

State of the  
Historic  
Environment  
Report 2002

**LONDON**

# The State of the Historic Environment in **London** Region 2002

COVER IMAGE:  
The West India Dock,  
E14 reflected in  
adjacent modern  
building. This Grade I  
listed former warehouse  
and offices, built by  
George Gwilt between  
1802 and 1813, has  
been converted to  
mixed residential and  
commercial uses,  
reinvigorating this part  
of London's Docklands.  
The property had been  
on the English Heritage  
Buildings at Risk List  
from 1992 and came  
off the list in 2001  
following this successful  
redevelopment project.

The publication of the first annual State of the Historic Environment Report (SHER) offers the opportunity to collate relevant information and begin to analyse the condition of the historic environment in England. SHER 2002 is a pilot and the Historic Environment Review Steering Group is inviting comment on the format and content of the national and regional documents to ensure that future SHERs can be improved.

For this first year it has only been possible to produce a summary of basic information for London. In future years the London Historic Environment Forum will play a key role in guiding regional content and analysis and they will be able to add to the basic content that will be available from the national SHER data collection process. It would be desirable to carry out some comparison between the inner and outer Boroughs as there are very significant differences between the nature of the historic environment resource and the way it is managed. Arguably, because of the density of development and financial pressures, achieving high quality buildings is a particular challenge in London.

English Heritage in London has more extensive powers relating to listed buildings, grants and archaeology than in the rest of the country. This makes comparison with other parts of England difficult in some respects – e.g. the number of listed building consent applications dealt with by the Regional team.

Views on the usefulness of this document and what should be in the future regional SHERs are welcomed. All documents can be viewed at [www.historicenvironment.org.uk](http://www.historicenvironment.org.uk)

**Please make your response by 28 February 2003 to:**  
Philip Davies, Regional Director, English Heritage,  
23 Savile Row London W1S 2ET

## THE STATE OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IN LONDON

London possesses an immensely rich built fabric of outstanding historic interest, which makes a major contribution to its world city role. London's streets, buildings, squares and parks, the River Thames and waterways are the product of two millennia of incremental growth and renewal; yet in their balance between continuity and change they define the distinctive identity of the capital.

London is a World City comparable in role and function only to New York and Tokyo. It is the seat of national government and the engine of the UK. It is a major international business and trading centre and the leading choice for international investment in Europe.

London is a city of paradoxes. Despite losing an average population of 51,000 a year, the city has grown by the equivalent of Sheffield's population (600,000) since 1998 and it is expected to grow by the size of Leeds in the period 2001-2016 – an additional 700,000. In this period, 300,000 new homes will be needed. 40% of the additional population will be in-migrants. It is already the most diverse city in the world with about one-third of its population comprising ethnic minorities.

Economically it is the richest region in Europe, but has the second highest level of unemployment in the UK (after the North East of England). With high economic in-migration and a younger age structure, 854,000 new jobs will be created in London up to 2015. Poverty and social deprivation, however, are at relatively high levels in national terms.

Over 670,000 people commute daily into the capital from surrounding regions and 3 million passengers a day use the Underground; but average road speeds are slower than in 1910. Congestion of roads and key rail stations are major issues. Pollution is rising and increasingly undermining the health of Londoners.

These trends will have a huge impact both on the quality of life and on the quality of the historic environment in London. The Mayor of London's emerging *London Plan* will provide the main strategic framework for addressing these issues. In order to ensure that the historic environment is given due weight at all levels of decision making, English Heritage in London has been closely involved with the preparation of the plan.

The London Historic Environment Forum has been created to provide more integrated working between the principal agencies and organisations. The LHEF is commissioning new research to provide hard evidence to demonstrate the value of London's historic environment economically, socially, culturally and environmentally and to inform future Regional SHERs.

Key issues for London's historic environment include:-

- Integrating the management of the historic environment into the strategic and local plan-making processes.
- Tackling under-investment in the maintenance and improvement of parks and public open spaces.
- Deterioration in the public realm – a recent MORI poll identified the condition of streets and pavements as the most serious problem for London's historic environment.
- Pressure for high density development at already severely congested historic transport nodes.
- Pressure for tall buildings in locations where they would damage London's historic environment.
- Insufficient recognition of the value of conservation-led regeneration in revitalising rundown areas of London and creating a liveable city.

A number of notable successes have been achieved by the heritage sector in London in the current year, among them:

- Over 100 Buildings at Risk have been removed from the *Register*, including some of the most intractable long-term cases: e.g. Holborn Town Hall and Library, the former Liberty Cinema, Southall, and the St Pancras Water Point, Kings Cross.
- Progress on the *London Squares Campaign*, in particular the restoration of Russell Square with a major HLF grant.
- The re-landscaping of Hyde Park Corner to coincide with the opening of a major exhibition of Indian culture at Wellington Arch and the Queen's Golden Jubilee.
- The establishment of the London Historic Environment Forum.
- The opening of the Wernher collection in the restored Ranger's House, Greenwich.
- Nomination of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew as London's fourth World Heritage Site.

## REGIONAL PROFILE

- London region, at 1580 sq. km., is the smallest of the 9 English regions.
- The total population of London region is 7.4 million compared to an average for English regions of 5.5 million, the highest for an English Region, forming 15% of the total population of England.
- The population density averages 4,611 people per sq km in London, the highest of all the English Regions and twelve times the average density in England (381 people per sq km).

## THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE LONDON REGION

### SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- In July 2002 there were 150 scheduled monuments in London, a figure unchanged since 2000. The average number of monuments in a region is 2204.
- 32 applications for Scheduled Monument Consent were made in the London in 2001/2 compared to a national average of 88 per region.
- One indicator of the degree of pressure on the stock of monuments is the number of Scheduled Monument Consent cases as a proportion of all Scheduled Monuments. In London this was 21.3% more than 5 times the national figure of 4%<sup>1</sup>.

### LISTED BUILDINGS

- In August 2002 London had 18,300 entries on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest which was 4.9% of the national total.
- In 2002 London had 5.5% of its Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings classified as being at Risk, the same as in the base year of 1999 but a 0.2% rise on 2001. This was above the national average of 3.7%. It is estimated that around 2% of London's listed building stock (not just list entries) are at Risk, nearly a quarter of them in local authority ownership.
- A register for Buildings at Risk of all grades has been running in London since 1991. 87% of the entries on the first London Register have been removed.
- 35.5% of the entries in the London 2002 English Heritage BAR Register were capable of economic repair (i.e. unlikely to require some public subsidy) nearly three times the national figure of 12.8%.

<sup>1</sup> As some monuments will have more than one application in a year and scheduled monument consent is not always applied for, this figure should be treated with caution and is one indicator of relative pressure for change.

<sup>2</sup> Source: English Heritage.

<sup>3</sup> Regulations require that planning applications in or affecting the setting of conservation areas that cover more than 1000sq.m. or where a proposal is more than 20m high should be referred to English Heritage.

<sup>4</sup> Local Authority Conservation Provision, 2002.

- In London in 2001/2, 2445 listed building consent applications were notified to English Heritage; an average of 1 application for every 8 listed buildings (the figure for all regions except London was 1 for every 64 listed buildings). In 2000/01 there were a total of 3781 listed building consent applications made to local authorities in the region, an average of 1 application for every 5 listed buildings. The average for England as whole was 1 for every 12 listed buildings.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

- In June 2002 London had 881 conservation areas<sup>2</sup>. The average number of conservation areas per English Region was 1003.
- In London during the year 2001/2, there were 1005 substantial planning applications in conservation areas<sup>3</sup>. This equates to around 1.1 major applications per conservation area in a year. The average per region was 558 applications or 0.6 major applications per conservation area.
- One way of measuring how conservation areas are being managed is the number of Conservation Area Appraisals that have been adopted by local authorities. In the London Region an average of 13 Appraisals had been adopted by each local authority by June 2002 compared to 8 nationally.

## WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- London has three of England's fourteen World Heritage sites: The Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church (designated 1987), the Tower of London (1988) and Maritime Greenwich (1997).
- Three of the twelve sites in England on the UK Government's Tentative list are in London. These are: Darwin's Home and Workplace: Down House and environs, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the Great Western Railway (also in the SE and SW).
- A management plan was agreed for Maritime Greenwich in 1997 (which is currently being revised). A plan for the Tower of London is about to be agreed and one for Westminster will be commissioned shortly. Kew's management plan is close to being finalised.

## HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

- In October 2002 there were 142 entries on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register in London, compared to an average per region of 170. 12 sites have been added to the Register since 2000.
- London has over 600 historic squares, 461 of which are protected under the London Squares Preservation Act 1931.

## REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- One of England's 43 Registered Historic Battlefields, Barnet, is partly in the London and also in the East of England Region.

## STRATEGIC VIEWS

- St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster are iconic landmarks of London's skyline and nationally important symbols of the capital. Their position and significance are protected by ten strategic views directions issued by the Secretary of State.

## RESOURCES

- In 2001/2, English Heritage offered £3,116,000 in London (11% of the total for England) which included £1,518,000 on secular grants, £196,000 on church grants, £1,402,000 on area grants (HERS). This represented an 8% increase in the previous year.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund offered grants during 2001/2 of £40,919,000 in London (12% of the total for England). This included £3,412,000 for Places of Worship, £4,257,000 for Parks, £2,000,000 for the Townscape Heritage Initiative and £916,000 for Your Heritage.
- Only 25% of London local authorities have a budget for historic buildings grants compared to 51% nationally. Just under £8,000 per local authority is available from this source in London while an average of £20,000 per local authority is available nationally.
- The LACP report<sup>4</sup> found that in London the average level of staffing for historic building conservation per local authority was 2.8 compared to a national average of 1.7.
- English Heritage employs 160 full time equivalent staff in the region. This includes custodial staff who work at English Heritage properties.



ENGLISH HERITAGE