



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

Making Heritage Work

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Dear Sir

INSPIRE

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation.

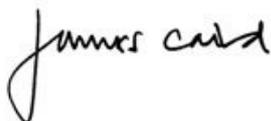
The Institute very much supports the proposal as it will aid the dissemination of information on historic environment matters and, we hope, help the promulgation of best practice. However, we are not qualified to give a technical opinion of the proposal's robustness.

Some of our members report time-consuming teething problems with IT initiatives. Those involving data preparation often present one-in-a-lifetime opportunities to implement so it is important that they are got right. Experience in the planning field shows very patchy on-line capability despite considerable emphasis on its importance over several years. We strongly urge the adoption of formats and processes which conform to industry standards with as much protection against obsolescence as possible built in.

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The management of the historic environment often suffers from stretched resources and the current financial environment may increase the likelihood of this. The Institute would not wish to see INSPIRE implementation programmes impacting on mainstream historic environment work either by sapping financial resources or preoccupying scarce staffing resources. We would hope that centrally devised protocols would help relevant bodies with implementation and would urge the overall INSPIRE programme to build in capacity for this.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Caird". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James Caird
Consultant Consultations Co-ordinator