

October 2012

City Walls Heritage Project

18th October 2012
Workshop Outcomes



HOLYWELL TRUST



Holywell
Consultancy



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foreword

In 1613, two representatives from the city of London, Alderman George Smithes and Merchant Taylor Mathias Springham, along with 10 local officers, 'viewed and trode out the ground at the Derry for the fortification there.' This initiative resulted in the creation of the City Walls - the largest ancient monument in Northern Ireland.

As well as exerting an enduring influence on the townscape of the City, Derry's Walls have played a critical role in shaping the identities and images of the communities they embrace. Today, the fabric of this fortification and the spaces and places it defines are features of a heritage which holds great potential as a cultural resources but whose interpretation, management and promotion pose substantial challenges, practical as well as philosophical.

The Holywell Trust, a community organisation with a peace and reconciliation ethos, is implementing, with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a City Walls Heritage Project which is designed to engage people with the heritage of Derry's Walls through a series of programmes aimed at;

- Healing through History- healing community divisions through an exploration of the shared history of the City Walls
- Celebrating Diversity- promoting the Walled City and the streets immediately around the City Walls as a heart of Derry which has welcomed diverse communities in the past and which will continue to do so in the future
- Reclaiming the Walls- animating spaces on the City Walls and around the City Walls which are contested or neglected.

While these programmes will be focused on learning and participation, they are designed to have a positive impact on the conservation of the monument, responsibility for which rests with the Department of the Environment NI. As part of this project, 'Walls 400!' will mark the quatercentenary in 2013 with a series of activities to unpack the contested history that the City Walls represent and to celebrate Derry's Walls as a present-day national heritage asset with the potential to unite rather than separate communities.

A fundamental starting point in the process of engagement has been concerned with developing an understanding of people's perceptions of the Walls, exploring with them the implications of these perceptions and collaboratively generating ideas about interventions that will make a difference. The Workshop on the 18th October 2012 sought to engage the understanding, expertise, experience and creativity of a range of people with an interest in these matters. While not all of those invited were able to attend, we are truly grateful to those who did for taking the time to come along and for sharing their thoughts with us.

The information presented in this Outcomes Report provides an important baseline of attitudes and opinions about the Walls. This baseline will be used by Holywell Consultancy to assess the impact that the City Walls Heritage Project will have over the next couple of years and will form an essential element in the evaluation of the project. The emerging recommendations for future action will also serve to inform the continuing work of the City Walls Heritage Project.

the participants

Eamonn Baker	Towards Understanding and Healing
Liam Campbell	Foyle Civic Trust
Frank Carey	Historian
Eamonn Deane	Holywell Trust
Fionnuala Deane	Dog Ears
Maureen Hetherington	The Junction
Mark Lusby	City Walls Heritage Project
Niall McCaughan	The Playhouse
John McGillan	Historic Monuments Council
Edward Montgomery	The Honourable, The Irish Society
Rosemary Morton	St Columb's Cathedral
Dean William Morton	St Columb's Cathedral
Marie-Claire Peters	City Walls Heritage Project
Hazel Philson	St Augustine's Church
Eilish Quigley	Tours 'n' Trails
Diane Ruddock	National Trust
Dr Brian Scott	Historian
Ivan Taylor	St Augustine's Church
Trevor Temple	City Walls Heritage Project
William Temple	The Fountain Community
Carol Wright	City Walls Heritage Project

Louise Browne	Facilitator, Louise Browne Associates
Gerard Deane	Facilitator, Holywell Consultancy
Roisin O'Hagan	Facilitator, Holywell Consultancy

APOLOGIES

Peter Appleton	Derry City Council
Cllr Michael Cooper	Derry City Council
Michael Coulter	NIEA
Odhran Dunne	Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau
James Kerr	Verbal Arts Centre
Rev David Latimer	First Derry Presbyterian Church
Robert McGonigle	St Columb's Cathedral
Sinead McLaughlin	Londonderry Chamber of Commerce
Tony Monaghan	Derry City Council
Rev Patricia Storey	St Augustine's Church

thank you

On 18th October 2012 you kindly participated in a conversation to explore your perceptions of the City Walls. We wanted to engage your understanding and experience in this exploration and to hear your views on the challenges and opportunities the Walls present. Following welcoming remarks by Gerard Deane, Holywell Consultancy, Mark Lusby, Project Coordinator, outlined the scope of the City Walls Heritage Project. He explained how this Project, which is aimed at promoting participation and learning, prompted the need for a wider conversation to explore issues, challenge current thinking and generate possibilities for creating new understanding.

Rather than deploy conventional methods of working participants were taken through a facilitated process which sought to explore a number of key questions;-

- **‘What the Walls mean to me’** – an exploration of the significance, relevance and meaning of the Walls
- **‘Some issues’** – an exploration of the key issues, trends and developments impacting on the City Walls and the implications of these in terms of dynamics, relations, attitudes and resources
- **‘Our ambition for the Walls’** – an exploration of your thoughts on what might, could, should happen in response to the emerging issues

As responses to these questions began to flow, participants were invited to capture their thoughts on comment cards which were then collected, explained, discussed and displayed on pinboards. As the session progressed through each area of investigation, participants collectively guided similar comments into groups on the boards. Towards the end of the session participants were invited to identify, by using the focusing device of coloured dots, those aspects of their ‘ambition for the Walls’ which were most important or significant for them.

This report is the outcome of all the contributions made during the course of the workshop. It draws together the different threads of the many conversations that took place on the day and presents the outcomes under a series of headings / themes which best describe the nature of the particular sentiments that were expressed. Hopefully it brings some coherence to the huge amount of information – the ideas, the issues and the aspirations- we gathered on the way through. It also identifies some of the insights participants brought to the discussion and suggests some next steps so that the momentum built can be sustained. Above all this is your statement of what the Walls mean to you, what you think is important, what you are currently involved in and what we need to pay attention to in realising the City Walls Heritage Project.

We thank you again for taking the time to come along and for sharing your thoughts with us. We hope you found it worthwhile and enjoyable and we look forward to working with you as we continue this conversation. A special word of thanks to Niall McCaughan for providing us with a splendid venue and to Rosin and Carol for all their help with organising the event.



what the walls mean to me?

... an exploration of the significance, relevance and meaning of the Walls

PART OF A BROADER CONTEXT

- Military history / European military heritage / European historical context
 - Walled Cities as part of a European project
 - Part of a club of Walled Cities
- London's Walls – a unique link
 - The only twin
 - Part of London's evolution

A 'LABORATORY FOR EMPIRE'... CONQUEST, PLANTATION, COLONISATION

- A symbol of colonisation
- A place of historical significance
 - Complex histories
 - Past & present linkages
 - Heritage/historic interest
 - A shared history
 - An historic city
- Never taught a lot about Irish history
- People only now discovering the Walls

A REMINDER OF A MORE RECENT ERA

- Dissident billboard
- First ever peace wall
- The Walls used to be closed
- Being searched going through the gates
- The demilitarisation
- Reminders of another era

- 400 years of terrorism & stealing of Doire by English tyrants
- An evolution – not as it was
- The Walls represent us

A SYMBOL OF IDENTITY

- The Siege part (a big part) of Protestant heritage
- Spirit of Protestant defiance – 'No surrender'
- Defence and survival of Protestantism
- Parading with the Apprentice Boys

A SYMBOL OF BELONGING

- A skeleton holding the city together
- We played on the Walls
 - A playground
 - Not allowed to play on the Walls
- The Walls as a cloak of comfort
- The Walls were part of the backyard of my Granny's house
- Knocked down by a bus at the Bishop's gate
- The walls as a gateway

OUR COMPASS

- Vantage points
 - Viewpoints to and from the Walls
 - Beautiful vista
- A one mile stage around the city
- A unique promenade

- A good walk
- A place to walk unhindered – a quiet place
- Our necklace
 - A necklace of facilities, projects, churches, heritage

THEY ARE SOMETIMES TAKEN FOR GRANTED

- Invisible yet obvious
- We take the Walls for granted
- They are just there
- We walked through them but never really noticed them

THEY ARE SOMETHING TO BE TREASURED

- The Walls could have been pulled down – in the way of economic development – but they have remained
- Their 400th birthday
- A National Monument
 - A local and national treasure
- Archaeology / discovery
- Second World War air raid shelters
- National heritage / architecture
 - Heritage – local, national & international
- The Cannon
- The famous people on the Walls
- Stonework
 - Craftsmanship
- A place of mystery
- A place of opportunity
- A place in need of better use
- A potentially shared space

THEY ARE A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

- They are iconic
- They engender pride
- A place of pilgrimage
- The Walls should not be touched – they are sacred
 - A sacred space

THEY HAVE ENORMOUS VISITOR APPEAL

- A tourist attraction
- Tourist platform
- A great opportunity
- A tourism opportunity
- Derry's Titanic
- A tourist destination



some issues

... an exploration of the key issues, trends and developments impacting on the City Walls and the implications of these in terms of dynamics, relations, attitudes and resources

THE VISITOR IS MISSING OUT ... THE EXPERIENCE IS TOO LIMITING

- A bigger issue is that it is a one hour city
 - One and a half hour stop in Derry
 - Time constraints
 - It needs to be an overnight stop
- The buildings miss out- no one bothers with the architecture
- Trade / businesses don't get a return
- Who puts the package together
- Tour guides- on a limited programme
 - Tour guiding - quality control?
 - Tour guides avoid places
 - The story can be piecemeal
 - Quality control of information for tourists
 - 'Dodgy tours'
- How do we bring the story to life
 - Animation
- Other visitors here for a specific purpose

THE REALITY OF THE EXPERIENCE

- No go area after dark
 - Drinking up the Walls
 - Venue for 'youth' anti-social behaviour
 - Drinking and fighting at the weekends
- A perception that the Walls are safe

- There is light at the end of the tunnel- a lighting scheme
- Economic development / traffic management
- ASB Enforcement by the PSNI

WHO DECIDES WHAT THE MESSAGE IS?

- Free Derry Corner and the Walls
 - Political graffiti - who decides what is written on the Walls
 - Some people claim their right / they see it as their wallpaper
- This is scary stuff
- Most of the people are excluded from it
 - I exclude myself from the conversation
- But there is a real need for a conversation
 - It has to start with a conversation

WHO CARES?

- Disowning the Walls
- How do the statutory agencies regard what is happening
 - A monument at the end of NI
 - Narrow view of what the monument is
- Turning our back on the Walls- city centre
 - Just part of the city's public realm
 - Place to park against
 - A place to put MUGAS
 - Trees in planters

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

- Ownership
 - No sense of ownership
 - Confusion over actual responsibility for overall maintenance of Walls and immediate surrounds
- Confusion over custodianship - the Honourable the Irish Society/ NIEA/ DCC etc
- The Honourable The Irish Society - no ongoing rights
 - The Honourable The Irish Society-open-ended deed of guardianship
- City Walls Management Group
 - 12/14 people – a jumble of agencies - a minimalist approach
- NIEA - the buck stops here
- Custodians are not part of the stewardship
- Absence of external critical friends- a National and European dimension
- Where to go to find out about who does what
 - Ignorance

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH?

- Around the Walls - cultural venues- don't have a say
- There is a gap between officialdom and the community
 - Communities and agencies
- More community involvement needed
- Community planning
- Planning has to be thought about
- Integration and coordination of Walls management
- Change and management - evolution and planning
- An example of how it might work better - The Lower Bann - two tier system

THE WALLS OFFER HUGE POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW REALITY

- A wonderful opportunity to reconcile our histories
- Let's not allow history to be a shackle
- What happened in Derry- changed democracy
- It's not about being triumphalist
- How the Cathedral is part of the Walls- visitors are interested in this
- Cathedral to include Walls in tours...relationality
- The redefinition of the Walls - a big opportunity
- Celebrating both stories
- The story of movement
- The Planter and the Gael - Us and Them- the Fountain and what it represents- the symbolism
- The story of a divided city

A REAL NEED FOR A STRATEGIC / CIVIC APPROACH

- It needs a strategic approach
- Rich potential - but no civic approach
- Conservation Plan- quality control
- The gaps - where is the point of contact- the City Council? / NIEA?

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Examine good practice
- Education (local history) in primary schools
 - Young children are very receptive and curious
 - Part of the National Curriculum
 - Local schools are not equipped with the resources
 - Education and history- especially for younger children
- Heighten sense of pride

our ambition for the walls

... an exploration of your thoughts on what might, could, should happen in response to the emerging issues

DEVELOP A SHARED AMBITION?

- What is the collective ambition?
- No overall philosophy - of a higher ambition
- Have subtle conversations - where we can start
- There needs to be external value challenge
- Global recognition as a peaceful 'bridge'
- That NI embraces the Walls

PROMOTE THE WALLS AS A SYMBOL OF TRANSFORMATION

- Educative tool and powerful symbol of transformation
- Transformative symbol and resource for a change in attitudes, mindsets, psyche of all citizens
- The Walls as a symbol of healing
- Revel in transforming contestation
- The Walls holding and nurturing a vibrant, diverse community within
- Collective belonging – shared space - education
- Pride and ownership of a shared history
- Reclaim our doorstep
- The Walls as a venue for events for both communities

NURTURE A GREATER SENSE OF BELONGING

- The entire community taking pride in the Walls
 - Life on the Walls - all of the City ownership and pride
- A venue for events

- That more people use the Walls for events
- Support Wall Events
- Pleasant walk for locals
 - That Derry people walk the Walls
 - A walk around the Walls as enjoyable as a walk along the top of the Walls
 - The Walls as a walking / training circuit
- For all locals to see Derry/Londonderry as a Walled City

DEVELOP THE WALLS AS AN ENTERPRISING PLACE ... A PLACE TO BE PROUD OF

- More flowers
- The Walls as a playground
- The Walls as a garden
- An open air gallery
- The Walls as an art gallery
- The Walls bedecked with bunting and balloons
- Animated
- Musicians
- Encourage private sector eg create postcards, certificates, t-shirts
- Forward thinking e.g. designate Castle Street as a café zone
- Cafe culture / restaurants etc
- Graffiti free (an effective process)

ENSURE THE WALLS PROVIDE A COMPELLING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Tour guides regulation
- A recognised 'world' attraction – reflected in a fully equipped tourist resource: listening posts – different languages
- Every visitor having a great experience ... and wanting to come back
 - Visitors are fascinated
- A tourist attraction to rival the Giant's Causeway
- Coordinated approach to tourism
- DVCB should be on the Walls / city centre
- A visible part of the City's townscape
- It is a stage
- Vibrant resource for residents/tourists showcasing the culture/heritage of the City

ENCOURAGE PURPOSEFUL ENQUIRY & PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING

- Elevated space to interpret pre Plantation and post Plantation growth of the City
 - Monument with a dedicated learning and participation programme
 - Plaques on City Cannon (ref Dr Scott's book)
 - Better information points along the Walls
 - More information boards eg Magazine Street, Georgian City, First Methodist Church (Wesley)
- Involve all schools
 - Involvement of schools – competitions
 - A 'Walled City' Primary School education programme

ACKNOWLEDGE WHERE RESONSIBILITY LIES NOW & IN THE FUTURE

- Needs a local presence
- NIEA has no visible presence
- Stewards/wardens/ the Irish Society/DCC/community groups/tourist businesses agree a strategy
- The reality - the hierarchy
- The Walls taken under the stewardship of the National Trust?



SHARED RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRES AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

- Effective community involvement in walls management
- Two key recommendations – an officer and community involvement
- A coherent approach- one point of contact
- Closer to home management
- Delegated management within a clear ambition
- Why does the community have to ask for permission
 - Having to seek permission to do things
- Higher value community involvement & external champions
- Build in a system that facilitates engagement
 - Community involved / engaged in Walls
- Encourage participation
- Community planning – big implications
- Local accountability
- There needs to be one key point of contact about the Walls
- A two tier Walls management committee?
- A starting point eg DARD Ballykelly
- May be better not to devolve everything to the local level

RESPONSIBILITY NEEDS TO BE PROPERLY RESOURCED

- Ongoing maintenance
- That the same investment in Titanic and the Causeway is invested in the Walls
- Funding for wardens/stewards
 - Need wardens / stewards in place
 - Worried about the security
- Remove security gates (or modify), buildings attaching, inappropriate signs, etc
- Keep the gates



afterword

‘Among prominent European ‘gems’, the walls of Aigues Mortes are 1,650m, with 20 towers; Avila’s 2500m (82 towers); Carcassonne’s outer walls are 1,650m (42 towers); Conwy’s 1,300m (21 towers); Lugo’s 2,100m (46 towers); and Derry’s 1,300m (10 towers)’

The designation of walled towns and cities as recognised heritage sites highlight some important insights for Derry – Londonderry. Walled towns and cities feature prominently on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. For many, these walls and defences whether they represent the architecture of atrocity or a cultural resource to be cherished are regarded as a particularly ‘dissonant’ form of heritage where the past is contested in the present. What is apparent is that effective management is best achieved where;

- The walls are not divorced from their urban context but are treated holistically in the context of the townscape and its setting.
- The importance of community participation in heritage management is recognised and is imagined in terms of movement along a continuum from cooperation to coordination to collaboration and ultimately to partnership
- In order to defend the authenticity and integrity of the heritage resource it is imperative to ensure that it has a vital, living and mutually supportive relationship with the urban fabric and cultural life that surrounds it
- There is recognition that cities find their real coherence and integrity in their citizens, in the individuals who are the real stewards of urban identity and accordingly, should be the first interlocutors when heritage matters are discussed.



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