

What is European Architectural Heritage Year 1975 ?

The Council of Europe have designated 1975 as European Architectural Heritage Year. They are determined to halt the steady loss of irreplaceable monuments and the erosion of character in historic European towns. The objectives of the Year are

‘To awaken the interest of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage;

To protect and enhance buildings and areas of architectural or historic interest;

To conserve the character of old towns and villages;

To assure for ancient buildings a living role in contemporary society’.

The campaign will be conducted at the international, national and local levels, beginning in 1973 and reaching its climax in 1975. National Committees have now been set up in nearly all European countries, backed by Government money and patronage.

In the United Kingdom our aims are threefold:

- 1 To effect through the co-operation and initiative of local authorities and all other interested groups the enhancement of some of our 2000 Conservation Areas. For example – buildings could be restored, cleaned, repainted, floodlit; new uses found for redundant churches or warehouses; larger buildings converted to flats or offices; pedestrian precincts and foot streets could be established; parked cars could be removed from historic squares; overhead wires could be put underground and unsightly street lamps or advertisements resited; more trees or shrubs could be planted to make streets more visually exciting.

There are substantial monies available from the Historic Buildings Councils for 'outstanding' areas and special Heritage Grants for smaller schemes if you send the details to one of the addresses opposite.

- 2 To inaugurate a campaign for Environmental Education, which will reach schools, the professions, property owners and public authorities. This could be done through films and closed circuit television, local radio, travelling exhibitions, publications and lectures.
- 3 To establish a National Heritage Fund, to operate on a 'revolving' basis, whereby the most difficult buildings to save – often smaller houses or cottages – can be bought, restored and resold so that the money can be used again. We hope to encourage the formation of more local Trusts to operate in this way, like those already existing in many areas.

In 1975 we hope that historic cities, towns and villages will hold special shows, festivals, exhibitions and other events. Tours could be arranged for people of all ages and visitors from overseas. Everyone can help, local authorities, private enterprise, nationalised industries, the professions, youth or voluntary organisations and individuals.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh is President of the United Kingdom Council, which represents all aspects of national life and which is supporting and promoting our campaign.

Vice-Presidents include the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Countess of Dartmouth is Chairman of the United Kingdom Executive Committee who are responsible for the detailed co-ordination of the campaign. There are National Committees for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother is President of the Scottish Committee and HRH The Prince of Wales is President for Wales. The central Secretariat in London is run by the Civic Trust assisted financially by the Government; the Scottish Civic Trust and the Civic Trust for Wales are providing a similar service for their countries.

Many types of organisation will be initiating special activities; many individuals will be participating in the campaign. The Secretariats will be pleased to help or advise in every possible way. Please write to us with any ideas.

Further Information

United Kingdom Secretariat,
European Architectural Heritage Year,
17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW
(Tel: 01-930 0914)

Scottish Secretariat,
European Architectural Heritage Year,
24 George Square, Glasgow G2 1EF
(Tel: 041-221 1466)

Welsh Secretariat,
European Architectural Heritage Year,
Welcome House, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2YZ
(Tel. 0222-566133)

Northern Ireland Secretariat,
European Architectural Heritage Year,
Ministry of Development, Stormont,
Belfast BT4 3SS
(Tel: 0232-63210)

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Sir Peter Allen	<i>Transport Trust</i>
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Professor Sir Nikolaus Pevsner	<i>Victorian Society</i>
Mr T Mervyn Jones	<i>Wales Tourist Board</i>

European Architectural Heritage Year 1975

Why?

The world is squandering its resources at an unprecedented rate. Some of these assets are natural, like the minerals below ground. Some are man-made, like the great works of art we have inherited from the past. All are irreplaceable. Once lost, they can never be recovered, never be repeated.

Paintings, sculpture, the craftsman's objects – these we put into museums. But what of the historical monuments, the buildings, the towns and villages? All over Europe the supreme heritage of western man is being eroded and destroyed, through neglect, demolition and redevelopment. This precious legacy of culture and beauty was built up slowly, lovingly, over many centuries. We have a duty to preserve what is left of it for the benefit of future generations and its obliteration must not be accepted as the inevitable price of progress. But time is running out. Only a concerted effort by the European peoples as a whole can bring about the change of heart, the re-ordering of priorities, that will ensure the action necessary to preserve this precious legacy.

That is what the Council of Europe had in mind when they designated 1975 as European Architectural Heritage Year.

Objectives

The campaign covers the whole of Europe. It will be conducted at the international, national and local levels, beginning in 1973 and reaching its climax in 1975. Its central aim is to awaken the interest and pride of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage; to draw attention to the dangers which threaten that heritage; and to secure the action needed for its conservation.

Within this broad objective, measures will be initiated

- (a) to protect buildings and areas of architectural or historic interest and assure for them a living role in contemporary society;
- (b) to conserve and enhance the special character of towns and villages.

In Britain

We in Britain can boast incomparable monuments. The fortified castles of Wales are unique. Durham Cathedral has been described as one of the great architectural experiences of Europe. Our country houses are famed all over the world for their reticent elegance, and the parklands in which they stand constitute one of Britain's most special contributions to creative design.

But individual monuments, however splendid, are only part of this legacy of beauty. What of the towns and cities, the squares and crescents, the narrow winding High Streets, the cottages round the village green? What of the riverside walks, the markets, the skylines and roofscapes; the unexpected quirks and details that lend so much character to the street scene? All these, too, are part of the European heritage. Over 150,000 buildings in Britain are listed as of architectural or historic importance. Over 350 towns and villages are considered to be of particular historic value. Over 2,000 urban Conservation Areas have been formally designated over the past five years. These are the buildings, these are the places, above all, which the United Kingdom campaign must seek to protect and enhance.

What can be done?

Removal of through traffic and on-street car parking; the creation of pedestrian precincts; the upgrading of outworn areas; the establishment of new uses for old buildings; stricter control over demolition and redevelopment; removal of overhead wires and street clutter; tree planting and landscaping; more appropriate street lighting and schemes of flood-lighting – these are only some of the things foreseen for such areas.

It is hoped to bring into being a considerable number of local Historic Buildings Trusts which will be able, by use of the 'revolving fund' technique, to acquire buildings, restore them and then sell them so that the proceeds may be ploughed back into further restoration. It is further hoped to set up a national revolving fund upon which local Trusts can draw. New thought will be given to the many technical, legislative and financial problems involved in conservation, with a view to formulating specific proposals and programmes, and this work will tie in with an important series of European seminars to be held over the next three years.

All this will come together in 1975, when it is hoped that historic towns and areas throughout the United Kingdom will put themselves on show with special festivals and events. Special tours will be arranged – for the public, for schools and for local authorities. People will come to Britain to see and enjoy what we have achieved; we in Britain will want to study what has been done in other countries, and learn therefrom. During that year a great international conference will be held to draw together and consolidate all the experience gained, and set guide-lines for the continuing follow-through of the campaign after 1975.

Machinery

In this great campaign there is a role for everyone – public authorities, private associations, industry, the professions, youth organisations, the individual property owner. Many national organisations have already promised their active support. These bodies, representative of all aspects of national life, together with distinguished individuals who are active in this field, form the United Kingdom Council which spearheads the campaign in this country. President of the Council is HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and the weight attached to the Year by Her Majesty's Government is shown by the fact that the Vice-Presidents include the four Secretaries of State for the Environment, for Scotland, for Wales and for Northern Ireland. An Executive Committee under the Chairmanship of the Countess of Dartmouth is responsible for the detailed running of the campaign; linked to this are national Committees for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – of the first two of which the Presidents are, respectively, HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and HRH The Prince of Wales.

All the organisations supporting the campaign will be involving their own members and their own local groups in programmes and activities of their own devising. The central Secretariat in London, and those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, will act as clearing houses for information and keep interested bodies informed of what is being planned by others. Additionally, the campaign organisation will itself be initiating pilot projects, research studies, educational programmes and so on.

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European
Architectural Heritage
Year 1975

Declaration by the United Kingdom Council

ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FIRST MEETING AT LANCASTER HOUSE, LONDON, DECEMBER 1972

This Council, being representative of many aspects of national life in all parts of the United Kingdom, mindful of the unique value of the European architectural heritage and recognising the unprecedented pressures for development which are threatening to destroy this great cultural legacy,

pledges the support of the many organisations here represented to the campaign in the United Kingdom;

welcomes the designation of 1975 as European Architectural Heritage Year;

and invites the people of the United Kingdom to play a full part in this concerted effort of the European peoples to conserve their common heritage.

This Council calls upon all those organisations and individuals having a responsibility for the preservation of ancient monuments, historic buildings and areas of historic, architectural or technological interest, to decide upon and to initiate the most appropriate action which needs to be taken in the United Kingdom.

In particular, the Council invites the active support and initiative of

local authorities, upon whose active co-operation the success of the campaign must largely depend;

property owners, from the great estates to the individual householder, with all their special responsibilities;

the voluntary bodies which have been the leaders in this field;

the environmental professions, whose expertise is needed to solve the technical problems;

industry and commerce, as sponsors of development, patrons of the arts and a major influence on the quality of the human environment;

the channels of information and education – press, radio and television;

cultural societies of every kind;

educationists at every level for only through an informed and enthusiastic public can the long-term success of the campaign be assured.

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Mr Alex Gordon	<i>Royal Institute of British Architects</i>
Mr Martin S Argles	<i>Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors</i>
Lord Hayter	<i>Royal Society of Arts</i>
Mr J S Millar	<i>Royal Town Planning Institute</i>
Earl of Gainsborough	<i>Rural District Councils Association</i>
Sir Hector MacLennan	<i>Scottish Tourist Board</i>
Duke of Grafton	<i>Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings</i>
Dr J N L Myres	<i>Society of Antiquaries of London</i>
Dr Kenneth Steer	<i>Society of Antiquaries of Scotland</i>
Sir John Summerson	<i>Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain</i>
Earl of Rosse	<i>Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries</i>
Mr Maurice Ash	<i>Town and Country Planning Association</i>
Mr Victor Feather	<i>Trades Union Congress</i>
Sir Peter Allen	<i>Transport Trust</i>
Councillor John McKnight	<i>Urban District Councils Association</i>
Professor Sir Nikolaus Pevsner	<i>Victorian Society</i>
Mr T Mervyn Jones	<i>Wales Tourist Board</i>