



INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

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Dear Sirs

Review of Planning Policy Guidance Note 21 (PPG21) on Tourism

I refer to your invitation for comments on the above document.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional institute, representing conservation professionals in the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It has around fourteen hundred members divided between fourteen branches. 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.

In principle, the IHBC accepts and supports the case for replacing PPG21 with good practice guidance on planning for tourism.

The discussion document refers to various Planning Policy Guidance notes, but surprisingly does not refer to PPGs 15 and 16, arguably the most important ones for tourism. It is essential to appreciate the fundamental importance of PPGs 15 and 16. The historic environment provides the basic infrastructure for the tourism industry in many areas. Tourism can help to support the preservation of the historic environment, both built and natural, but can also threaten its survival through erosion, etc. These are key factors to take into account in the revision of PPGs 15 and 16 and in the formulation of the new good practice guidance on tourism.

Planning policies and good practice guidance relating to tourism should recognise the importance of high quality built and natural environments in developing the visitor experience, encouraging visitor expenditure and protecting the ongoing viability of tourist-related businesses and areas. This includes a range of policy areas, including:

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- Robust policies relating to urban design and public spaces. The public realm is important for image and identity and is also where social interaction and outdoor cultural events take place. The quality of the public realm also has a profound impact on the viability of local businesses;
- Policies and initiatives to realise the potential of historic buildings and areas (A successful example of this is Grainger Town in Newcastle). The historic environment is of fundamental importance to tourism;
- Introducing landscape-sensitive agricultural policies and initiatives. Public access and the maintenance of footpaths are clearly important considerations;
- Positively encouraging high profile new architecture in the provision of new tourist attractions and high quality design in the conversion or extension of historic buildings (e.g. The Imperial War Museum North, Walsall Art Gallery, Tate Modern, The Baltic Exchange, Magna, Albert Dock in Liverpool, etc). High profile buildings can in themselves raise an area's profile, create local identity and act as a significant visitor magnet;
- Placing emphasis on traffic management and a strong commitment to convenient and affordable public transport. Traffic and transport infrastructure often present considerable conflicts between the interests of access, tourism, environmental quality, residential amenity, etc

Strong and effective policies of this type not only benefit tourism, but a range of social, economic and regeneration aims and objectives. Robust tourism policies are an important part of securing urban renaissance and rural revival.

I trust that these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully

Dave Chetwyn
Consultations Secretary