

Overview of the seminar

The room was packed with planners and archaeologists. The attendees listened to presentations on heritage legislation from Anna Cartledge of Shoosmiths, planning and archaeology from Peter Hinton of ClfA, Leicester case studies from Mathew Morris of University of Leicester Archaeological Services, strategic planning for heritage assets by Adam Partington of Locus Consulting and a redevelopment case study from Sarah Harrison of City of Lincoln Council.

The key message from all the speakers was that the earlier clients think about how to approach their heritage asset, whether it is strategic planning or submitting a planning application, the better. And, that collaboration between the professions helps this process.

Anna highlighted that the key points in any heritage planning application are enabling development and viability. Significantly, also, there is no statutory definition of “setting” and this relies totally on case law. In terms of a case law update, Anna highlighted the importance of a correct approach, setting (and how this influences significance) and less than substantial harm versus substantial harm. From a client advisor perspective, Anna underlined the importance of owners of heritage assets engagement with statutory bodies and that conservation deficit and alternative viable use are also major client side challenges.

Peter presented the surprising statistic that 95% of archaeological assets are undesignated, placing particular emphasis on early assessment of potential development sites and pre-application discussions with local authorities, communities and other interested parties. He described a staged approach to informing decisions and managing risk and opportunity. Peter also noted that the role of the archaeological advisor in local authorities is at risk. ClfA has produced a very useful client guide. <https://www.archaeologists.net/projects/cifa-client-guide>

Mathew presented two contrasting case studies from Leicester City to highlight the importance of early and wide consultation and the very significant additional costs when engagement of appropriate heritage professionals doesn't happen at the outset of a project.

Adam highlighted the significant economic value of heritage assets, referring to the Historic England publications in 2018, Heritage Counts and Heritage & Society. The importance of a heritage strategy was vital in securing funding for a project and bringing partners, communities and others on board. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>

Sarah showed the before and after slides of the impressive regeneration scheme for Sincil Street and the Cornhill Quarter of Lincoln. The £40 million scheme has significantly enhanced the heritage assets of the area and provided economically viable reuse of the buildings. Her message was pay attention to details and embrace variety.