

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this research that provides evidence for the connection between heritage and life satisfaction. It is the first in a series of new economic research projects that Historic England is producing, funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS') Culture and Heritage Capital programme.

As the Chair of the Culture and Heritage Capital (CHC) Programme Advisory Board, I understand the importance of improving how we communicate and articulate the value of culture and heritage in economic terms. As a sector, we need to engage actively to ensure that public and private sector decision-making processes that draw on economic evidence do not undercount or exclude heritage, as they currently often do. Through this research series, Historic England will provide a holistic, compelling, and authoritative economic understanding and evidence about the value of our precious heritage.

Heritage has a profound impact on how places are perceived. The presence of heritage, its aesthetic character, authenticity and representative collective memory, influence how we connect with our surroundings and how we feel. From associations of beauty and custodianship conjured by even the most modest of historic homes to the congruence and distinctiveness provided by a well-maintained local historic shopping parade to the celebration of people and stories past embodied in local monuments, our local heritage has a lasting impact on our perceptions and experiences of place.

Using robust economic techniques, this research demonstrates that heritage where we live has a tangible and measurable impact on life satisfaction. People residing in places with a higher density of heritage assets are found to be more satisfied with their lives. It is, in fact, the presence of everyday heritage that is found to be the main driver of life satisfaction. Nationally, living in close proximity to heritage is found to be associated with wellbeing gains in the region of £29 billion per annum in England.

Conserving, retaining and maintaining heritage is an important part of place-making and supporting the nation's wellbeing. These research findings reinforce the importance of Historic England's purpose to improve people's lives by standing up for/ supporting/ advocating for and protecting the historic environment.

Lord Mendoza CBE
Chairman, Historic England

