



IHBC SOUTH WEST BULLETIN AUTUMN 2024

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1. Heritage News

New Historic England Guidance Adapting Historic Buildings For Energy and Carbon Efficiency.

Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN 18) July 2024.



Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency

Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN 18)



Our historic buildings must continue to change and evolve if they are to both contribute to a greener future and be fit for purpose for the people who live in, experience and care for them. If done thoughtfully and carefully, these changes can achieve the complementary goals of protecting our heritage and adapting to a changing climate. Historic England has produced this Advice Note to provide clarity on key considerations and to support consistent decision making.

How should future housing development be approached in historic cities?’

Wells Civic Society are organising a panel discussion to take place at our 9 October meeting (7pm) on

‘Is more housing good or bad for the Wells ‘city region’? How should future housing development be approached in historic cities?’

The Society plan to publish a summary of the meeting and a ‘think piece’ from the issues raised.

2. IHBC SW Events

Conservation Engineering CPD Training Day 3 December

The IHBC South West Branch are delighted to announce that they will be hosting an in person CPD training day on the topic of Conservation Engineering, with Ian Hume, on **3rd December 2024**. The event will take place in Swindon.

3. Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone

This March saw the completion of the Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) project, one of 67 such schemes across England which ran between 2019 and 2024. The projects were supported by £82.7m of funding from Historic England (HE), which was matched by over £122m of investment, with the aim of making our high streets a better place to work, live, shop and visit. This involved works to public realm and buildings in conservation areas, including shop fronts, alongside community engagement projects and cultural programmes led by local consortia.

The Chard HSHAZ was one of ten projects in the south west, led by the local authority (South Somerset District Council and then Somerset Council) with a dedicated project officer employed by the authority. Historic England provided advice and support through a project officer in the Bristol office, and myself as ‘HE lead’, working as a conduit between HE and the local authority to ensure the project ran smoothly and achieved its aims and objectives.

Chard HSHAZ focused on most of Fore Street and Holyrood Street and part of High Street, so it did not include the entire conservation area. The three main strands to the project were public realm improvements, building repair grants and community engagement. A separately-funded cultural programme, Culturally Chard, ran at the same time. At completion the project had spent £892,000 of HE funding with £1.3m local authority match, and £75,000 third-party match.

Public realm improvements

The main aims of the public realm works were to refresh tired street surfaces and improve accessibility on Holyrood Street and outside the Grade II* Guildhall. The historic Blue Lias rills (water gullies) on Holyrood Street and part of Fore Street were also repaired and restored. The materials choice of Forest Pennant sandstone flags and Spanish granite kerbs. The Eastern Gateway area and various other small projects were also completed using other funding and complement the HSHAZ public realm work. The final result looks cohesive and is well-appreciated; an on going maintenance plan is in place with the Town Council.



Public Realm around Guildhall Chard Before and After

Building improvement grants

Twenty-five buildings were identified as priorities in the project design, but this was reduced to 15, three of which were seen as high priority; unfortunately, only one of

these received a full grant. Some of the other buildings which were improved through the scheme include Barron's on Holyrood Street which had repairs to its roof and dormers and a new awning; new sash windows were made for the upper floors of 5 Holyrood Street and the 'Welcome Bap' café; the Baptist Chapel railings were subject to paint analysis in the hope that they were originally painted a snazzy colour, but disappointingly they turned out to have always been black; and the café on the corner of High Street had new sash windows and repairs to the roof.



Barrons, Holyrood Street Chard HAZ funded roof repairs and a new awning.

A new shopfront guide also funded through this part of the project, which was used to inform building grant works. The project was able to provide some grant funding for the Grade I listed 9 Fore Street, which was purchased earlier this year by Somerset Council and leased to Somerset Building Preservation Trust. The funding allowed for asbestos to be removed from the building so that further survey work can take place; a drone survey and laser scan survey was also funded; and repairs to the shop front roof and rainwater goods in the yard between numbers 7 and 9. All of this will hopefully contribute to removing this significant building, and its neighbours, from the Heritage At Risk register.



Grade I 9 Fore Street Chard funding for asbestos removal and further survey work.

Community engagement

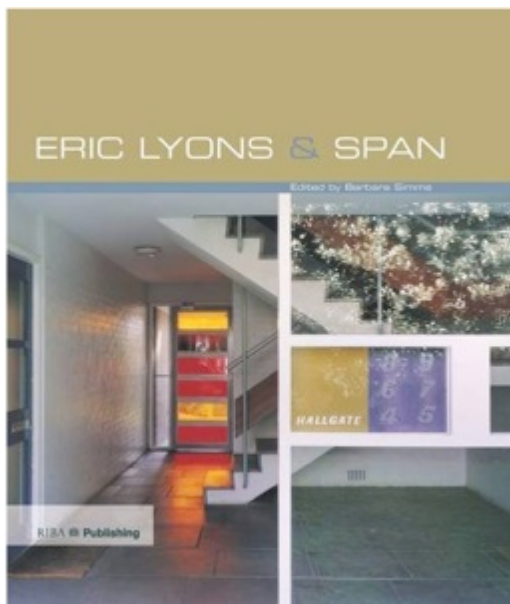
Almost the entire community engagement strand of the HSHAZ was carried out by Chard Museum. The funding allowed them to refresh and relaunch their walking trails, and carry out various small projects under banner of 'Hidden High Street Histories' – including posters for 30+ historic buildings, business, sites and events in Chard; 'The Streets of Chard' booklet; and an exhibition of 'lenticular' art. In February, myself and a colleague hosted a workshop in Chard Guildhall to introduce the community to the National Heritage List for England and the Missing Pieces project. This was an idea I had from the start of being involved with the HSHAZ but was only fully realised at the end of last year. The aim of the workshop was to get the community to add a Missing Piece to as many of the LEs in Chard town centre as possible, both at the time of the workshop and in the future, whilst also busting some listing myths and expelling listing as a dark art. Thirty-seven people attended the event and it was very well received. It was the only community engagement event in Chard which HE was directly involved in and it was really satisfying to meet the local community and see first-hand their interest in and dedication to the town.

Overall the project was considered to be a great success, although of course it was not without its problems, the main one being the supply and price of materials and availability of labour post-Covid and following Brexit, something that was encountered across all of the HSHAZ schemes. In Chard, we also had to deal with the National Grid digging up the new paving on Fore Street to replace a transformer, the change from a district to unitary authority, a change in project officers and a general lack of building owners applying for grants. There is still work to do, but since the completion of the HSHAZ other building owners have been redecorating and new businesses have been opening in vacant buildings.

Many Thanks for this contribution to Samantha Barnes BA MSc *Historic England Listing Adviser – South West Region and Chard HSHAZ Lead (2019-2024)* IHBC SW Cornwall Rep

4. Books

Eric Lyons and Span



Front Cover and Image of Corner Green Blackheath 1979

At a time when we need inspiration for new housing developments I note Context have devoted their September 2024 Issue No. 181 to Urban Housing. My contribution to this discussion takes a step back to the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's work of Eric Lyons and SPAN. Many of these developments are now listed.

Lavishly illustrated and deeply researched, this book celebrates the work of the architect Eric Lyons OBE (1912-1980), whose famous post-war housing - that today would be marketed as 'lifestyle housing' - is as well loved today as it was vibrantly successful when first constructed. Built almost entirely for Span Developments, its mission was to provide an affordable environment "that gave people a lift".

Influenced by Walter Gropius, Lyons brought a commitment to high density housing and the idea of fostering community into his Span work without compromising his intuitive sensitivity for landscape. His success brought the practice an impressive array of awards and led to a term as President of the RIBA.

The enduring success of his design philosophy can be traced forward to 2005, when Span received a special Housing Design Award given to schemes that meet the current Sustainable Communities Plan. Indeed, the concept of Span mirrors current best practice thinking in housing design and continues to offer a fresh, relevant challenge to volume housebuilders in Britain today. This book serves as a lively reminder of that fact.

Bulletin Editors Comment

This is the quarterly Bulletin for the IHBC SW Branch. It looks to highlight relevant news and best practice in the South West and things of interest from elsewhere.

I would welcome contributions from members in the South West as the best way to make this Bulletin relevant and worthwhile. I look forward to receive contributions on any topic, be it buildings, people or anything else members feel might be relevant and of interest. Please attach relevant photographs with contribution as these help make the Bulletin of visual interest and saves a lot of words!

Please note that Bulletin is made up from a variety of Contributor's and the Editor holds no responsibility for the viewpoints expressed or information provided.