

Cardiff Civic Society HERITAGE SUBMISSION - in support of meaningful protection for Cardiff's heritage in the RLDP

Heritage does not simply cover landmark, historic buildings, it also encompasses cultural heritage and much-loved community buildings that give each neighbourhood its sense of place and add to the character and soul of the city.

As the debacle of Guildford Crescent illustrates, current policies and supporting documents are powerless to protect the city's cultural and community heritage. Indeed, even listing fails to secure the future of a building as the continuing saga of the ever-declining Grade 2 *listed Coal Exchange amply illustrates.

The RLDP must protect the city's heritage in the strongest possible terms. The wording must be clear, concise, and watertight.

Placemaking

Many fine words surround the issue of placemaking, but little happens to support the concept in reality.

For clarification, placemaking is defined thus:

Placemaking is a 'people centred' approach to the planning, design and management of places and spaces. It seeks to create buildings and areas within which people would desire to live, work and spend recreational time.

The importance of Placemaking has been embraced as a cornerstone of the national planning agenda in Wales and the sustainable development objectives which underpin it. This is emphasised by the 2020 Placemaking Charter.

All new development can contribute in some form to the making of places, and influence how that place will be experienced and enjoyed,

which will stand as a legacy for future generations of occupants and visitors.

ALSO

Placemaking is a multi-pronged approach to the planning, urban design and management of public spaces. It maximises a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. In essence, transforming places to live.

The RLDP must take placemaking seriously. For example, by removing permitted development rights for public houses and other buildings key to the character of a neighbourhood.

Placemaking is also more than just building, it includes paying attention to the physical, cultural and social identity of a place. For many communities, placemaking has been a way to reimagine and renovate their public places. Placemaking can empower communities to create a sense of belonging and lead to community pride. The new RLDP must reflect this by providing proper protection to the buildings and green spaces people cherish, and empowering communities to defend these spaces.

A thriving city is more than a series of tower blocks, and a destination for one-night visitors attending events, it needs a rich, cultural life and buildings that resonate with the population and tell the story of the city's past, inform its present, and provide a legacy for future generations.

HERITAGE VALUE

Access to culture and heritage has many benefits, such as improving our wellbeing, providing education, and contributing to local identity. As the agreed approach to measuring this contribution is somewhat

nebulous, the true value of culture and heritage capital has often been understated.

However, published evidence demonstrates not only that people gain benefit from access to heritage, but that people gain significant benefit just from the existence of culture and heritage sites through local identity or knowing continued access is available to family, friends and future generations.

The document accessed via the link below may refer largely to England, but key observations on the value of culture and heritage apply equally to Wales. Again, as evidenced by public response to Guildford Crescent, Hailey Park, Maindy Velodrome, and the Cardiff Story Museum.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-research-will-demonstrate-benefit-of-culture-and-heritage-to-society#:~:text=Access%20to%20culture%20and%20heritage,heritage%20capital%20is%20often%20understated.>

Facadism

The trend for facadism fails to defend heritage in its fullest sense. Again, referring to Guildford Crescent, this area was more than the sum of its parts. The existence of the lively music venue Gwdihw and the other vibrant, independent business contributed hugely to the cultural worth of Cardiff.

Some of the reasons why the RLDP should guard against facadism are outlined in the document accessed via the link below - the butchering of our architectural and cultural heritage.

<https://perspective.art.blog/2019/11/16/the-case-against-facadism/>

Protecting Cardiff's working-class heritage

Cardiff Civic Society launched a campaign to protect the city's working-class heritage, and worked towards protecting a previously unrecognised building, Eastmoors Youth Centre in Splott, the society's efforts paid off, with the consequent Grade 2 listing by Cadw.

The protection of Eastmoors Youth Centre means that this gem of a building is not only protected, but will continue to be place where people gather, socialise and learn.

Other buildings have not been so fortunate. The wonderful Splott University Settlement building, for example. While Cadw recognised its significance in relation to the social history of the city, it was not considered to have sufficient architectural merit to be listed because the building had been altered over the years.

A living, actively used building of this kind, is likely to have had changes made to its fabric. But this should not be an impediment to protection.

The RLDP has a duty to protect historically and socially important buildings such as the Splott University Settlement. Failure to protect working-class heritage will give a one-sided and deeply impoverished view of the fabric of our city.

Cardiff Council, in its RLDP, must make specific commitments in policy to protect such places.

Heritage Tourism, and the economic benefits

The economic case for preserving Cardiff's heritage is also compelling.

In 2015, domestic and international tourists made 192 million trips to visit the UK's cultural, historic, and natural assets. They spent £17.5 billion while doing so. Heritage tourism is of particular benefit to Wales, as a survey conducted on behalf of the National Heritage Lottery Fund highlights.

The heritage sector's total impacts are equivalent to nearly two percent of regional gross value added in the North East, Wales and Scotland, higher than anywhere else in the UK.

Heritage tourism also supports nearly £400,000 jobs in the UK.

Currently, SP9 stresses the economic benefits of tourism but sees this only in terms of new developments such as the proposed new arena and the International Sports Village. This view is too narrow. The generally accepted definition of heritage assets not only includes obvious attractions such as castles, but also encompasses assets such as urban parks and distinctive public houses.

If Cardiff Council fails to recognise the economic benefits of heritage tourism, the city will lose out financially. Placing greater emphasis on heritage tourism would also bring significant benefits in terms of job creation.

The current trend for those visiting Cardiff is for a one-night stay, for a specific event. Protecting and promoting heritage and culture in the city would encourage visitors to stay longer, enhancing the economic benefits to the city.