



PUBLIC SECTOR | WISBECH CONSERVATION AREA

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Conservation Area Appraisal to support HLF bid

DESCRIPTION

Wisbech is considered to be the East of England's finest Georgian market town and port, earning it the reputation as 'the Capital of the Fens'. However, declining investment in the town has left several buildings in a precarious position, and led to Historic England designating the Wisbech Conservation Area as being in 'very bad' condition with a trend for deterioration.

In order to reverse this trend, Fenland District Council appointed Beacon Planning to prepare a new Conservation Area Appraisal to support their bid for funding to secure the High Street's repair and renovation, which was ultimately successful. The Heritage Lottery Fund's Townscape Heritage programme supports schemes that make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities, and since Beacon's completion of the CAA, Wisbech has been awarded 1.9 million towards the regeneration of the high street.

A site visit was undertaken early in the assessment process, in order to complete a comprehensive Historic Area Assessment, following Historic England's guidelines; this extensive investigation included day-time and night-time views of the town. Assets and their settings of particular importance and heritage interest were identified, and the town was split into character zones to tease out the differences in the area's special qualities.

Client Fenland District Council
Appointed October 2015
Services Appraisal

BP team Jon Burgess



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Following the site visit, the information accrued was synthesised with the results of intensive desk- and archive-based research, drawing on sources of different types and ages to create a fully informed appraisal of the area's current and historic character and appearance.

In addition to preparing the appraisal, Beacon provided exhibition boards for the public consultation undertaken by Fenland District Council, and attended meetings in order to ensure that the appraisal reflected not only the objective interpretation of the town, but also the sense of place felt by residents.

OUTCOME

The Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in March 2016 and the HLF bid approved in July 2016.

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