Heritage Counts 2012 – Indicators on Building Preservation Trust activity

This report sets out the findings of the Architectural Heritage Fund's analysis of Building Preservation Trust (BPT) activity. Annex A contains the research methodology. Annex B contains the list of identified live BPT projects as of the end of the 2011/12 financial year.

1. Number of Building Preservation Trusts* by region

Rank	Region	Number of BPTs*
1	South West	35
2	East of England	24
3	West Midlands	19
4	North West	18
5=	East Midlands	12
5=	London	12
5=	Yorkshire & Humber	12
8	South East	11
9	North East	5
n/a	National	7
	Total	155

*Members of the UK Association of Preservation Trusts as at 31st March 2012

2. Projects completed by Building Preservation Trusts, 2011-12

The following 5 projects were completed by Building Preservation Trusts in the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012:

- **South East**: Farnham Pottery, Farnham, Surrey (Farnham BPT)
- **East of England**: South Wing, Thoresby College, King's Lynn, Norfolk (King's Lynn BPT)
- **North West**: The Florence Institute for Boys, Liverpool (Florence Institute Trust)
- **West Midlands**: Hopton Castle, Shropshire (Hopton Castle Preservation Trust)
- **East Midlands**: Moulton Windmill, Lincolnshire (Moulton Windmill Preservation Trust)

3. Live projects being undertaken by Building Preservation Trusts, 2011-12

Rank	Region	No. of live projects
1	South West	31
2	North West	23
3	East Midlands	12
4	East of England	8
5	London	7
6	South East	6
7=	West Midlands	5
7=	Yorkshire & the Humber	5
9	North East	0
	Total	97

Observations

Building Preservation Trusts in England were actively involved with 102 projects to save historic buildings in 2011-12 (taking completed and live projects together). [1] Given that the vast majority of BPTs depend entirely on a small number of committed volunteers, this is a remarkable figure. It reflects a strong commitment to the historic built environment by local communities and a willingness to take action to prevent its degradation.

The second observation to be drawn from the research is that there were more BPTs than projects in the period covered. A significant proportion of the total 155 BPTs were not undertaking any projects.

Two regions (South West and North West) account for more than half of all projects. The two other regions of northern England (North East and Yorkshire & Humber) are ranked in the bottom three, with no projects at all currently underway in the North East.

The reasons for these regional variations are not entirely clear. Taking the two most active regions, it might be assumed that they would share common characteristics. Yet the picture is very different: the South West has a relatively large number of mostly 'single project' BPTs, while activity in the North West is dominated by one regional BPT and its 3 subsidiaries, which account for 20 of the 23 live projects. So the remaining 14 BPTs in the North West have only 3 live projects between them.

Some explanations

<u>'Single project' and 'multi project' BPTs</u>
Very few BPTs are currently operating with a 'revolving fund', where a restored building is sold on the open market and the sale proceeds are re-invested into the acquisition and repair of another building at risk. For this model to work, a BPT must have the ability to acquire a building at risk at low cost, it must be able to secure the funds to cover the conservation deficit and be able to sell the property once the project is complete, enabling the surplus to be invested in the next project. This set of conditions is increasingly difficult to find. Nevertheless, a significant level of activity is still being driven by what would be better described as 'multi-project' BPTs, which are committed to undertaking a series of projects. These Trusts are typically focussed on a particular geographical area, usually a county, and in most cases have developed or are exploring alternative income streams, no longer relying on the revolving fund model.

Increasingly, the BPT sector is characterised by 'single project' BPTs, typically established at a grass-roots level as a result of community concern about a particular building which is under threat. These Trusts often wish to retain ownership of the restored building and manage it as a visitor attraction or community facility. This may go some way to explaining why there are more BPTs than projects: many BPTs have achieved their aim of saving a building and have become occupied with keeping the building running. They remain as members of the Association of Preservation Trusts, but are unlikely to take on another project.

<u>Barriers to acquisitions by BPTs</u>
Most local authorities or other public sector organisations seek the highest possible capital receipts for the sale of their property assets. Even in cases where their historic 'assets' have

[1] This number is the number of live projects among UK Association of Preservation Trusts as at 31st March 2012.

been shown to have little commercial value and a significant conservation deficit, it is considered that there has sometimes been an unwillingness to transfer ownership to a BPT for less than the market rate. It has always been difficult for BPTs to acquire buildings at risk that are in private ownership, as local authority support is required here also. BPTs must rely on local authorities utilising the powers available to them: issuing Repairs Notices, undertaking compulsory purchase proceedings and entering into back-to-back agreements with BPTs. It is considered that many local authorities are often unwilling to bear the cost and risk of such actions.

It must be acknowledged that some BPTs themselves are risk-averse and appear unwilling to acquire buildings at risk even if the local authority is offering encouragement to do so. BPTs operating in the more prosperous regions of England have reported difficulties in finding suitable buildings because in a buoyant property market commercial developers have delivered solutions for all but the most difficult properties.

The challenge of maintaining partnerships with local authorities

Most of the original county-wide revolving fund BPTs were established by the local authority, often with core funding to pay for a member of staff. Cuts to local authority budgets have made financial support to BPTs much less likely but some of the most successful BPTs today are still characterised by having strong links with the local authority. In the best examples, local authorities act as guarantors for loans from the Architectural Heritage Fund or other lenders, or offer interest-free loans directly to the BPT; they contribute towards project development costs; the Conservation Officer is seconded part-time to the BPT; the BPT is offered ‘first refusal’ when the local authority wishes to dispose of one of its properties. Few BPTs enjoy this type of relationship with their local authorities. Administrative reorganisations have in a number of cases further dislocated the BPT from the local authority. Some of the ‘county’ BPTs have an area of operation which covers former metropolitan counties which were abolished some years ago.

High cost of projects and funding challenges

The acquisition, repair and conversion of a listed building is a costly process. Even before the cost of capital works is considered, the amount of investment required to fund project development work can be a significant barrier for BPTs, particularly if they are wholly reliant on external funding and on volunteers to do the work. With the cost of projects typically being counted in millions rather than thousands of pounds, BPTs have to assemble complex funding packages and demonstrate from the outset that there is an economically viable new use for a building at risk.

It has become increasingly difficult to attract funding for projects which involve the repair and conversion of a building to residential or commercial use, yet this is often the most viable use for a redundant building. The type of project that can be delivered has been shaped in large part by the priorities of grant-giving bodies, particularly the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It should be acknowledged that without lottery funding, a significant number of building rescue projects by BPTs could never have happened and the HLF will continue to have a key role.

The increasing cost of projects means the HLF has often been the major contributor, given its relatively large funding resources. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s (HLF’s) criteria require projects to provide public benefits such as access or learning opportunities. This approach is well suited for buildings whose end-use is as community centres or visitor attractions. It has been more challenging to attract grants to repair and convert buildings for residential/commercial use, even where this is considered the most viable use to ensure survival. Some organisations, such as the Landmark Trust, have successfully obtained HLF grants for projects involving the repair and adaptation of historic buildings where public access will be limited in the future, having met HLF’s requirements by providing opportunities to engage the public in the project delivery phase. The new Heritage Enterprise grants announced in HLF’s

strategic framework are expected to provide more funding opportunities to repair and convert buildings for commercial use.

Conclusions

Given the nature of the challenges outlined above, it could be concluded that it is unrealistic to expect the voluntary sector to attempt to save redundant historic buildings. Yet BPTs can and do deliver successful projects for buildings considered by the private sector and the state to be too difficult and risky. It is a testament to the tenacity, skill and commitment of the volunteers involved that new life is found for 'unviable' buildings which would otherwise have been lost and this work is continuing in an extremely difficult economic climate. However, there are still large parts of England where an active BPT does not exist and this needs to be addressed.

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Architectural Heritage Fund
August 2012

This work was commissioned as part of Heritage Counts 2012. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of English Heritage.

Annex A) Indicators methodology for Building Preservation Trust activity

Introduction

To mark 10 years of Heritage Counts, the Architectural Heritage Fund was commissioned to undertake research into the number of live projects and projects completed by Building Preservation Trusts in England during the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. The data will be presented on a regional basis and will highlight projects involving buildings listed on 'at risk' registers.

Definitions

1) The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) defines a **Building Preservation Trust** (BPT) as a registered charity whose objects include prominently the preservation of a building or buildings of historic, architectural or constructional interest. The latter is usually defined as any building which is listed or which lies within a Conservation Area. Its governing documents must also give it the powers to buy and sell property and to offer the charity's assets as security for borrowing. The AHF is strongly of the view that BPTs should be incorporated as companies limited by guarantee, thus giving their trustees the protection afforded by limited liability. Most BPTs are members of the UK Association of Preservation Trusts (APT). For the purposes of this study, the term BPT will be taken as synonymous with membership of APT.

2) There is an assumption that a project taken on by a BPT will involve a **'building at risk'**, i.e. those that are listed on English Heritage's 'Heritage At Risk' Register (Grade I and II* listed, Grade II in London) and Buildings At Risk Registers maintained by local authorities for Grade II listed buildings. Projects involving a building on an 'at risk' register will be identified as such in this study. However, the AHF's definition of a 'building at risk' is much broader than this, in recognition that only a minority of local authorities maintain up-to-date registers. In providing financial assistance for projects, the AHF takes a view on a case-by-case basis as to whether a building is considered to be 'at risk'.

3) A **'live project'** is more difficult to define. AHF's eligibility criteria for its grants and loans states that a 'project' must involve the acquisition, repair and reuse of a building at risk. The vast majority of projects taken on by BPTs will meet these requirements. However, in some exceptional cases the AHF has provided project funding to BPTs for

work involving structures or monuments which are not capable of reuse. Buildings at risk in this category will be included within the scope of the research.

The point at which a project becomes 'live' is also open to interpretation. BPTs can spend many years campaigning on behalf of a building at risk without any prospect of taking ownership. To the BPT in question this is a 'live' project but will not be viewed as such by other agencies. After some early promise, projects can become stalled for many years, only to be revived again once certain obstacles have been overcome. A BPT may have successfully completed the capital works on a project, but not secured sufficient income to repay an AHF loan. For the purposes of this study, a 'live project' will have the following characteristics:

a. the building in question is owned by the BPT or there is evidence indicating that the BPT has a realistic chance of being able to acquire it (this must be the freehold or a leasehold of at least 21 years and a day).
b. there is a reasonable expectation that the building is capable of an economically viable new use **or** funding has been provided towards a building which will not be brought into use (e.g. consolidation of ruins, repair of a scheduled ancient monument)
c. capital repair works have not yet been completed.

4) A **'completed project'** should be self-explanatory: physical repair and restoration works have been completed and the building is occupied, or is available to be used but an end user has not yet come forward. In the case of structures where no use is possible, it should no longer be considered 'at risk'. Within this category will be included some projects that may not actually be considered completed by AHF: cases where there is outstanding AHF loan capital and/or interest to be repaid.

Sources of data

The main source of data was the AHF's database of grants and loans. Other sources of data explored as part of the project were:

1) English Heritage's grants database (especially for structures not capable of reuse)
2) Heritage Lottery Fund (especially where AHF development funding was not required)
3) The APT study of BPT activity in the South West
4) APT members database – telephone surveys of BPTs

Annex B) Heritage Counts 2012 – Indicators on Building Preservation Trust activity

List of live projects

No.	Region	Project	BPT
1	NW	Rose Castle, Cumbria	Cumbria BPT
2	NW	37-39 Main Street, Sedbergh, Cumbria	Cumbria BPT
3	NW	Tonge Hall, Middleton, Rochdale	Greater Manchester BPT
4	NW	Long Street Methodist Chapel, Middleton	Greater Manchester BPT
5	NW	Dukinfield Old Hall Chapel, Tameside	Greater Manchester BPT
6	NW	Newton Hall, Hyde, Tameside	Greater Manchester BPT
7	NW	St Paul's Church, Shaw, Oldham	Greater Manchester BPT
8	NW	Watling Gate, Trafford	Greater Manchester BPT
9	NW	Agecroft Cemetery, Salford	Greater Manchester BPT
10	NW	St Luke's Cheetham Hill, Manchester	Greater Manchester BPT
11	NW	Baguley Hall, Wythenshawe, Manchester	Greater Manchester BPT
12	NW	Ancoats Dispensary, Manchester	Greater Manchester BPT
13	NW	Higherford Mill, Barrowford, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
14	NW	St Mary's Church, Nelson, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
15	NW	Lomeshaye Bridge Mill, Nelson, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
16	NW	Lomeshaye Old School, Nelson, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
17	NW	The Presbytery, Nelson, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
18	NW	Bank Hall, Chorley, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
19	NW	Lytham Hall, Lytham, Lancashire	Heritage Trust for the NW
20	NW	Wesleyan Chapel, Upholland, Wigan	Heritage Trust for the NW
21	NW	84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	Manchester HBT
22	NW	Victoria Baths, Manchester	Manchester Victoria Baths T.
23	NW	Winter Gardens, Morecambe, Lancashire	Morecambe Winter Gdns. T.
24	YH	Holgate Windmill, York	Holgate Windmill Pres. Soc.
25	YH	Victoria Cottage, Sutton, Kingston-upon-Hull	Buildings at Risk Trust
26	YH	Wellhouse Farm Barn, Mirfield, West Yorks.	Kirklees HBT
27	YH	Howsham Mill, North Yorks.	Renewable Heritage Trust
28	YH	42-44 King Street, Thorne, South Yorks.	South Yorkshire BPT
29	EM	Building 17, Cromford Mill, Derbyshire	Arkwright Society
30	EM	Building 1, Cromford Mill, Derbyshire	Arkwright Society
31	EM	Hoffman Kiln, Ilkeston, Derbyshire	Derbyshire HBT
32	EM	St James the Less, New Mills, Derbyshire	St James the Less PT
33	EM	Dronfield Hall Barn, Dronfield, Derbyshire	Peel Centre Charitable Trust
34	EM	Derby Hippodrome	Derby Hippodrome Res. Trust
35	EM	Cotesbach Schoolhouse, Lutterworth, Leics	Cotesbach Educational Trust
36	EM	All Saints Church, Benington, Lincolnshire	Benington Community HT
37	EM	Sneath's Mill, Long Sutton, Lincolnshire	Sneath's Mill Trust
38	EM	Bourne Cemetery Chapel, Lincolnshire	Bourne Preservation Trust
39	EM	116 High Street, Boston, Lincolnshire	Heritage Trust of Lincs.
40	EM	Manor Farm House, Helpringham, Lincs	Heritage Trust of Lincs.
41	WM	Wappenshall Warehouses & Wharf, Telford	Shrewsbury & Newport CT
42	WM	Newman Bros. Coffin Works, Birmingham	Birmingham Conservation T.
43	WM	59-60 Tower Street, Dudley	West Midlands HBT
44	WM	Weavers' Cottages, Kidderminster, Worcs.	Worcestershire BPT
45	WM	Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire	Hartlebury Castle PT
46	EE	St Mary's Old Church, Clophill, Beds.	Clophill Heritage Trust
47	EE	Vauxhall Bridge, Great Yarmouth	Great Yarmouth PT

48	EE	Great Yarmouth cemeteries	Great Yarmouth PT
49	EE	133 King Street, Great Yarmouth	Great Yarmouth PT
50	EE	90 London Road, King's Lynn	King's Lynn PT
51	EE	Langham Dome, Langham, Norfolk	North Norfolk HBT
52	EE	Briton's Arms, Norwich	Norwich Preservation Trust
53	EE	Howard House, 97 King Street, Norwich	Norwich Preservation Trust
54	SE	Bursledon Brickworks, Southampton	Hampshire BPT
55	SE	LMS Swing Bridge, Oxford	Oxford Preservation Trust
56	SE	Romsey Railway Station, Hants.	Romsey & District BPT
57	SE	1-15 Regency Close, Sheerness, Kent	Spitalfields HBT
58	SE	Old St Helen's Church, Hastings, E. Sussx.	Sussex Heritage Trust
59	SE	Hadlow Tower, Kent	Vivat Trust
60	LN	St George's Garrison Church, Woolwich	Heritage of London Trust Ops
61	LN	549 Lordship Lane, East Dulwich	Heritage of London Trust Ops
62	LN	Abney Park Cemetery Chapel, LB Hackney	Abney Park Trust
63	LN	Upminster Windmill, LB Havering	Upminster Windmill PT
64	LN	The Old Fire Station, Norwood High Street	South London Theatre BPT
65	LN	Limehouse Town Hall, LB Tower Hamlets	Limehouse Town Hall Trust
66	LN	Wilton's Music Hall, LB Tower Hamlets	Wellclose Square BPT
67	SW	Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol	Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust
68	SW	Brandy Bottom Colliery, Pucklechurch, Glos	Avon Industrial Buildings T.
69	SW	1 Royal Crescent, Bath	Bath Preservation Trust
70	SW	Literary & Scientific Institute, Bridport	Bridport Area Development T.
71	SW	Lower Lodge, Ashton Court, Bristol	Bristol BPT
72	SW	Cleveland Pools, Bath	Cleveland Pools Trust
73	SW	Dawe's Twine Works, West Coker, Somers.	Coker Rope & Sail Trust
74	SW	Old Duchy Palace, Lostwithiel, Cornwall	Cornwall BPT
75	SW	The Walronds, Cullompton, Devon	Cullompton Walronds PT
76	SW	The Guildhall, Tavistock, Devon	Devon HBT
77	SW	The Dissenters' Graveyard	Exeter HBT
78	SW	Goods Transfer Shed, Exeter Station	Exeter HBT
79	SW	Great Torrington Town Hall, Devon	Great Torrington BPT
80	SW	Guns Mill, Forest of Dean	Hartpury Heritage Trust
81	SW	Champion's Brassworks, Warmley, Bristol	Kingswood Heritage Projects
82	SW	Llanthony Secunda Priory, Gloucester	Llanthony Secunda Trust
83	SW	Lupton House, Brixham, Devon	Lupton Trust
84	SW	New Mechanics' Institution, Swindon, Wilts.	New Mechanics' Inst. Trust
85	SW	Poltimore House, Exeter, Devon	Poltimore House Trust
86	SW	Maker Heights Barracks, Cornwall	Rame Conservation Trust
87	SW	Castle House, Bridgwater, Somerset	SAVE Trust
88	SW	Castle House, Taunton, Somerset	Somerset BPT
89	SW	Somerton Old Town Hall, Somerset	Somerton HBT
90	SW	Brunel Goods Shed, Stroud, Glos.	Stroud Preservation Trust
91	SW	Tone Mill, Wellington, Somerset	Tone Mill Trust
92	SW	Brunel Building, Totnes, Devon	Totnes Development Trust
93	SW	Barn at Derriads Farm, Chippenham, Wilts.	Wiltshire BPT
94	SW	47 Blue Boar Row, Salisbury, Wilts.	Wiltshire BPT
95	SW	Wiveliscombe Town Hall, Somerset	Wiveliscombe Town Hall T.
96	SW	The Riding House, Wolfeton Manor, Dorset	Wolfeton Riding House Trust
97	SW	Woodchester Mansion, Gloucestershire	Woodchester Mansion Trust

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