Historic England

The Present State of Conservation Areas in England

10 June 2017 - Brockley

Duncan McCallum
Policy Director, Historic England

Historic England

Conservation Areas - an introduction

Came into force on 27 Aug 1967 through the Civic Amenities Act. Now covered under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

CAs are designated by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

Historic England

Conservation Areas - an introduction

LPAs have a duty to:

- ‘determine which parts of their areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’
- to designate those areas as conservation areas
- consult public on proposals
- to review those designations

Historic England

Conservation Areas - an introduction

Additional controls:

- Planning permission needed to demolish unlisted buildings
- Some permitted devt rights removed or reduced inc adverts
- LPAs can put Article 4 Directions in place to require consent for certain works eg to windows
- Topping, lopping or felling trees
- Certain NPPF policies apply

Historic England

Number of Conservation Areas

- There are currently at least 10,105 Conservation Areas
- HE is working towards a 100% coverage of GIS data. 4% left to be collected.
- All local authorities in England have Conservation Areas

- Northumberland National Park has one – Kirknewton

- Wiltshire Council has 246

Historic England

Which is the largest?

- Swaledale and Arkengarthdale in the Yorkshire Dales National Park is 71 sq km – it is an upland ‘barns and walls’ landscape including around 1000 traditional farm buildings. The designation surrounds several villages designated separately as CAs

Image YDNP

Historic England

Which is the largest?

- Swaledale and Arkengarthdale in the Yorkshire Dales National Park is 71 sq km – it is an upland ‘barns and walls’ landscape including around 1000 traditional farm buildings. The designation surrounds several villages designated separately as CAs
- It is only slightly smaller than Guernsey.

Image YDNP

Historic England

…. and the smallest?

Heath Passage in Hampstead Village, London Borough of Barnet comprises just two buildings all in just 1094 sq m.

Image: Google

Historic England

…. and the next smallest?

- The second smallest appears to be Hitchman Road, Stoke upon Trent – a single block dating from 1889 and comprising 13 houses and 1 shop
- The Conservation Area Appraisal runs to 26 pages.

Image: Google

Historic England

What do CAs contain?

- 93% contain listed buildings
- 84% of them have between 1 and 50 listed buildings
- 19% include a scheduled monument
- 10% include all or part of a registered park or garden
- Most CAs (83%) are between 2 and 50 hectares (3 and 75 football pitches)

Historic England

What % of England is a CA?

Over the years, the extent of coverage has increased significantly.

QUIZ QUESTION:

- How much of England is covered by a CA designation? Is it:
- A) 0.6%
- B) 2.2%
- D) 3.9%
- E) 6.4%

Historic England

What % of England is a CA?

- QUIZ QUESTION:
- How much of England is covered by a CA designation? Is it:
- A) 0.6%
- **B) 2.2% - 2,938sq km**
- D) 3.9%
- E) 6.4%

If moved into a single block, England's Conservation Areas would be the 175th largest country in the world - Bigger than Luxembourg

Historic England

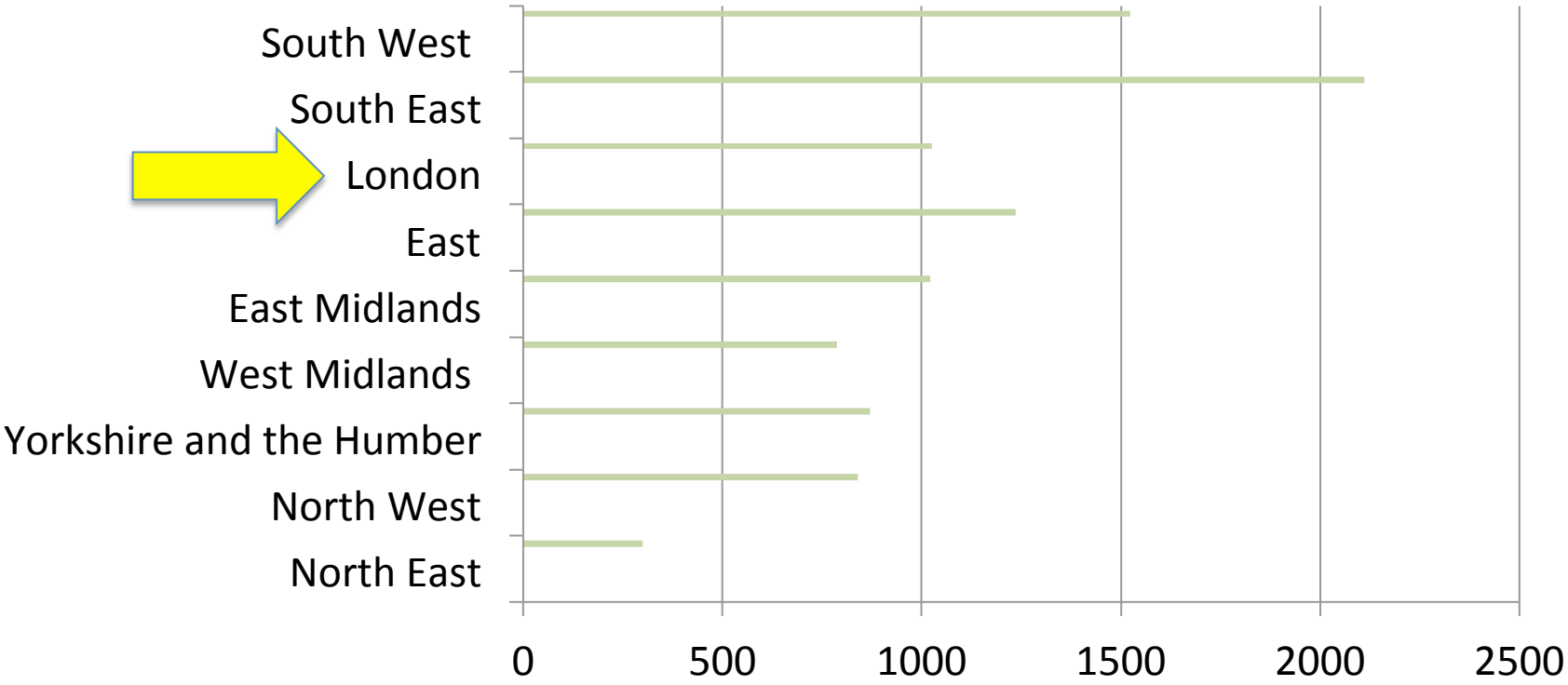
Is that a lot or a little?

- If 2.2% of England is a CA
- Urban landscapes make up 10.6%
- National Parks 9.3%
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – 7.5%
- National Nature Reserves - 0.7%

The estimated total area of England directly built on is…. 2.27% - so there is a lot of open space in CAs.

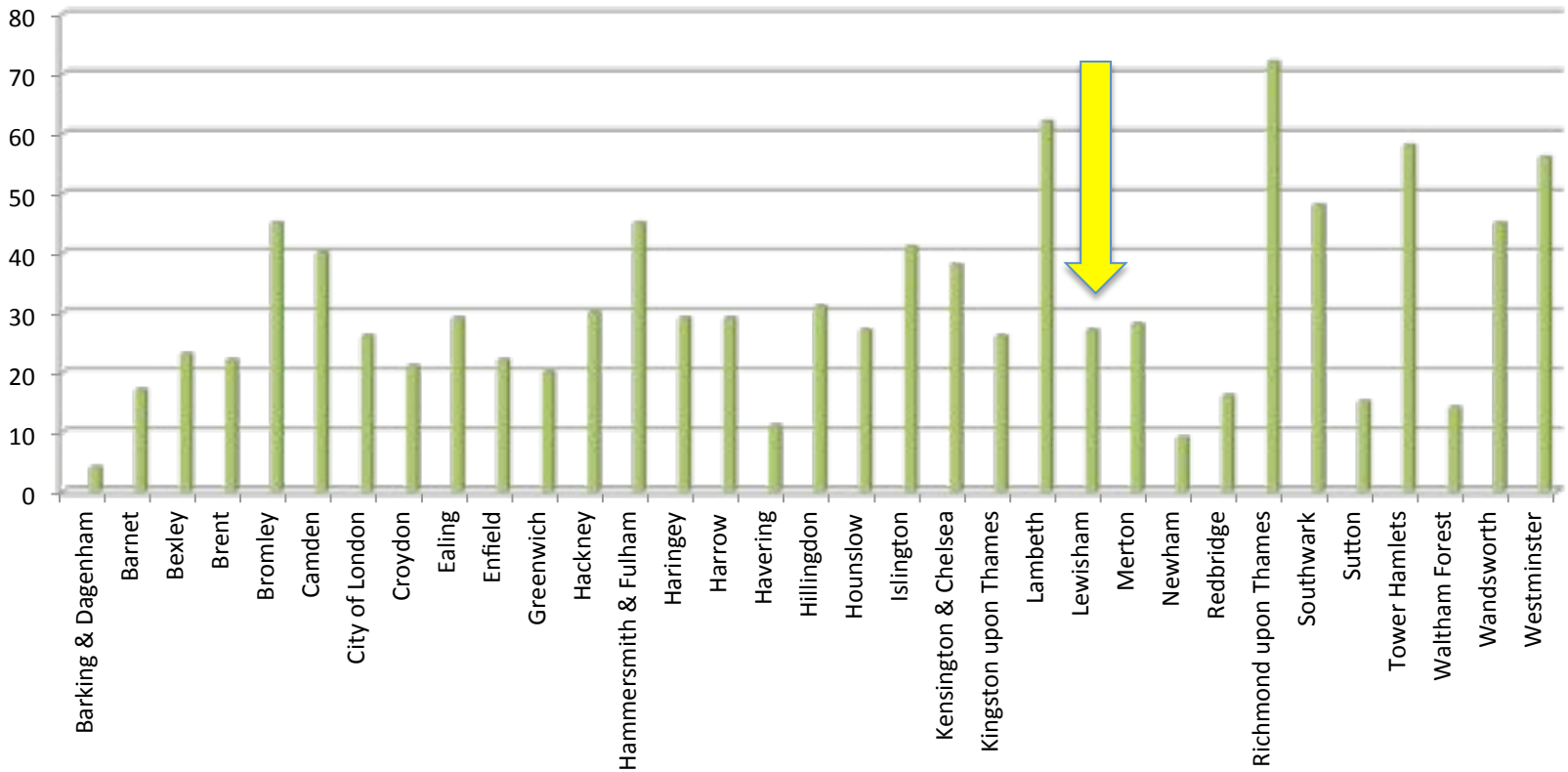
Historic England

Number of Conservation Areas



Historic England

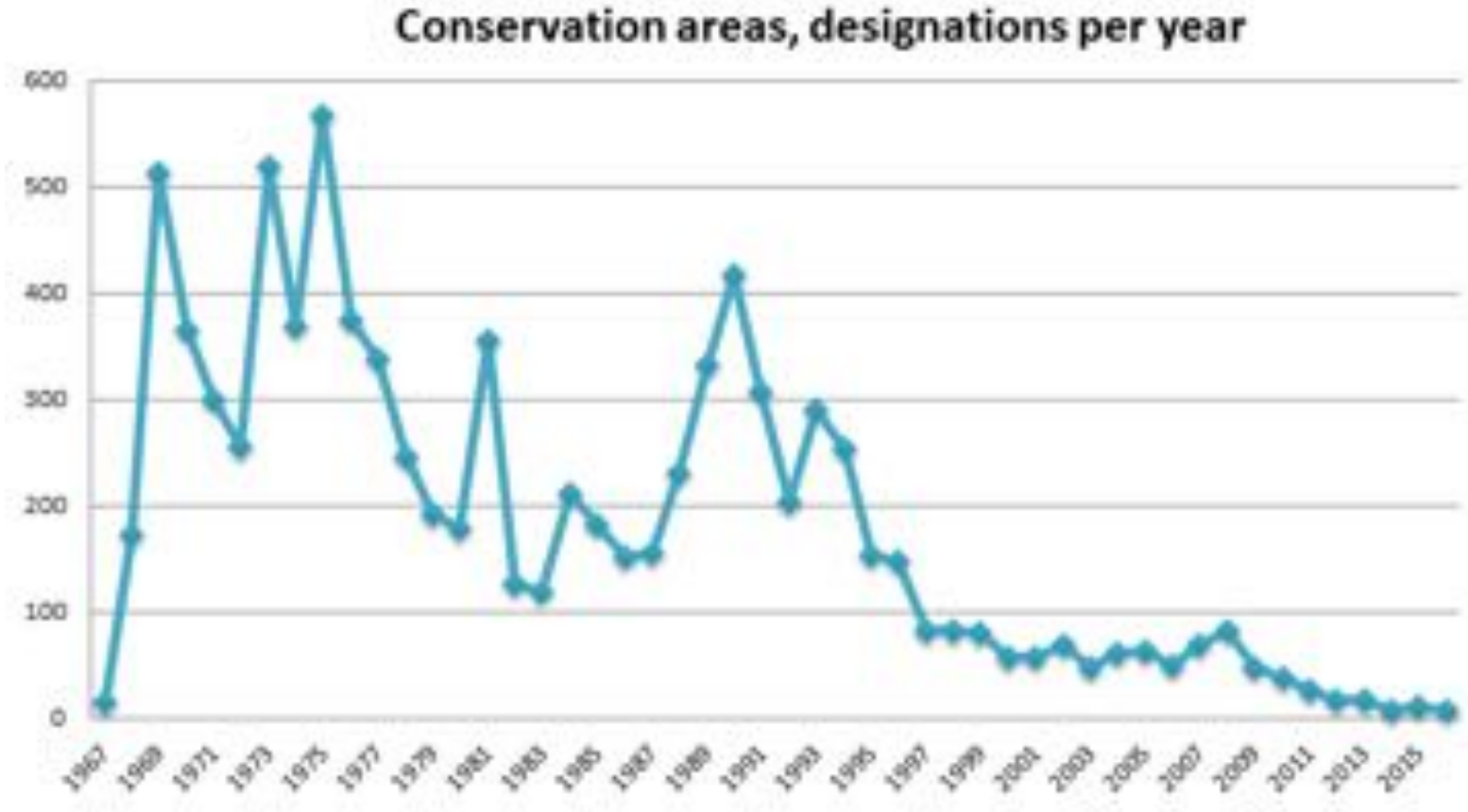
Total Number of Conservation Areas in London



https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/

Historic England

Declining numbers of new designations

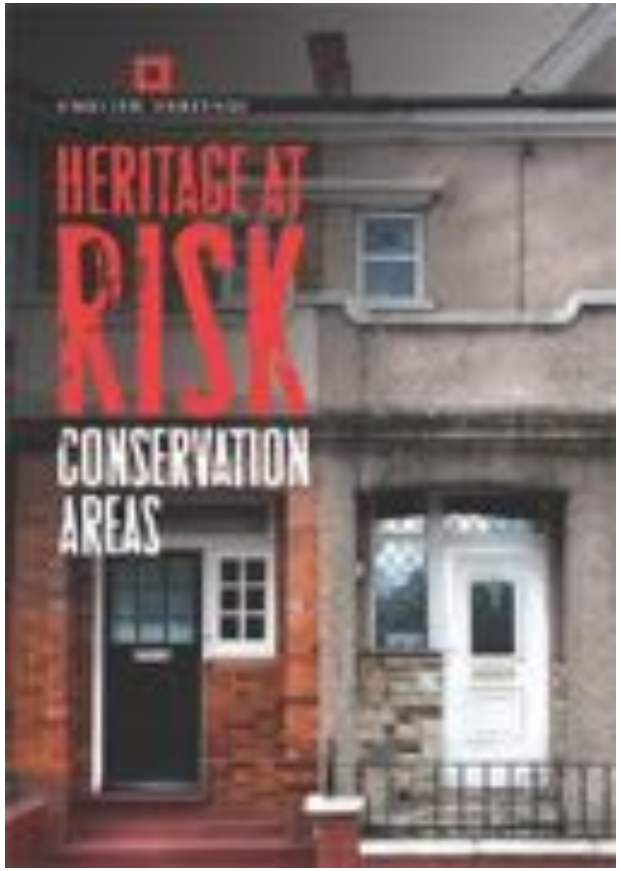


Historic England **Conservation Areas at Risk**

Historic England

Conservation Areas at Risk

- Over 90% of LPAs have carried out HAR surveys for their CAs
- Deptford High Street was the only CA at risk in Borough of Lewisham in 2016
- There is now a CA Management Plan in place so status may change
- Main issues are that LPAs could make more use of Article 4 Directions and they could pay more attention to the public realm



Historic England

Conservation Areas at Risk

Top threats (2009 survey) :

- Unsympathetic doors/windows
- Poorly maintained streets
- Walls, fences or hedges
- Satellite dishes
- Effects of traffic management
- Alterations to walls/roofs/chimneys
- Unsympathetic new extensions
- Impact of advertisements
- Neglected green spaces

Historic England

Ask an Estate Agent….

- 75% felt a well maintained CA added to property value
- Unsympathetic windows/ doors are biggest threat to CA property values
- 82% felt original features added to a property’s value
- 72% felt that original features helped ensure a quicker sale

Historic England

Property values in Conservation Areas

- Residential prices in CAs are, on average, 23% higher than outside CAs (but areas that later become CAs start with a premium of 16% before designation). After controlling for other factors, premium is, on average, 9%
- Prices for houses in areas with an Article 4 in place are about 15% higher than those in CAs without them – but small effect after other considerations factored in (2012 research by LSE for EH)

Historic England

Property values in Conservation Areas-2

- The price of properties in CAs generally rises as one moves from the edge to the centre of the CA.
- There is a positive ‘shadow’ effect on CA property prices – extending outside the CA for up to 500m
- House prices in CAs have, on average, exceeded those in the control group by about 0.2% a year (and 0.1% just outside CAs).

Historic England

Attitudes of owners to wider area

- Owners place high value on green and open space in their CA irrespective of levels of deprivation in the area.
- Owners report high levels of positive feelings about community and neighbourhood
- There was recognition of the impacts of gentrification

Historic England

Attitudes of owners to controls

Owners who had applied for Planning Permission more likely to be positive about the controls than those that had not applied. This effect was especially strong in high premium areas.

(This qualitative research was linked to the main research and although not statistically robust it has given us useful insight into some of the attitudes of owners)

Historic England

Attitudes of owners to controls

40% of owners had objected to a neighbour's proposal irrespective of levels of premium/deprivation

Role of amenity societies more likely to be mentioned in high premium areas.

Historic England

Close to good transport….

Owners mentioned having an easy commute as a positive factor in living in their CA (in both high and low premium areas)

Historic England

Attitudes to design

Owners much less likely than Cons Officers to mention that CA designation had improved the quality of new design

Historic England

Design issues

As property values are higher, CAs are desirable places to build

They therefore suffer greater pressure than elsewhere

But there are good grounds for strong policies in the Local Plan

Historic England

Design issues

The NPPF requires LPAs to ‘look for opportunities within CAs…to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.’

Historic England

Deptford Market Yard

- Historic England's latest version of 'Heritage Works' – its guide to the positive management of change features Deptford on its front cover
- GII listed Carriage Ramp (1836) – London's oldest railway structure
- Re-using derelict land and arches
- Commercial, retail, 132 homes
- Start-up businesses encouraged

Historic England

Characteristics of owners

- Owners of unlisted buildings in CAs are more likely to have owned their property for 5+ years than owners of listed or the national average.
- Around a third have owned their property for more than 20 years. 50% are retired.
- Unlisted houses in CAs much less likely to be a second home than for listed buildings.
- 71% of owners of unlisted buildings in CAs are over 55 years, a slightly higher proportion than for LB owners, but they were much more likely to be over 75 than LB owners.

Historic England

Characteristics of owners - 2

- Owners of unlisted buildings in CAs seem to carry out re-painting, maintenance to gutters, down pipes and drain covers less frequently than LB owners.
- They were much less likely to seek professional advice to advise on work to their building than LB owners (10% to 22%)
- They found it easier to find suitable building materials than LB owners.
- They found the planning system clearer than the LB owners found the LB consent system.

Historic England

50th Anniversary Conservation Areas

- Civic Voice/IHBC member survey results to be published shortly
- Public survey of awareness/views
- Your Home advice for CA home owners
- Updated Historic England advice on CAs – aimed mainly at Local Authorities
- New Streets for All manual
- Heritage at Risk results inc CAs
- Heritage Counts research ‘good growth’

Historic England

Advice & Guidance

https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/

Historic England

Some questions for the future

- Is society changing how we are approaching CAs, or are CAs changing our society?
- With CAs, do we risk creating exclusive zones for the older richer elite?

Historic England

What are we building now that will form the next generation's Conservation Areas?

How will we deal with **densification**?

Historic England

How will we deal with

TA LL BUIL DIN GS ?

Historic England

How will we deal with

Facade

Retention?

Historic England

How will we deal with poor maintenance of CAs and anti-social behaviour?

Historic England

Despite all the challenges, I remain optimistic about the future of our heritage

Because people care!