funding regimes. We are also concerned with how the wider CBH is interpreted, appreciated and accessed by society as a whole. In both processes there are opportunities for promoting greater inclusion or, conversely, for reinforcing exclusion. Throughout the paper we use the term CBH interchangeably with the slightly broader UK concept, historic environment.

2. CBH as Historic Place: Critiques and the Search for Legitimacy

The purpose of this section is to set CBH within the wider debate surrounding the role and growth of heritage in the last few decades. It provides some theoretical context over the social role of CBH and also begins to outline how this translated in to policy and action, in the 1970s and 1980s especially.

used the ladder form here for its conceptual simplicity in conveying a key point about degrees of empowerment.

⁴ Newman, A., & McLean, F. (1998). Heritage Builds Communities: the application of heritage resources to the problems of social exclusion. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 4(3 & 4), 143-153.

Separating out the heritage function of CBH is not straightforward. Some conserved historic buildings have wider heritage roles, but many simply provide economic space, the backdrop to everyday living. Sometimes they perform both functions simultaneously. For example, Salt's Mill at Saltaire⁵, Bradford, houses amongst other things, a collection of David Hockney artworks (heritage already?) and a hi-tech satellite communications company. Broadly based critiques of heritage and culture have, however, caught up the CBH in their analysis. The principal sphere with which we are concerned here is political analysis of power and class relations.

Dominant ideology thesis, derived from the writings of Marx and Engels, asserts dominant groups maintain the status quo in society by preventing any conception that society could be different. Vital to this process is 'culture' which is endowed with symbolic meanings, framed by power elites, to legitimise their place in society. In this way dominance is derived from symbolic as well as economic power. In France, Foucault developed these ideas⁶ in relation to the tutelary complexes of knowledge and power and more specifically in relation to concepts of heritage by Bourdieu⁷ and Hoyau⁸. Bourdieu saw symbolic power as the mechanism to achieve consensus in society that the dominant have a 'right' to their privileged position. In this way it produces complicity among the dominated⁹.

Translated into the sphere of heritage attractions in the UK it is easy to see how the mass visiting of aristocratic country houses could be interpreted in this light, even though visitors now 'flock to the kitchens' as well the drawing rooms¹⁰. However, various counter arguments on the value of heritage have been made, notably by Samuel¹¹ and Lowenthal¹². Lowenthal's¹³ seven 'benefits of the past' are often

⁵ A newly inscribed World Heritage Site.

⁶ Foucault, M (1970) *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the Human Sciences.* London: Routledge.

⁷ Bourdieu, P *Distinction*. London: Routledge.

⁸ Hoyau, P (1988) Heritage and 'the Consumer Society' in Lumley, R (ed.) *The Museum Time* Machine. London: Routledge.

⁹ See Merriman, N. (1991). *Beyond the Glass Case*. Leicester: University Press, for discussion of this in relation to museums.

¹⁰ Lowenthal, D (1998) The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History. Cambridge: University Press.

p.14
Samuel, R (1994) *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*. London: Verso.

¹² Lowenthal, D (1985) The Past is a Foreign Country, Cambridge, University Press & Lowenthal (1998) op. cit. note 10.

¹³ Lowenthal, D (1985)

quoted. His central theme is that the manifold changes of modern life, from increasing longevity to growing fear of technology, instil among millions the view that they 'need and are owed a heritage', ¹⁴. For Samuel heritage provides a harmless chance for the most ordinary in society to indulge in the 'romance of otherness', ¹⁵. Furthermore, the cultural plurality of heritage is something that can be used to create a public history that may affirm minority identities.

Politically, CBH benefited under the New Right governments of the 1980s. Commentators drew parallels between the victory of New Right politics, the rise of heritage and a return to a ruling elite version of history¹⁶. Analyses of right-wing treatises that called for the deregulation of town planning have shown there was a remarkable lack of criticism of state intervention in conserving CBH¹⁷. The increased prominence of the conservation agenda at local-level, however, was also often linked with left-wing local authorities. For example, Sheffield City Council initiated the innovative conservation of Kelham Island, a former cutlery manufacturing area, in 1985¹⁸. Furthermore, from the 1970s there was a frequent linking between conservation and radical politics in the form of development struggles. The saving of Covent Garden is often cited as a prime example of community activists battling against the power of capital¹⁹.

The idea of consciously conserving CBH has undoubted elitist origins²⁰. However, running counter to the elite culture conception of CBH is another strand that sees the historic environment as contributing to identity. The political struggles that have occurred over such places as Covent Garden, or the areas of east London discussed by

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¹⁴ Lowenthal, D (1998) p6, op. cit. note 10

¹⁵ Samuel, R (1994) p247, op. cit. note 11

¹⁶ Wright, P (1985) On Living in an Old Country: the national past in contemporary Britain. London: Verso; Ascherson, N (1987) Why Heritage is Right-Wing, Observer, 8 November; Hewison, R (1995) Culture and consensus: England, art and politics since 1940. London: Methuen.

¹⁷ Thornley, A (1991) *Urban Planning under Thatcherism: The Challenge of the Market*, London: Routledge; Pendlebury, J (2000) Conservation, Conservatives and Consensus: the Success of conservation under the Thatcher and Major Governments, 1979-1997, *Planning Theory and Practice*, **1** (1) 31-52.

At the time Sheffield City Council was a left-wing authority in frequent conflict with central government.

¹⁹ Anson, B (1981) *I'll fight you for it! Behind the struggle for Covent Garden*. London: Cape. ²⁰ Jokilehto, J (1999) *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann,.

Wright²¹, have been about the right to sustain that identity and sense of ownership in place in the face of the transforming logic of capital investment in property.

Tunbridge and Ashworth discuss the paradoxical nature of some of the dilemmas of heritage. The claimed creation and manipulation of heritage by dominant groups they see as being most readily countered by a 'liberalisation' to include more marginalized heritages a 'reinterpretation, not an absence of interpretation'²².

The socially progressive benefits of CBH have been consciously mobilised since the 1960s as part of a process of establishing the legitimacy of the field. The recognition of the value of the 'common place' in historic buildings as opposed to high architecture is a trend that strongly emerged in the 1970s, with a growth of interest in vernacular architecture and the re-evaluation of industrial buildings²³. The broadening of the scope of conservation was by no means the only legitimising process, however. The role of CBH in education was also a theme that emerged strongly around European Architectural Heritage Year, 1975. Here education was taken in its broadest sense, one of the primary aims being to bring sections of community into 'closer association' and using CBH as a tool to reinforce mutual understanding and an 'awareness of interdependence' within communities²⁴.

In the 1980s the contribution of CBH focused in a quite different area. Increasingly the CBH was argued as complementary to urban regeneration and it is to this wider relationship with urban policy we now turn.

3 Opportunity Space for Urban Regeneration

In this section we describe how CBH has become increasingly associated with qualities beyond its attributes as historic place and developed an association with quality that is seen as advantageous to physical regeneration.

²¹ Wright, P. (1992). *A Journey Through Ruins: A keyhole portrait of British postwar life and culture*. London: Flamingo.

²² Tunbridge J. E. & G. J. Ashworth (1996) *Dissonant Heritage: The management of the past as a resource in conflict.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. p4

²³ Pickles, W (1971) *Our Grimy Heritage*. London: Centaur Press; Department of the Environment, (1975) *What is Our Heritage?* London: HMSO; Binney, M et al (1978) *Satanic Mills*. London: SAVE. ²⁴ Bailey, K (1976) *Education and Heritage: a Report on the Significance and Outcome of European Architectural Heritage Year in English Education*. London: Civic Trust. p14 & 16

The 1967 Civic Amenities Act is usually seen as the impetus for the move away from CBH as an activity focused primarily on architectural monuments to something more broadly based which recognises the significance of the wider historic environment. Conservation areas were introduced within a context where it was still believed that demolition and redevelopment on a massive scale would transform urban areas for the better. In spite of this, it was necessary to introduce some safeguarding of places considered to be of 'special architectural or historic significance'. The shift away from large-scale redevelopment came partly from bottom-up resistance but this often occurred in conjunction with changed attitudes from policy makers. For example, the Convent Garden campaigners achieved their victory over a redevelopment-minded Greater London Council by persuading the Secretary of State for the Environment to list a large number of buildings in the area. Broader shifts in urban policy were key in giving impetus to conservation as a practical activity. Housing policy changed in emphasis from clearance to area renewal and neighbourhood scale environmental improvements through the Housing Acts 1969 and 1974 that created General Improvement Areas and Housing Action Areas. These were used extensively to fulfil conservation objectives, though grant regimes often benefited the relatively affluent owner-occupier rather than more marginal groups. Housing programmes improved property but gentrification processes transformed locales and displaced poorer private-sector renters²⁵. The 1970s saw conservation transformed from a concern of a small intellectual elite to a more broadly based movement; a refocus on places rather than purely individual buildings and mobilised groups able to help transform and then utilise changed government policy towards the physical environment. However, it was a movement that was essentially middle-class and it was the middle-class that gained most out of these changes.

In the 1980s the conservation of the CBH in key locales again fitted with wider urban policy agendas. The newly elected neo liberal Conservative government conceptualised 'urban' as a locus for market activity and saw the problems of the city as arising from dereliction which acted as a deterrent to private investment. The

²⁵ Smith, N (1996) *The New Urban frontier: gentrification and the revanchist city.* London: Routledge.

dominant solutions were aimed at land and property²⁶. These spatial designations focused on former commercial areas, most notably waterfronts, and studiously excluded residential neighbourhoods. The regeneration of historic buildings often became landmark schemes within these regeneration processes. For example, the reuse of the Albert Dock, Liverpool, was the flagship scheme of the government-created Merseyside Development Corporation. The utility of quality historic environments as part of place-marketing/ city image initiatives became increasingly evident, as urban areas sought to use cultural policy as a strategy of urban regeneration²⁷. CBH had become opportunity space in which regeneration might take place. The historic environment became an integral part of the consumer society, derided by Hewison²⁸ and considered by Urry²⁹ to be 'stage-sets within which consumption can take place'. The socially beneficial potential of CBH was in this period linked to the broader strategy of physical regeneration, whereby investment benefits were supposed to 'trickle down' to poorer people.

The 1990s saw English Heritage, the government agency with the responsibility for the historic environment, respond more explicitly to government urban policy agendas and the potential of CBH to contribute to physical regeneration. However, by then it was clear that benefits had not been shared and that while many cities had undergone positive physical change the gap between the affluent and the poorest had widened. The urban problem was recast as a fragmentation of relationships between the stakeholders of a locality, though it has also been described as a rediscovery of community³⁰. Area based initiatives focused on people and neighbourhoods in need of priority action and local authorities created regeneration partnerships with private and voluntary sector and community representatives. An important shift was a focus on process and the need for institutional learning. Linked to this, we also see attempts to shift power away from the usual players to communities – a strategy clearly

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²⁶ Atkinson, R & Moon, G (1994) *Urban Policy in Britain: the City, the State and the Market.* Basingstoke: Macmillan; Healey, P, Davoudi, S, O'Toole, M, Tavasanoglu, S, and Usher, D (eds.) (1992) *Rebuilding the City: Property-led Urban Regeneration.* London: Spon.

²⁷ Bianchini, F., & Parkinson, M. (eds.). (1993). *Cultural policy and urban regeneration: The West European experience*. Manchester: University Press; Ward, S. (1998). *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850-2000*. London: E & FN Spon.

²⁸ Hewison, R. (1987). *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline*. London: Methuen. ²⁹ Urry, J. (1995). *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge. p21

³⁰ Lovering, J. (1991) Regulation/Urban Labour Markets: Towards a New Mode of Regulation?, paper to *Urban change and Conflict* conference, Lancaster, September.

influenced by the views of the Social Exclusion Unit set up by Labour in 1997. Social exclusion is combated it is held, at least in part, through a process of building capacity in disadvantaged neighbourhoods³¹.

As urban policy has shifted emphasis from property to people and process, and specifically concentrations of socially excluded people in very deprived neighbourhoods, this has created a more challenging agenda for heritage agencies whose fundamental concern is with historic fabric. The English Heritage area-funding scheme Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS), launched in 1999, is explicitly targeted at the most deprived areas as defined by government indices. Only one of the five objectives for the programme is focused on English Heritage's traditional concern, the conservation of historic fabric; the others refer to economic revitalisation and sustaining economic activity or creating residential accommodation to meet community needs. More broadly, English Heritage has been pursuing an agenda to make heritage issues more pluralist. There has been an acknowledgement that the value judgements that underpin definitions of heritage and its management have been expert-led and that this may not reflect wider views in society and, crucially, that this is in itself problematic³². Subsequently English Heritage has adopted a number of social inclusion goals that, amongst other things, emphasise the cultural diversity of England's heritage and the need to enable access in its widest sense to this legacy³³.

A further key body in the heritage sector is, since its creation in 1993, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), responsible for disbursing substantial sums of money from the proceeds of the National Lottery and with a broad remit and impact across the historic environment. The HLF has been conscious of appearing relevant and useful to society as a whole and it targets some of its funding programmes on areas of economic and

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³¹ Taylor, M. (2000) *Top down meets bottom up: neighbourhood management*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Bevan, M. & Gilroy, R. (2000) *Industrial renaissance and community benefit: The story of the York Regeneration Partnership*. York: York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Duncan, P. and Thomas, S. (2000) *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing community involvement*. Bristol: The Policy Press for Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Russell, H. (2001) *Local strategic partnerships: Lessons from New Commitment to Regeneration*. Bristol: The Policy Press for Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³² English Heritage. (1997). Sustaining the historic environment: new perspectives on the future . London: English Heritage.

social deprivation³⁴. The HLF's approach has been driven in part by the responsible government department, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In terms of wider action on social inclusion, however, the government has not emphasised the role of heritage until recently. DCMS's Policy Action Team on social inclusion³⁵ focused on sport and the arts and the subsequent progress report³⁶ contained only the briefest of mentions on 'The Built and the Historic Environment'.

Power Of Place³⁷, a discussion document considering the future of the historic environment, produced by English Heritage (but with the input of many other bodies) and the government's subsequent statement, *The Historic Environment: a Force for Our Future*³⁸, have moved the debate on the relationship between conservation and social inclusion and exclusion further. Most recently, at the time of writing, is *People and Places: Social Inclusion Policy for the Built and Historic Environment*, produced by DCMS³⁹, which is concerned with the wider built environment as well as CBH. We examine how these documents have conceptualised social inclusion in the next section.

4. CBH and Social Inclusion

As we have seen the attention of urban policy-makers has become (re-)focused on deprived residential neighbourhoods. Inequality is no longer defined in purely economic terms, but includes issues of discrimination, oppression, domination and exclusion. These problems were initially hooked upon the term <u>social exclusion</u> and, subsequently, overcoming them on the term <u>social inclusion</u>. Solving the problems of these areas involves an engagement and empowerment with the people that live there

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³³ www.english-heritage.org.uk/socialinclusion

³⁴ Heritage Lottery Fund. (2001). *The Horizons of Heritage*. London: HLF; Heritage Lottery Fund (2002) *Broadening the Horizons of Heritage: The Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Plan* 2002-2007, London: HLF.

³⁵ Department of Culture Media and Sport. (1999). *Policy Action Team 10; A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit*. London: DCMS.

³⁶ Department of Culture Media and Sport. (2001). *Building on PAT 10: Progress Report on Social Inclusion*. London: DCMS.

³⁷ English Heritage. (2000). *Power of Place: The future of the historic environment* . London: English Heritage.

³⁸ Department of Culture Media and Sport, & Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions. (2001). *The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future*. London: DCMS.

³⁹ Department of Culture Media and Sport (2002) *People and Places: Social Inclusion Policy for the Built and Historic Environment*, London: DCMS.

⁴⁰ Terms underlined in this and subsequent sections are those considered in table 1.

as well as physical transformation. Redressing inequality requires cultural transformation⁴¹ and success needs to be defined in terms of changed processes as well as outcomes.

In evaluating the socially progressive potential of the historic environment we found the term social inclusion to be problematic. Different heritage agencies appear to convey different concepts when using the term. DCMS in Building on PAT10⁴² uses the government's five stated objectives of a social inclusion policy: improved educational improvement, increased employment prospects, improved health, reduced crime and improved physical environment, relating the built and historic environment to this last objective on physical environment in particular. English Heritage in *The* Heritage Dividend⁴³ group social inclusion with economic regeneration, whereas more recent statements emphasise physical, intellectual and financial access 44. The HLF in *Horizons of Heritage*⁴⁵ again stress access and education issues, whereas their commissioned research on developing new audiences for the heritage⁴⁶ links social inclusion to issues of discrimination (racial, gender and physical access). In their most recent strategic plan⁴⁷ HLF tend to avoid the term inclusion, but as well as an ongoing stress on access and education emphasise community involvement in heritage processes, link heritage activity to regeneration and argue for wider definitions of heritage. Power of Place⁴⁸ does not explicitly use the term social inclusion, but in discussions on inclusivity places a strong emphasis on multiculturalism. A Force for Our Future⁴⁹ looks at social inclusion both in terms of access issues and in terms of combating social exclusion, specifically citing lifelong learning, volunteering and regeneration. Therefore, under the one term social inclusion we have policy makers referring to the physical environment, the nature and accessibility of the historic

⁴¹ Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*: London: Macmillan.

⁴² Department of Culture Media and Sport. (2001). Op. cit. note 36.

⁴³ English Heritage. (1999). *The Heritage Dividend: Measuring the Results of English Heritage Regeneration 1994-1999*. London: English Heritage.

For example, English Heritage's social inclusion goals, http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/
 Heritage Lottery Fund. (2001) op. cit. Note 34

⁴⁶ PLB Consulting. (2001). *Developing new Audiences for the Heritage*. London: Heritage Lottery Fund.

⁴⁷ Heritage Lottery Fund. (2002) op. cit. Note 34

⁴⁸ English Heritage. (2000). Op. cit. Note 37

⁴⁹ Department of Culture Media and Sport, & Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions. (2001). Op. cit. Note 38

environment and the contribution of CBH in overcoming entrenched social and economic problems. These strands are drawn together in *People and Places*⁵⁰ which links social inclusion in the built environment to combating social exclusion, developing citizenship and reinforcing identity (through people feeling 'at home'), and contributing to social and economic regeneration. Social inclusion, it is argued, should occur through developing access and education, acknowledging cultural diversity and multiculturalism, through developing partnership and community involvement and changing the way heritage agencies work.

Thus though social inclusion is useful for communicating a broad concept it lacks precision. We have therefore used the term social inclusion in this broad way, embracing the various ways in which CBH can be used in a socially progressive manner. In the next two sections we define a framework for these different dimensions. For social exclusion, on the other hand, we use the more precise and restricted definition provided by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit (see table 1).

5. CBH as Historic Place

In this section we consider the potential socially inclusionary benefits the historic environment may bring as historic place. We do this under three sub-headings, each of which in turn suggest a greater degree of empowerment to people and communities (see Table 2 also).

a) Widening Access to the Benefits of the Existing Defined Historic Environment

The issue here is to help more people in society to access and benefit from existing, unchallenged definitions of heritage. We consider this through the term <u>access</u>. Discussions of access to heritage often relate to visited heritage sites, the usefulness of access as a concept to enjoying the heritage that forms a backdrop for everyday life is less easy to define. Physical access is obviously important, though the Disability

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 $^{^{\}rm 50}$ Department of Culture Media and Sport (2002), Op. cit. note 39.

Discrimination Act (1995) is generally regarded as a major contribution towards breaking down discrimination in this area.⁵¹ Financial access is also important. In the context of this paper there is the economic value that attaches to a gentrified historic environment, which can effectively exclude poorer sections of society. We discuss this briefly in relation to Grainger Town, Newcastle upon Tyne in section 6.

Intellectual access is also regarded as key. This suggests an intellectual engagement currently lacking and therefore is bound up with issues of education. Education is strongly stressed in *A Force for Our Future*. It makes the case for CBH as a resource for learning about history and other disciplines such as geography and design. It is also said to be useful in developing an active citizenship; by helping people learn about their own environment and how they can participate in its evolution. These educational benefits can be applied to the school curriculum or lifelong learning. ⁵²

Thus extending access to CBH might have a role in attaching people to society by linking them with society's ideas and values. It is, however, a limited role, tells us little about what impact heritage might have, and is essentially geared to admitting people to the established order on the established order's terms.

b) Changing the Definition of the Historic Environment

The recent policy documents reviewed in previous sections acknowledge that the existing defined heritage stems from a particular, and narrow, narrative on what constitutes England's heritage. They suggest that we need more <u>pluralistic</u> definitions of heritage, although they do not challenge the existing narrative found in existing designations. Thus, current definitions are seen as of continuing importance and validity but there is a potential for a more inclusive extension. The two principal themes are <u>multiculturalism</u>, recognising the heritage of ethnic groups and an appreciation of more modest, 'everyday' heritage.

⁵¹ Though more critical perspectives exist, see, for example, Drake R (1999) *Understanding disability policies*. London: Macmillan or Imrie R (1996) *Disability and the city; international perspectives*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing

It is unclear how CBH can be redefined to encompass the values of ethnic groups. Indeed, work commissioned from MORI by English Heritage⁵³ has emphasised how irrelevant much of traditional CBH is perceived to be by many Black and Asian people. Their definitions of their own heritage are often highly personal and lacking the grand narrative of nation building implicit in the usual definitions of England's heritage. Furthermore, the heritage they identify often relates to non-built cultural issues. Though initiatives such as Black History Month have served to raise the profile of 'other' histories in the UK, this has yet to be translated to the built environment in the way that, for example, Boston's Black Heritage Trail has for the last twenty five or so years. This walking tour through the historic district of Beacon Hill specifically interprets the area in terms of black heritage.⁵⁴

Engaging with a wider, everyday, heritage is a process that has been on going since the 1970s and, for example, industrial and vernacular buildings have been listed in large number from that period. The further development of this process put forward by English Heritage and a Force for Our Future is through characterisation. Characterisation involves considering the (historic) character of all places, rather than exclusively focusing on particular places because of their perceived special qualities. It is seen to be a way of recognising values ascribed locally by which wider definitions of the historic environment can be embraced without enormously expanding, or challenging, existing systems of protection. Following this argument, the character of any place can be defined and used as a tool for managing change. Important to the discussion here, communities can directly undertake character assessment, a theme we return to later.

A third strand has been extending traditional conceptions of heritage to a closer point in time. This has had the effect of, for example, bringing the listing of historic buildings into the post-1945 period. As such it has encompassed buildings built by the welfare state. Thus, buildings of the working class have been recognised on a scale

⁵² The Whitehaven Citizenship Project (cited in A Force for Our Future) is a good example, where the restoration and regeneration of historic buildings in the town was built into Key Stages 3 and 4 citizenship curriculum. ⁵³ MORI. (2000). *Attitudes Towards the Heritage*. London: English Heritage.

⁵⁴ Hayden, D. (1995). *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. London: MIT Press.

not previously evident. However, these are buildings constructed by a paternalist state, and though the listing of such modern buildings is often portrayed as a departure from more traditional conceptions of heritage it is actually an extension of a policy of focusing on 'high architecture' defined in art historical terms. Park Hill, a massive 1950s deck-housing scheme in Sheffield has been listed and Byker which dates principally from the 1970s, is one of the last heroic redevelopment schemes in Britain and is being considered for listing at the time of writing. In both cases listing may help foster community pride, by official acknowledgement that this place is somewhere special. Probably more importantly, though, listing may unlock resources for regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

Finally, some recent listings have been decidedly populist in nature. For example, the listing of post-war prefabricated houses⁵⁷ and of a pigeon cree⁵⁸ have embodied this approach, recognising the value of the social history of these structures. However, the numbers of buildings listed in this way are tiny compared to the overall listed stock.

c) Extending involvement

Merely enabling more people to enjoy heritage, or extending how it is defined to recognise the diversity of society, do not in themselves challenge power relations and control over the process by which heritage is defined and managed. Traditional modes of public participation in the processes we are describing have been shown to be limited. They reveal participative exercises that favour privileged respondents who can debate the issues in the same terms as conservation professionals, or exercises that are geared to information dissemination rather than participation in any meaningful sense⁵⁹. In national conservation policy a classic case of this was the public consultation carried out upon the listing of modern buildings in the mid-1990s. The

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⁵⁵ A move that at the time of listing seems to have had the support of around 50% of the residents responding to a survey, Beard, A. (2001). A Future for Park Hill. In S. MacDonald (Ed.), *Preserving Post-War Heritage: The Care and Conservation of Mid-Twentieth Century Architecture* (pp. 177-185). Shaftesbury: Donhead.

⁵⁶ A scheme that famously involved extensive resident participation; Malpass P & Murie A (1987) *Housing Policy and Practice*, 2nd edition. London: MacMillan.

⁵⁷ Planning. (1998, 9/1/98). Popular post-war prefabs make the grade with listing. Planning. p1.

⁵⁸ Howe, J. (1998, 27/3/98). Not a cree- more a listed building. *Newcastle Journal*, p9.

⁵⁹ See for example, Pendlebury, J., & Townshend, T. (1999). The Conservation of Historic Areas and Public Participation. *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, 5(2), 72-87.

criteria upon which buildings were listed were not open to negotiation, meaning only experts and the well-networked stood any serious chance of influencing the process.

The process of applying characterisation to conservation areas through character appraisal has been seen as one means to achieve a greater and more meaningful conservation engagement in conservation practice. This has been tried with conservation area character appraisals, based on the model of Village Design Statements, an initiative of the Countryside Agency introduced for rural communities. In principle such community-led appraisal allows people to both help define what is special about the place where they live and to create a management tool that will have an influence through the planning process on how it evolves in the future. Tynemouth, essentially an affluent suburb of Tyneside, has a combined Conservation Area and Appraisal and Village Design Statement produced by local residents. Thus, a wider cross-section of the community has been engaged in forming a vision of place and providing a means to help its future management and as such it has been a socially inclusive activity. However, as a group of self-selected residents seeking to sustain a high environmental quality in what is essentially a middle-class, high property value location this process might in turn be exclusionary. The character appraisal might be used in efforts to prevent social housing or "bad neighbour" developments being constructed in the area. Thus this process that is inclusive at one level might be used to reinforce exclusivity.

Other initiatives at extending community participation in the historic environment have been targeted at more excluded groups. For example, the Hackney Building Exploratory is an educational initiative that aims not only to educate residents about the place in which they live, including the history of its buildings, but also to educate professionals about how residents think about the area. An understanding of place is argued to help create a sense of place and facilitate participation in more formal processes. *A Force for Our Future* also cites volunteering as a means by which heritage can help overcome social exclusion. Volunteering is seen to lead to more

engaged active communities and to offer people seeking employment the possibility of developing skills and self-esteem through work experience.⁶⁰

Thus CBH as heritage may help promote social inclusion, broadly defined, in various ways, though conversely the processes described may reinforce the exclusivity of areas. However, we are more sceptical over the role of historic places in combating social exclusion. An appreciation and involvement with the historic environment is likely to have a more limited role in overcoming the deeply embedded and material problems of the socially excluded.

6. CBH as Opportunity Space for Urban Regeneration

In this section we consider the potential socially inclusionary benefits the historic environment may bring as opportunity space for regeneration. We do this under two sub-headings, which again suggest an increasing degree of empowerment to people and communities (see Table 2 also).

a) <u>Economic and Physical Regeneration</u>

We have described the growing connection established by the heritage sector to urban regeneration agendas though the 1980s and 1990s. This included prestige developments as part of major cultural re-branding exercises and more modest schemes. For example, the regeneration of Grainger Town in Newcastle upon Tyne and of the centre of Brixton in London are programmes used as flagships by English Heritage. The former involves revitalising the heart of the city centre and a substantial amount of major Georgian townscape, the latter a traditionally unfashionable locale with a high ethnic minority population. Though these schemes and others like them will generally generate some economic activity and improve the physical environment this does not necessarily imply that they will be socially inclusive. So, for example,

 $^{^{60}}$ A much cited project in this respect as the National Trust's Inner City Project in Newcastle upon Tyne which works with volunteers from deprived areas of the city. However, it should be noted that

the regeneration of Grainger Town has attracted high value retailers in to part of the area that had been struggling economically. These lie adjacent to a magnificent grade I listed covered market, the Grainger Market that has traditionally provided food shopping for low-income groups. The success of the regeneration programme has already displaced lower income shoppers from the area and now it has brought pressure to 'upgrade' the nature of tenant in the market, a move, which if it occurs, will displace users who traditionally have had this outstanding building as a backdrop for their shopping. A further example is the Albert Dock scheme. This transformed a major complex of derelict historic docks with new economic and cultural activity. However, for many Liverpudlians this scheme is seen as essentially a heritage site to be visited by car disconnected from the rest of the city. Others have commentated about the suppression of the former dock use that has a significant part in the city's social and economic history⁶¹.

Keeling House in Bethnal Green, London was the first post-war local authority housing block to be listed in 1993. Completed in 1957, it was designed by Denys Lasdun. It follows the form of a cluster, four towers grouped around a central stair and lift tower and it was designed to act as a vertical version of a traditional street. Ultimately unsuccessful as a social housing scheme it lay empty for many years until it was recently restored by a private developer, who has aimed the refurbished block at style conscious owner-occupiers. To give purchasers security in an essentially poor neighbourhood the block has a concierge and is surrounded by a fence. Thus a pioneering piece of welfare state architecture has been re-branded for modish urban living, close to the City of London. Physical improvement has been achieved but by creating a secure island within an area whose fundamental problems remain.

Thus though physical and economic regeneration may help disadvantaged communities and may contribute to enhancing social inclusion this is by no means certain. Indeed, in some circumstance, physical transformation as part of a process of

many volunteers in the heritage sector have a very similar socio-economic profile to the traditional consumers of heritage.

Walsh, K (1992) *The Representation of the Past: Museums and heritage in the post-modern world.* London: Routledge.

gentrification may have quite the opposite effect through, for example, displacing excluded groups and suppressing narratives of place that do not sit easily with new commodifications.

b) Neighbourhood Renewal

In this section we consider the more direct engagement of communities within processes of regeneration. Partnership building has been a key strand in urban regeneration policy over the last decade or so. The capacity to develop sustainable results is thought to be increased by a multi-stakeholder involvement in the regeneration process and the appeal of long lasting benefits may both increase involvement and empower communities. However, partnership working has also frequently been criticised for being opportunistic and short-lived to capture resources and for having no real transforming impact on power relations⁶². Partnership working has been a developing theme in the work of English Heritage through such funding regimes as Conservation Area Partnerships (CAPs). The Heritage Dividend claims new partnership relations as one of the key successes of a CAP scheme in Redruth, Cornwall, where a number of agencies have been working to address issues of rural poverty. Schemes have included the conversion of a former post office building to retail units, a heritage centre and a 'foyer scheme' that combines accommodation and training for unemployed young people.

The regeneration of Cresswell Model Village in the Nottinghamshire coalfield also involves a complex partnership that brings together the local authority, housing associations, a development company and a private landlord who own much of the housing stock and residents. The Heritage Lottery Fund's Townscape Heritage Initiative, the Government's Single Regeneration Budget and the European Regional Development Fund are providing funding. The village was laid out on Garden City principles in the 1890s with the sinking of the pit to provide improved conditions for miners and their families. However, since the closure of the pit in 1989 the settlement has rapidly declined with an out migration of people leaving over a third of properties

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⁶² Davoudi S & Healey P (1995) City Challenge: sustainable process or temporary gesture? *Environment and Planning C: Government and Planning*, Vol. 13, pages 79 - 95

vacant and few employment opportunities. One of the key objectives is the improvement of housing conditions and the restoration of architectural detail. Other objectives include improving a key central public space and the re-use of empty former schools to create job opportunities and a space for the community⁶³.

Thus in both Redruth and Cresswell, it is argued, the conservation of the historic environment is playing a key part in regeneration initiatives that encompass the regeneration of communities as well as property. However, in both cases the contribution of CBH is coincidental. These deprived communities happen to be located in stock that can be considered historic in conventional terms, through the listing of buildings or the existence of a conservation area.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, after starting with a reminder that the use of CBH is not necessarily socially progressive, we summarised how the roles attached to CBH have developed and changed. Heritage agencies have long sought to reinforce the cultural relevance and importance of CBH. More recently, through the actions of heritage agencies and others, the historic environment has acquired a positive image that frequently sees it presented as lending substance and quality to processes or regeneration. After looking at the potential social benefits of CBH asserted by relevant agencies we have drawn out two strands of potentially progressive activity. The first focused on the historic environment as heritage has been undergoing incremental shifts. An emphasis on helping poorer groups gain an appreciation of their heritage, which might be viewed as the role of CBH in social control, has shifted to one of institutional learning. Heritage bodies are beginning to learn how to question their own values. This is in line with a broader self reflection within governance agencies encouraged by greater public involvement and mechanisms such as 'Best Value'64. Attempts to redefine heritage have led to limited increases in involvement to date. However, we would argue that new processes, which bring communities and decision makers closer

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⁶³ Renfrew, J.-A. (2001). Regeneration Through Conservation: The Broadest Role for the Conservation Officer. *Institute of Historic Building Conservation Handbook*, 2001, p17-20.

together in understanding, are empowering and it is through these processes that an engagement with CBH may contribute to routes out of exclusion. The second strand examines the role of CBH where it is a convenient space in which regeneration occurs. The presence of historic fabric may increase funds available for change. However physical enhancement and regeneration in themselves are no guarantee of eradicating social exclusion. Indeed, the potential for gentrification of CBH means that taken alone such physical solutions may reinforce social exclusion or effectively deny access to part of the historic environment to poorer groups.

Heritage bodies may fuse these strands by seeking a broader view of how heritage is defined and engaging with communities about the issues that are important to them in areas needing regeneration. Through working in this way CBH may have a significant role in contributing to social inclusion and more occasionally in tackling social exclusion. An interesting on-going case at the time of writing is the fate of a large area of nineteenth century housing in Nelson, Lancashire. In a situation resonant of the 1970s local groups in the largely Asian community are resisting the compulsory purchase and clearance of their houses by the local authority. Despite the lack of conservation designations over most of the area they have the support of conservation bodies such as English Heritage and the Heritage Trust for the North West. As well as arguing over the historic and architectural qualities of the stock to be demolished, these bodies have stressed the impact such an intervention would have on community coherence. They argue that neighbourhood revitalisation will best be accompanied by working with the existing stock and community.

It is our contention that CBH has two pathways by which it may contribute to social inclusion, through its intrinsic historic nature or as a place where regeneration may occur, with the latter perhaps given additional lustre because it is historic. Both have limitations and can easily be subverted to produce opposite ends. This last point is key. If the contribution of CBH to processes of social inclusion is to be realised it will require a greater clarity of thinking from those in the sector than has been evident to

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the concept of 'Best Value', in particular in relation to issues of equity, see Thomas, H (2000) Race and Planning: The UK Experience. London: UCL Press.

date. Through the framework we have put forward in this paper, summarised in Table 2, we hope to contribute to this debate.

Table 1: Matrix of key terms

Key term	Definition	Policy framework	Role in CBH policy
Access	Defined in terms of the access lobby as an issue of promoting awareness of the needs of disabled people and eradication of environmental and attitudinal barriers raised against them. The term has also been used in the sense of intellectual and financial access (see across).	On physical access, introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) which is being incrementally rolled out to 2004 (physical access). Also PART M of Building Regulations (access for disabled persons) Moves the government has taken on other conceptions of access in the cultural sphere include lifting admission charges to national museums.	Physical access has been a strong theme in English Heritage (EH) policy for some years. Increasingly the concept of access is being broadened. E.g. access to information through ICT and concepts of intellectual access – interpreting the historic environment in a way that is relevant and accessible to a wider range of groups. Force for Our Future (FFOF) ¹ and People and Places (P&P) ² link access to these and to financial access. FFOF refers to CBH being 'accessible to everybody and is seen as something with which the whole of society can identify and engage' (p9). This links to pluralism.
Multiculturalism	The concept that cultural diversity (in the sense of cultures of minority ethnic groups) is recognised and valued.	Seen most particularly in the field of education ³ where it has been criticised for conceptualising minority cultures as exotic ephemera ⁴ ; substituting a focus on 'samosas, saris and steel bands' for a real concern for the education of minority pupils	Power of Place (PofP) ⁵ discusses multiculturalism. P&P refers to the multicultural heritage and discusses cultural diversity more broadly (linking to pluralism).
Partnerships	Multi agency groups constituted usually to deliver change in urban regeneration programmes.	Since the urban regeneration programme City Challenge in the early 1990s, partnerships of different agencies (public, business, voluntary sectors) and communities have become the established way of delivering sustained change in run down areas. Following City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and more recently New Deal for Communities have attempted to shift power to communities.	Partnership has been a strong theme in EH policy since the introduction of Conservation Area Partnership grant funding in 1994. No systematic attempt as yet to link to communities. FFOF and P&P recommend that community strategies consider CBH.

Pluralism	Presupposes a society composed of many different groups with different interests, all competing to define the agenda for the actions of governments ⁶ . It produces a politics of competing claims and recognises diversity. Seen as a challenge to the older model of representative democracy where there is a concept of the Public interest. Pluralism embodied in ideas about public participation/citizen involvement. Important in consideration of co-existence in shared space ⁷ .	Pluralism is at the heart of the concept of governance i.e. the view that decisions are no longer made solely (if they ever were) by central and local government. Now consciously part of a strategy to create partnerships of local stakeholders including citizens. New vocabulary of social capital, building capacity.	Pluralism is a dominant theme in contemporary discourse about the historic environment, though the term is rarely explicitly used. Sustaining the historic environment ⁸ was the first major statement along these lines. FFOF refers to 'A broader definition of heritage' and states 'The historic environment should be seen as something which all sections of the community can identify with and take pride in, rather than something valued only by narrow specialist interests' (p 30). P&P defines cultural diversity as about 'equality and valuing different cultural experiences, whether they are due to ethnic identities, social or economic situations' (p15).
Social inclusion	Used generally without rigour or seen as the dichotomy of social exclusion. More precisely understood as an exclusion/inclusion continuum, which might move from a pure description of a condition (e.g. unemployment) to an identification of related factors, which suggest vulnerability.	Generally seen as a goal for central government but essentially defined as the reverse of social exclusion. The Scottish Social Inclusion strategy set out a programme of works including the development of a package of indicators for monitoring success. Similarly the Welsh strategy defines key indicators. ¹⁰	Used increasingly in historic environment discourse. EH adopted a series of social inclusion principles in July 2000 that are wideranging, encompassing issues to do with <i>access</i> , <i>pluralism</i> and <i>multiculturalism</i> . <i>P&P</i> is subtitled 'Social Inclusion Policy for the Built and the Historic Environment'. However, though a wide-ranging document, despite specifically defining social exclusion, it does not offer a definition of social inclusion. The implication is that it is the converse of social exclusion.
Social exclusion	A shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.	Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) set up by the Prime Minister in 1997 to provide opportunities for creating joined up policy between departments rather than simply focusing on issues dealt with by a single department. SEU defines social exclusion as 'a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, poverty and family	Social inclusion is the term used most often in historic environment policy. However, P&P specifically defines social exclusion using both SEU definition and a further definition by Anne Power.

		breakdown.'	
Neighbourhood renewal	Understood generally as regeneration on the local level but more recently (1998) as a strategy for tackling social exclusion.	The national strategy for neighbourhood renewal ¹¹ sets out to "develop an integrated and sustainable approach to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown and bad schools". The focus is therefore on the problems of people in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The use of the term estates suggests identification with local authority housing estates.	PofP links the historic environment and conservation with neighbourhood renewal, though otherwise neighbourhood renewal is not a phrase frequently explicitly used in conservation policy.

¹ See main note 38

² See main note 39

³ Gilborn, D (1990) *Race, Ethnicity, Education. London*: Unwin Hyman.
⁴ Mason, D (1995) *Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain*. Oxford: University Press. p. 70

⁵ See main note 37

⁶ Healey, P (1997) Op cit. main note 41 p. 222 ⁷ Healey, P (1997) Op cit. main note 41 ⁸ See main note 32

⁹ Cameron, S, Coaffee, J, Gilroy, R, Jones, I & Speak, S (2001) A Scoping Study of Social Inclusion in the North East of England: A Regional Baseline and Benchmark. Report for One North East. Newcastle: One North East.

Department of Social Security (1999) Opportunity for All, London, TSO

Social Exclusion Unit (2001) Neighbourhood Renewal; The National Strategy Action Plan, London, TSO

Table 2 Ladders of CBH & Social Inclusion

CBH as Historic Places	CBH as Opportunity Space for
combating social exclusion	Regeneration
	combating social exclusion
extending involvement	
	neighbourhood renewal
changing definitions	
	physical & economic regeneration
widening access	